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DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND NATURE CONSERVATION

**POLICY ON OFFICIAL JOURNEYS
4 DECEMBER 2012
HUMAN RESOURCE UNIT**

"A PROSPEROUS AND EQUITABLE SOCIETY LIVING IN HARMONY WITH OUR NATURAL RESOURCES"

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1. CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND

1.1 INTRODUCTION

DEPARTMENTAL POLICY GUIDELINE: OFFICIAL JOURNEYS

In terms of the Public Service Co-ordinating Bargaining Council Resolution 3 of 1999 and the Public Service Regulations 2001, as amended, departments were given the mandate to develop policies and programmes which would enhance their managerial actions especially in respect of their human resource matters. The effect of the aforementioned is that departments are capacitated to develop their own policies and guidelines which will suit their needs, and with this added advantage those departments have greater autonomy in the day-to-day management of their human resource matters.

It can also be mentioned that in 1999, the then Director General for the province indicated that it was necessary to develop universal policies for the province, especially in those areas which are considered transversal. Although the then Director General had the intention to develop provincial policies for transversal issues, such intentions never materialized. For this reason, departments are still dependent on themselves to develop even those transversal policies until such time that provincial policies are developed.

1.1.1 PREAMBLE

The purpose of this policy is to cover reasonable travelling costs incurred by employees in order to complete duties at places other than their normal place of work.

1.1.2 DEFINITIONS

Normal place of work: The office/buildings or site where the employee is required to perform his/her main duties.

Supervisor: Head of the component/directorate.

Reasonable costs: The costs associated with the journey, which is authorized by the supervisor.

Family: An employee's spouse, life partner, parents, adoptive parents, grand parents, biological children, adopted children, grandchildren or siblings.

Headquarters: City/Town or site where the normal place of duty is situated.

PSCBC: Public Service Coordinating Bargaining Council

1.2 LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS

Official journeys are regulated by **PSCBC Resolution No. 3 of 1999**, which provides a framework and authorizes the Executing Authority to establish a policy in this regard.

2. POLICY STATEMENT AND APPLICATION SCOPE

2.1 POLICY STATEMENT

- The Department will provide fair and reasonable compensation for official journeys justifiably and legitimately undertaken by employees in the interest of the Department.
- In order to qualify for official journeys, there must be a particular function to be performed.
- Employees required for undertaking official journeys shall be instructed in writing or verbally by the Supervisor.
- Employees' journeys should be applicable in circumstances where it is essential that duties be performed away from the employees' normal place of work.
- Compensation for official journeys is designed to cover the reasonable costs by the employees for expenditure incurred as a result of the journeys.
- Official journeys must be undertaken only for official purposes, be cost-effective and funds must be available to finance the costs.
- Official journeys may not be undertaken while on leave, unless instructed to do so by the Head of Directorate or supervisor or senior official of the Department.
- Officials must claim individually for their expenses

2.1.1 POLICY PROVISIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

I. SUBSISTENCE AND TRAVELLING ALLOWANCES FOR OFFICIAL JOURNEYS LESS THAN 24 HOURS

In cases where an official journey is undertaken- in less than 24 hours, employees may be compensated for reasonable, actual expenses necessity incurred by him or her. Only expenses, which can be verified by documentation, will be reimbursed. In cases where documentary proof cannot be provided, but the requirements of this policy are complied with, an employee may be compensated up to the maximum stipulated amounts for costs incurred in respect of meals and refreshments while performing official duties away from the normal place of work. See attached addendum for amounts per item. (these will be annually reviewed):

An employee may only submit a claim for breakfast if the claimant departs from his or her residence/normal place of work before 06:00, and may only submit a claim for dinner/supper if the claimant returns to his/her residence after 20:00. If employees leave before 10h00 and return after 15h00, they will qualify for lunch. The practice of compensating employees for expenses is not a measure to supplement salaries. Personnel are called upon not to misuse this concession.

Only reasonable actual expenses, which were incurred, may be claimed. The concession lies therein that if actual expenses are less than indicated in the policy, confirmative receipts need not be submitted.

