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**Department of Environment and Nature Conservation**

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**Lefapha La , Tikologo  
Le Tshomarelo**

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**Departement van Omgewing en Natuur Bewaring**

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**Isebe Indalo Nolondolozo**

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Metlife Towers  
T-Floor  
Private Bag X6102  
KIMBERLEY  
8300  
Isakhiwo se Metlife  
T-Floor  
Inqxowa yeposi X6102  
KIMBERLEY  
8300

Moago wa Metlife  
T-Floor  
Kgetsanaposo X6102  
KIMBERLEY  
8300  
Metlife Towers  
T-Vloer  
Privaatsak X6102  
KIMBERLEY  
8300

Tel: (053) 807 -7300

Fax: (053) 807 7328

# **DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND NATURE CONSERVATION**

## **CELLULAR TELEPHONE POLICY**

***SUSTAINABLE NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT FOR A BETTER LIFE***

## **1. CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND**

### **1.1 Introduction**

This document provides the policies and procedures related to the allocation and use of telephones and cellular phones. This document outlines the procedures to be followed in each of the activities related to the allocation and use of cellular phones. Deviations from these procedures need to be approved by the Head of Department. Provide help and guidance to the Head of Departmental and to standardize the use of cellular phones. This document deals exclusively with the allocation and use of cellular phones.

#### **Objectives**

To ensure the following:

1. To conform to and/ or inform the annual budget process and the prescribed budgeting and reporting responsibilities by means of correctly costing of this cost driver.
2. To formalize the processes and procedures regulating the acquisition, utilization and management of the cellular phone account during use and when a employee is no longer employed by the Department
3. The validity of cellular costs relating to business use.
4. To formalize the processes and procedures regulating the allocation and usage of pool cellular phones within the Department.
5. To maximize awareness of official's responsibilities towards the safeguarding of the cellular phone provided to them.

### **1.2 Legislation:**

The responsibility of managing and controlling a cellular phone is assigned, in terms of sections 38(1) (b), (d) and 38(2) of the Public Finance Management Act, to the Accounting Officer.

Treasury Regulations 10.1.1 and 10.1.2 states:

- 10.1.1 – "The Accounting Officer of an institution must take full responsibility and ensure that proper control systems exist for assets and that –
- (a) Preventative mechanisms are in place to eliminate theft, losses, wastage and misuse, AND
  3. Stock levels are at an optimum and economical level."
- 10.1.2 "The accounting officer must ensure that processes (whether manual or electronic) and procedures are in place for the effective, efficient, economical and transparent use of the institution's resources."



## **2. POLICY STATEMENT AND APPLICATION SCOPE**

### **2.1 POLICY STATEMENT**

- a) Department policy is that a cellular phone is regarded as a tool which will assist staff in performing the duties for which they have been appointed and not a status symbol or fringe benefit.
- b) Cellular phones are provided to qualifying employees who are required to avail themselves for official duties at all times (24 hours a day). Costs of the rental of the cellular phone contract, as well as all related calls are paid by the Department up to a specified limit.
- c) If an employee should require the use of a cellular phone, but does not qualify for such a facility (as per procedures for the allocation of cellular telephones), the Department may allocate a pool cellular phone to the employee for a period of time as deemed necessary. The employee is to return the telephone to the Department once the need no longer exists.
- d) Cellular telephones are provided to qualifying employees on contracts with predetermined service providers. A monthly limit is also granted. This limit is not to be exceeded. The Service Provider is expected to disallow any calls over the specified limit by installing the stop limit facility. The official shall be allowed to receive calls without making any until the beginning of the new month.
- e) The employee bears the responsibility for the safeguarding of the cell phone while it is in his/her possession. Measures should be adopted to ensure that the cell phone is free from damage and neglect, and that it is not stolen. All cellular phones which are provided to officials by the Department are to be insured by the Department.

#### **2.1.2 Procedures**

The following guidelines should be followed when issuing employees with cellular phones.

##### **(a) Criteria for the allocation of Cellular phones and 3 G cards**

Cellular phones could be allocated to officials using the following criteria:

- a) Employees must demonstrate that as a result of the nature of their duties they are required to make use of cellular phones to function effective and efficiently especially after hours or on week-ends;
- b) Staff members who are away from their place of work and need to be contacted by the office on a regular basis;
- c) Certain events, depending, on the nature of the work performed at the relevant Department, which require close co-ordination and contact between the office and the staff member;
- d) The acquisition of the cellular phone must be absolutely essential and in the interests of the Department that the requirements cannot be satisfied through a less costly medium;
- e) Exceptional cases, which do not meet the above criteria, are to be approved by the Head of the Department.

