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### Introduction

The implementation of technology in a business environment is to enable and improve the functioning of the organisation and to automate processes for efficiency. The way the technology operates and supports the business objectives is driven by the processes within that organisation. The quality and efficiency of the organisational processes therefore dictates the technology, systems, services and support in the organisation.

Within the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) environment at the Compensation Fund (CF), various initiatives were undertaken during the financial year to provide technology services that focussed on improving reliability and stability of the current environment. Attention was also given to areas of improvement and enhancement, and in assisting the organisation in moving forward, from a technology perspective.

### ICT Component

The directorate is managed by the CIO, Vikash Sirkisson and in February 2006, Ms Nyameka Satsha was transferred to the CF as ICT Manager. Two staff members, from other sections, have been seconded to assist the ICT component.

### Public Private Partnership

The CF's information technology requirements are addressed and managed through a Public Private Partnership that the Department of Labour has with Siemens Business Services.

### Completed Projects \Initiatives

The following projects\initiatives were undertaken and completed during the year in review:

#### **eClaims** - claims processing system

Additional enhancements and functional requirements were incorporated into the eClaims system. These included D-Section awards, closure of T-files and interface between the financial system to facilitate payments. A service level agreement was finalised for this system and signed off by stakeholders.

#### **SAfika Enquiries** claims enquiries system

This web based system was completed and rolled out to users within the Fund. During the year this system was also rolled out for use in provincial offices, labour centres and mobile offices. This enables CF clients to be assisted on claims queries at all Department of Labour offices.

#### **FYI** - workflow system

This legacy system posed several challenges throughout the year and eventually a specialist was brought in from the USA to assist. Various recommendations were made which included changes to both the application and infrastructure. These were implemented and have stabilised this system. The database was also moved to a high powered machine to improve response times and provide additional stability.

#### **Management Information**

Operational reports for both the Claims and Finance areas were completed and allows users to draw static reports from the systems.

#### **Call Centre**

A 40 seat call centre was setup and launched in March 2006. This call centre uses the existing Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF) infrastructure with upgrades and additional telecoms infrastructure being used at CF. The CF call centre incorporates a VoIP solution, an initiative that can be seen as the first step in the direction of convergence within the Department of Labour.

#### **Infrastructure**

- The CF server room and the equipment within it came under duress due to the building renovations at CF. The constant vibration and dust posed a risk to this environment as well as problems caused by the electrical and air conditioning contractors. Dust covers for the equipment and sheets cordoning off the server room were used for the dust and stabilisers had to be procured to minimise the vibrations to the equipment.
- Additional infrastructure was acquired for the FYI system. This has improved response and has provided stability to the system.
- New cabling was installed in areas of the building where renovations were completed and additional cabling installed when staff were moved to accommodate the renovations.
- High end pc's have been replaced with thin client devices and the former have been utilised in areas where required e.g. call centre.



### **Kiosk**

A kiosk has been setup for user training and doubles as an Internet kiosk for staff.

### **Disposal of equipment**

An inventory of old, damaged and unused equipment was completed and these have been moved to temporary storage awaiting disposal.

### **Projects \Initiatives in progress**

The following projects\initiatives were undertaken during the year in review and are still in progress:

#### **Telecommunications upgrade**

This project is to upgrade the entire telecommunications environment of the Fund leveraging of the UIF telecoms infrastructure.

#### **Scanning and Indexing**

A proof of concept is in progress to replace the outdated scanning and indexing environment with current technology and applications.

#### **Disaster Recovery**

A disaster recovery plan is being developed for the Department of Labour by the State Information Technology Agency and incorporates the CF.

### **IT Policies**

User based IT policies have been drafted and will be implemented once the consultation and acceptance phase is completed.

#### **Desktop environment**

A desktop faxing project is in progress. This will reduce the amount of paper used and the number of fax machines and contracts.

#### **Server room**

A new server room is being prepared that conforms to industry standards in terms of fire protection, air conditioning, security etc. This will eliminate the risk posed by the current room.

### **Challenge**

- Business processes need to be clearly defined and to be streamlined\optimised to develop integrated IT system
- Current ICT systems are disparate
- Current systems were not not designed for decentralization
- Managing user expectations

"The first rule of any technology used in a business is that automation applied to an efficient operation will magnify the efficiency. The second is that automation applied to an inefficient operation will magnify the inefficiency" - Bill Gates