If the total of the reasonable actual expenses which an employee incurs during official duty away from his/her normal place of work exceeds the total allocated amount, the actual expenses can still be compensated, provided that there is acceptable documentary proof of total expenses and acceptable reasons for the overspending, during the full duration of absence from his or her headquarters. Should the Head of Directorate determine that the expenses were beyond the minimum due to extravagance on the part of the employee, he/she has the right not to reimburse actual expense but the limit set out in this policy.

II. SUBSISTENCE AND TRAVELING ALLOWANCES FOR OFFICIAL JOURNEYS LONGER THAN 24 HOURS

In respect of official duties within the Republic away from an employee's normal place of work for a period of 24 hours and longer, an employee has a choice to claim compensation for his / her accommodation expenditure on the basis of either (a) or (b) below:

- (a) His/ her reasonable actual accommodation expenditure (receipts for all accommodation expenditure, meals and refreshments and other expenses must accompany the claim) plus the payment of special daily allowance of R 67,50 to compensate for his/her incidental expenditure. This R67, 50 includes any tips paid.
- (b) A fixed daily subsistence allowance of R221, 00.
 - The Department of Public Service and Administration may on an annual basis, adjust the above-mentioned rates.
 - It should be noted that no claims for alcoholic beverages or cigarettes will be accepted.
 - All expenditure incurred should be reasonable and excessive spending should be avoided at all times.
 - Laundry expenses will only be covered after three days away from an employee's normal place of work.
 - Expenses relating to parking and tolls may be claimed.

III. EXPENDITURE ON TRANSPORT AND ACCOMMODATION OF CANDIDATES REQUIRED TO REPORT FOR AN INTERVIEW

If the Department considers it necessary that an interview should be conducted with a candidate residing in the Republic, in order to establish his/her suitability for appointment, promotion or transfer, the actual transport and accommodation expenses of such candidates should be covered by the department.

Candidates may be transported to the venue for the interview at the Department's discretion. The Department will carry travel and accommodation costs, which must be

cost-effective for the Department. It should be pre-determined whether a candidate may be reimbursed for expenditure incurred on transport expenses at the point of departure and/or return or whether such transport should be provided by the department.

IV. CAMPING ALLOWANCE

When camping staff perform duties away from their normal place of work the employer may pay them a daily allowance of R82. 00. In cases where rations are provided, the cost will be deducted from the daily allowance. The Department shall provide the necessary camping equipment and facilities.

V. ROAD TRANSPORT

Road transport such as a bus may be utilized. Travel by means of a bus may only be undertaken in cases where it is cost effective. In cases where an employee must travel to a place other than his/her normal place of work, and does not possess a valid driver's license, public transport shall be used, or the trip must be co-ordinated with that of a colleague. In exceptional circumstances, and then only with the approval of at least the relevant Director, may a driver be used. Whatever means of road transport is used must be the most cost effective, taking into consideration the time it takes to reach the destination.

VI. SPECIAL TRAVELLING PRIVILEGES

(A) During serious illness or death

If an employee, who is away from his place of work on official duty, finds that his/her health condition deteriorates to such an extent that he/she is unable to return to his/her place of work and the presence of his/her spouse or an immediate family member is deemed essential at his/her bedside, his/her spouse or aforesaid immediate family member and the children under his/her care may travel to and from the place where he/she is being treated at the expense of the Department, and be accommodated there. This provision is subject to the recommendation of the medical practitioner or specialist in charge of the case, as well as approval by the Head of Department, or his/her delegate.

When a member of an employees immediate family, or one of the spouse's parents ,

- Becomes so ill that the employee's presence on the recommendation of the medical practitioner or specialist in charge of the case, is regarded as essential; or
- Dies, while he/she is away from his/her normal place of work on official duty, he/she may return to his/her headquarters, or if necessary, travel to another centre, at the expense of the Department.

If the employee does not return to his/her normal place of work, but instead travels directly to the relevant other centre, the Department's expenditure shall be limited to the costs of such return to his /her normal place of work, or alternatively, if it is less, the cost of proceeding to the relevant centre and subsequent return to his or her normal place of work. Only reasonable costs will be compensated.