### **(b) Approval of Cellular Phone and 3 G Cards**

The authority to approve cell phones for Departmental staff rests with the Accounting Officer. The Accounting Officer will also have the power to withdraw/ deny a cellular phone application if it is in the best interest of the Department.

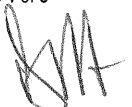
### **(c) Application Procedure**

When an employee requests a cellular telephone, the following information should be provided:

- a) Reasons for the request of a cellular phone or 3 G card
- b) Which other means of communication were considered;
- c) Is it necessary that the user at all times be available;
- d) Is the cellular network in operation within the area of use of the cellular phone;
- e) What are the financial implications of the cellular phone or 3G card, that is, which tariff structure and which services are contemplated?
- f) All applications must be on an official application form.
  - i. The application form must be recommended by a Director and approved by the Head of Department.
  - ii. The Program Manager is entrusted with the responsibility to ensure that funds are available before making a recommendation.

### **(d) Guidelines on Purchase of Cellular phones and 3 G Cards**

- a) The equipment must comply with the requirements of the Global System Mobile Communications (GSM) cellular network;
- b) The equipment must be compatible for International roaming.
- c) The service must be obtained from firms that are formally associated with the network licensees;
- d) The Department will, for the acquisition of cellular telephones, adhere strictly to the Supply Chain Management/Asset Policy;
- e) Cellular phones are to be purchased on contract, from approved service providers;
- f) The service provider will be identified by the Supply Chain Management section and a two year contract will be entered into between the Department and the service provider;
- g) All cellular phones are to be acquired directly by the State and belong to the State and not to the official. Government officials are not to communicate with the service provider directly, any queries are to be channeled through the Supply Chain Management Head;
- h) The official is to notify the administrative representative in the Department with the relevant details (contract number, cellular phone number etc) within seven working days after the phone has been obtained;



### **(e) Ownership and Possession of Cellular Telephones and 3 G card**

- a) Cellular phones allocated to employees of the Department who qualify for this benefit, remain the property of the State. The employees are responsible for the safekeeping of these cellular phones and ensuring that they function effectively. The onus is on the employee to ensure that the cellular phone is protected against theft and damage.
- b) The cellular phone provided to the employee forms part of the asset pool of the Department
- c) Officials who are allocated with cellular phones acknowledge that the instrument is a work tool and that they will therefore be accessible on the cellular phone (directly or through voice mail) during working hours and, by agreement, after hours in the case of officials whose responsibilities demand such accessibility.
- d) If the insurance reimbursement was to be declined due to negligence by the official, the official shall be held responsible for the cost to replace or repair the phone.

### **2.1.3 Limits for Usage of Cellular Phones and 3 G card**

Employees of the Department, who qualify for a cellular phone and 3 G card, have a monthly limit which must be adhered to.

This limit will be paid for by the Department. The different categories of staff, which qualify for a cellular telephone, are allocated different allowances according to their levels within the Department. This limit covers the rental, as well as the cost of the calls. This limit will be reviewed annually.

If an employee exhausts his/her limit during the month the Head of Department has the powers to instruct Finance section to investigate if there was any misuse.

#### **Monthly Limits for Cellular Telephone usage for the Department.**

The following limits should serve as a guideline when granting amounts to officials for usage of cellular telephones. The amounts below include the monthly rental and include the cost of the business calls per various positions.

<b>Position</b>	<b>Monthly Limit</b>
MEC	No limit
Head of Department	R1000-00
Chief Director/ Director	R 800-00
Deputy Director	R 600-00
Assistant Director	R 400-00.
Senior / Administration Officer	R 300-00.



#### **2.1.4 Managing the Cellular phone and 3 G card Account**

- a) There should be a detailed account for each individual user of cellular telephones summarized into one account, within the Department;
- b) This account should be paid in total to the supplier and copies of the individual accounts of the users should be retained for reference purposes;

#### **2.1.6 Liability and Insurance of Cellular phones and 3 G card**

- a) Cellular phones, which are provided to the qualifying officials, are to be insured by the Department.
- b) The official who is allocated the cellular phone should take all precautionary measures to ensure that it is safe (guidelines provided below);
- c) If the cellular phone is damaged or lost as a result of negligent use by the user, the user will be obliged to settle the excess amount as stipulated by the insurer and any additional costs, which arise as a direct result of the negligence.

##### **(a) Safety guidelines for cellular phones and 3 G card**

- a) Officials must be in possession of their cellular phones at all times (not left lying on desks or in offices);
- b) Cellular phones must be carried in such a way that it is not visible while appearing in public;
- c) The use of cellular phones in open areas (i.e. in the streets and in public places) should be avoided at all costs. Voicemail facilities should be used instead;
- d) Officials who are provided with cellular phones by the Department must ensure that these are properly locked away and stored in a safe place;
- e) When a cellular phone is stored in a briefcase, handbag, etc. these are to be under the personal control of the employee responsible for the items;
- f) Cellular phones should not be stored in a visible place in a motor vehicle when an employee is travelling. Cellular phones should not be left in the cradles of the hands free kits when stopping at traffic lights or at any other traffic signs;
- g) All cellular phones, which have been lost, should be reported to the South African Police Service and the Department's Supply Chain Management section within 24 hours.

##### **(b) Use in Cars**

- a) Car kit installation is optional and for the employees own account
- b) The Department will not be held liable for any damages and/or injuries caused by accidents or traffic fines which are directly or indirectly the result of the use of the cellular phone while traveling in a motor vehicle;
- c) The Department will not be liable for unlawful use of the phone, including infringement of the law resulting from failure to use the hands free apparatus while driving.

### **2.1.7 Officials Leaving Department or Contract Expires**

- a) All cellular phones and 3 G cards must be returned to the Supply Chain Management Section at the expiry of the service contract or if the official leaves the employ of the Department
- b) Head of Supply Chain Management must ensure that cellular phones and 3 G cards of officials, who terminate their services with the Department are returned before leaving;
- c) On expiry of the cellular phone contract, the relevant section(mentioned above) may renew the contract and obtain a free replacement cellular telephone;
- d) On expiry of the cellular phone or 3 G card contract, the user should return the cellular phone or 3G card to the Department. It should be disposed of in accordance with the normal policy on the disposal of assets or added to the pool of phones at the Department;
- e) It is the duty of every official to hand in the cellular phone at the relevant unit when leaving the Department.

## **2.2 APPLICATION SCOPE**

This policy will apply to all officials of the Department of Environment and Nature Conservation

## **3. POLICY FRAMEWORK**

### **3.1 IDENTIFICATION AND CONSULTATION OF STAKEHOLDERS**

All Senior Managers, All Middle Managers, Policy and Planning Unit.

### **3.6 COMPLIANCE, MONITORING AND EVALUATION (M&E)**

The Directorate Manager and Supply Chain Management will ensure that this policy is adhered to.

#### **CONSEQUENCES OF NON COMPLIANCE**

Failure to comply with the policy will be viewed as a serious disciplinary transgression and appropriate disciplinary action will be taken.

The Accounting Officer will also have the power to withdraw such a facility if it is in the best interest of the Department to do so, or if the following circumstances have been identified:

- a) If an official is negligent;
- b) If the cellular phone is missused (example, unnecessary calls);
- c) If it is not a necessity according to the job description.

## **Documents**

The following documentation pertains to the use of cellular phones:

- a) Contract between service provider and Department ;
- b) Application form;

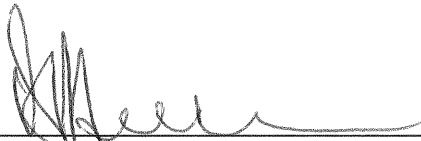
### **3.7 POLICY REVIEW**

This policy will be reviewed when the need arises or in case of the occurrence of extenuating circumstances (political mitigation, or pronouncement by legislation and/or regulations). The contact person for this policy will be required to submit all relevant information pertaining to this policy in conjunction with a signed memo for all amendments (addition or omission) during the third quarter annually.

### **3.8 POLICY IMPACT**

The desire of this policy is to formalize the processes and procedures regulating the acquisition, utilization and management of the cellular phone account (both during the employment or termination of employment by the Department). Furthermore, it aspires to formalize the processes and procedures regulating the allocation and usage of pool cellular phones within the Department. In order to maximize awareness of official's responsibilities towards the safeguarding of the cellular phones provided to them.

## **4. APPROVAL OF POLICY**



**NAME: MR D VAN HEERDEN**  
**HEAD OF DEPARTMENT**

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**DATE**