- (B) Travelling expenses of spouses who accompany officers or employees on official duty by invitation

The travelling expenses incurred by employees in respect of a spouse, when he/she accompanies the employee under the circumstances and occasions indicated below, may be refunded from public funds subject to the under-mentioned conditions and on the basis applicable to the employee.

Visits abroad – under the following circumstances but with the approval of the MEC.

- (a) When an employee represents the Department/Head of Department at an occasion where circumstances or custom would have required that the relevant spouse accompany him/her officially.
- (b) When an employee and his/her spouse are invited by a foreign state or when he/she is delegated to visit a foreign country and it is customary and deemed necessary in the national interest that his/her spouse accompanies him/her.
- (c) When an employee must accompany the Head of Department, who is accompanied by his/her spouse and it is the wish or request of the Head of Department that the employees' spouse also undertake the journey to assist the HoD's spouse at official functions.
- (d) Visits within the Republic – In cases where an employee's spouse accompanies him/her with the approval of the Head of Department and –
 - (i) He/she directly represents the Head of Department whose spouse would have accompanied him/her officially, or
 - (ii) The spouse must on account of his/her husband/ wife's official duties perform a function, or
 - (iii) He/she and his/her spouse are invited to attend a conference or function, and he/she attends it in his/her official capacity; or
 - (iv) The Head of Department himself/herself decides, as in respect of other powers delegated to him/her, when his/her spouse should accompany the employee

- (v) Visits abroad do not include the following countries

Zimbabwe.
Botswana.
Lesotho.
Swaziland.
Namibia.

- (vi) Deserving cases, which cannot be dealt with in terms of the above- mentioned provisions, should be submitted to the MEC.

- (c) Officers/Employees who work at places other than their normal place of work for long periods.

If an employee is absent from his/her headquarters on official duty for a continuous period of at least one calendar month, the Head of Department or delegated authority, with due cognizance of the needs of the department and the employee, may make suitable arrangements to bring him/her back to his headquarters in the most cost-effective manner so that he/she is able to take care of his/her interests at his/her headquarters or re-unite with his/her family or relatives provided that it be limited to two visits per calendar month.

The travelling privilege indicated above, may at the discretion of the HOD be granted to members of the employee's family to enable them to visit him/her but it must be limited to the cost the Department would carry, had the official/employee made use of the privilege himself/herself.

VII. TRANSPORT BETWEEN RESIDENCE AND PLACE OF DUTY

- (a) It is the responsibility of an officer or employee to provide own transport between his/her residence and place of duty, this exclude officials who perform standby duties
- (b) Government transport, to be paid for according to prescribed tariffs may be provided only in exceptional circumstances where no public transport is available.
- (c) The utilization of government transport in these circumstances is not a service benefit, and must be paid for.
- (d) The HOD may at his/her discretion authorize an employee to use government transport between his/her residence and place of duty, should exceptional circumstances arise affecting the performance of duty at a particular place of duty and which make it essential that government transport be provided.
- (e) If an employee is transported by means of government transport between residence and place of duty, he or she must pay for such transport according to

the prescribed rates as determined by the Department of Public Service and Administration.

- (f) Applications for the provision of government transport must be made in a form specified by the Head of Department. An employee to whom government transport is provided must inform his/her Department in writing of any change, which might have an influence on his/her position regarding the justification of the provision of such transport.
- (g) The utilization of government transport for journeys between residence and normal place of work should under no circumstances be interpreted as an official journey, but must still be regarded as private journey.
- (h) Normal place of duty is, for the purposes of this provision, the physical place where a person performs his/her everyday duties.

VIII. ASSISTANCE WITH REGARD TO BOARDING AND LODGING FEES

- (a) It is an employee's own responsibility to provide for accommodation expenditure in respect of his/her children. Should an employee, due to a particular work situation (not from choice), be obliged to place his/her children in a boarding school or have them lodge privately, assistance may be rendered towards the payment of boarding school or lodging fees in respect of such children (R1030 per annum).
- (b) The purposes of the assistance with regard to boarding and lodging fees is to render assistance to employees in particular work situations in the defraying of expenses in respect of the boarding school and lodging fees of their children.
- (c) The authority to approve assistance rests with the Head of Department who may delegate such authority. This measure is applicable to all employees within the Department.
- (d) The following officials are excluded from the provisions and measures:
 - (i) Persons who place their children in a boarding school or have them lodge due to:
 - domestic or family problems
 - personal preferences
 - (ii) Persons whose children are in hostels at institutions for tertiary education.
- (e) Assistance may be rendered if an official works and lives at a station where:
 - (i) No school facilities are available within a distance of 32 km,
or

- (ii) School facilities are available within the said distance, but are inaccessible for the children due to the language medium.
- (f) On condition that the transport of the children between the station and the school on a daily basis is a more cost-effective arrangement.
- (g) The assistance may not exceed 50% of the reasonable actual expenditure for boarding school and lodging fees.
- (h) In cases where the school going and boarding children of officials stationed at isolated offices, employees may be compensated by the Department for actual expenses incurred up to what it would have cost them to undertake the journey by private motor transport, at the beginning and end of school terms and over two weekends during the school term. The limit for vehicles to be utilized in this regard is the 1550 cc to 1750 cc.

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

This policy document was distributed to staff members within the department and their feedback and inputs are included where changes were suggested and motivated. Information sessions were also held as part of the consultation process. The recognized Labour Unions are not excluded in the process as they do have shop stewards within the department, and them being part of the departmental staff, thus had the opportunity to participate in the process. Furthermore, it needs to be mentioned that the department cannot negotiate with the Unions (Organized Labour) as a separate entity on this policy. Especially, because there are matters of mutual interests that must be dealt with in the formal structures created for this purpose, such as the Provincial Bargaining Council.

3.2 TIMEFRAMES

In August 2007 a draft of this policy was reviewed by the departmental legal services and policy unit who submitted their comments on the policy. After incorporating those comments a second draft was sent to the policy and planning unit on the 14-18 February 2008 to align and re-check the policy. 02- 14 April 2008, the policy unit used the soft copies of this policy to align it with the provincial template. The policy was reviewed by the Policy unit on November 21, 2012.

3.3 IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

It is the responsibility of each Head of department to ensure that this policy is carefully followed within the department. All managers should make members of their employees aware of the obligation to familiarize themselves with and follow this policy.

An implementation plan will be drafted which will outline how and when this policy will be implemented. The plan will be drafted two months after the implementation date of this policy. In order to ensure adequate implementation of this policy the human resource unit will compile an infrastructure investment (in terms of human capital) and policy management plan. The plan will be updated on an annual basis and will contain details on future guidelines for this policy. The financial implications if any will be indicated on the plan in order to ensure that funds are available or availed.

The implementation date for this policy is _____

3.4 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

This policy will be funded by the Human Resource Unit. The budget for the financial year is

3.5 COMMUNICATION

This should be communicated through the respective directorates. However, the most important unit to contact would be Human Resources.

3.6 COMPLIANCE, MONITORING AND EVALUATION (M&E)

- Strict monitoring will ensure that the allowance is not abused and this will be implemented consistently throughout the Department.

DELEGATIONS

Applications to undertake official journey : Head of Sub Directorate

Approval to undertake official journey : Head of Directorate

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 with all amendments (addition or omission) during the third quarter annually.

The exception, the Policy development unit will be conducting all extenuating reviews throughout the year, therefore it is paramount that any new information received be submitted to this unit, in order to coordinate the review process of this policy.

3.8 POLICY IMPACT

This policy desires to regulate the guidelines on official journeys

3.9 INTERIM MEASURES

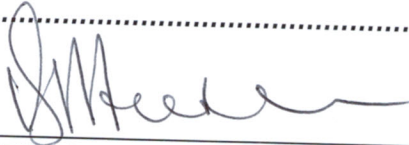
This is an interim document for this Department until such time that a provincial policy has been developed.

4. ADOPTION OF POLICY

Approved / ~~Not Approved~~

Comments:

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HEAD OF DEPTMENT

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DATE