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OF ETHIOPIA

OFFICE OF THE FEDERAL  
AUDITOR GENERAL

# INTERNAL COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

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THE FEDERAL DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC  
OF ETHIOPIA  
OFFICE OF THE FEDERAL  
AUDITOR GENERAL

# INTERNAL COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

Office of the Federal  
Auditor General of Ethiopia

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## FOREWORD

The Office of the Federal Auditor General is charged under the law with the responsibility of providing objective, timely and relevant information and analysis on how well public monies have been spent and what has been achieved as a result of these expenditures for the benefit of people and society.

We discharge this responsibility by carrying out a variety of audits of government, ministries, departments and agencies. We prepare audit reports and make them available to parliament at appropriate times, as we are required to do and also when we deem it necessary.

Our most valuable and enduring asset is our people. It is they who allow us through their hard work and dedication to discharge our responsibility to Parliament and the Ethiopian people. A qualified, experienced, healthy, and motivated workforce is our lifeblood. It is imperative therefore that we recruit the best, train and develop those we have recruited, encourage professional development, support their aspirations and take care of them. Open, honest, frequent and relevant communication within the office is a prerequisite for cultivating an environment of trust and confidence. To this end, the office has developed an Internal Communication Strategy outlined in this booklet.



Lemma Argaw  
Federal Auditor General



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Communication is one of the most central aspects of managerial activities. A manager's prime responsibility is to get things done through people. No matter how sound a manager's ideas and how well reasoned his/her decisions, they become effective only as they are transmitted to others and achieve the desired action or reaction. Communication is a manager's most vital management tool. His/her effectiveness depends significantly on his/her ability to communicate effectively with superiors, subordinates, peers and external agencies.

## 2. BACKGROUND

OFAG's strategic vision is to strengthen the performance, transparency, democratization, accountability as well as the good governance of the federal government for the benefit of the Ethiopian people by providing reliable and objective information through its audit reports to support the Council of Peoples' Representative.

OFAG believes strongly in promoting professional independence and competence of its employees. It is committed to recruiting the best staff, training and developing them, encouraging their professional development, supporting their aspirations and taking care of them. It is committed to improving management practices through transparent and participatory decision-making, sharing information and feedback from employees. It is ready to accept change through delegation of authority and empowerment.

## NEED FOR AN INTERNAL COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

The rationale for an internal communication strategy has many dimensions, including:

- ♦ Making employees aware of OFAG's vision, mission, mandate and objectives
- ♦ Informing employees about the rationale for their tasks and how these contribute to OFAG's objectives
- ♦ Informing employees about the results of OFAG's work and its achievement in meeting its objectives
- ♦ Providing employees feedback on the quality, quantity and timeliness of their performance
- ♦ Being receptive to employees' concerns and problems related to their workplace as well as to their family, health, religious and community environments and addressing these concerns
- ♦ Receiving feedback from employees on ways to improve OFAG's management and its organizational performance
- ♦ Making employees aware of OFAG's policies, plans and decisions that affect them most directly, including those related to compensation, recruitment, promotions, transfers, annual, sick and study leave, and professional development and training.

## 4. KEY ISSUES/CONSIDERATIONS

Communication flourishes best in an environment of trust, confidence and mutual respect. OFAG senior managers must find out and

understand if barriers to effective internal communication exist and actively work to removing and/or minimizing them through consultation with employees.

The key considerations that should guide an internal communication strategy include:

- ♦ Commitment that communication, both external and internal, is among the most important duties of OFAG
- ♦ Effective internal communication requires investment in time, energy and resources. It requires a well-staffed and well-equipped Communication Department headed by a senior professional who is part of OFAG's senior management team
- ♦ Effective internal communication is a 360 degrees exercise, not just a downward flow of information from superiors to subordinates. It also encompasses upward, horizontal and diagonal communication
- ♦ Information relevant to employees should be shared with them
- ♦ Internal communication must provide mechanisms that recognize that employees not only have needs related to the workplace but also needs related to family, health, religious faith, community relations and gender-related needs
- ♦ Feedback should be used to learn if communication is working and how it could be improved.



## 5. AIM OF INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

The desired outcomes of the internal communication strategy are to:

- ♦ Build trust and confidence between management and employees
- ♦ Raise awareness among employees of the work of the office and its achievements
- ♦ Recognize employees' contribution to the office's strategic objectives
- ♦ Provide employees feedback on their performance
- ♦ Respond to employee needs, fears, interests, motivation, not only in the workplace but also in their family, religious and community environments
- ♦ Motivate them to be more productive

## 6. OBJECTIVES OF INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

The objectives of the internal communication strategy are to:

- ♦ Communicate to employees a clear and precise understanding of OFAG's vision, mission, mandate and objectives
- ♦ Informing employees about the rationale for their tasks and how these contribute to OFAG's objectives
- ♦ Informing employees about the results of OFAG's work and its achievement in meeting its objectives
- ♦ Providing employees feedback on the quality, quantity and timeliness of their performance

- ♦ Receiving feedback from employees on their concerns and problems related to their workplace as well as those they face in their, family, health, religious and community environments and addressing these concerns

- ♦ Receiving feedback from employees on ways to improve OFAG's management and its organizational performance

- ♦ Making employees aware of OFAG's policies, plans and decisions that affect them most directly, including those related to compensation, recruitment, promotions, transfers, annual, sick and study leave, and professional development and training.

## 7. TARGET AUDIENCES

OFAG's primary target audience for internal communication is the employees of the office. This includes employees at all levels, regardless of age, gender, religion, ethnic origin, etc.

**Current behavior:** Employees of the office are generally proud that they work for an important institution like the Office of the Federal Auditor General. They are keenly interested in the work of the office and take pride in the contribution they make to the office's goals and they want the office to do better. They are very interested in knowing and understanding office policies, activities and decisions, particularly those that affect them directly, including policies and decisions related to compensation, recruitment, promotions, transfers, annual, sick and study leave, and professional development and training.

*Level of awareness:* The level of awareness of the office vision, mission, mandate and objectives is not uniform across all levels of employees. There appears to be insufficient understanding regarding policies on recruitment, promotions, transfers, professional development and training partly because insufficient information is available to them or the information is not clear enough.

*Preferred method for receiving information:* Employees prefer to receive information in written form, as verbal briefings, as reports and documents available in the library, as email, in the office newsletter, or face-to face meetings with decision-makers.

*Motivations/barriers to hearing, believing or accepting the information:* One barrier is that insufficient information is available. Measures have been taken in accordance with the Civil Service Reform Program to encourage two-way communication and awareness among supervisors and subordinates to discharge their responsibilities efficiently and effectively. However, indications are that the usual bureaucratic traditions are still being maintained.

## Y MESSAGES

OFAG's internal communication strategy must be based on conveying the following key messages:

- ♦ Employees are the office's most valuable and enduring assets.

- ♦ The office is ready and committed to working with its employees to improve internal communication based on openness and mutual trust
- ♦ It is important that employees fully understand the work of the office and its achievements and feel part of it
- ♦ Employees contributions to the office's strategic objectives are highly valued
- ♦ Employees have a right to receive feedback on how well they are performing in their jobs and what they need to do to progress professionally in the office
- ♦ The office is sensitive to employee needs, fears, interests, motivation, successes and failures, not only in the workplace but also in their family and community environment and stands ready to respond to them
- ♦ The office encourages feedback from employees in order to improve management and organizational performance.

## 9. PROPOSED COMMUNICATION MIX

A wide range of mechanisms for internal communication is available to suit the nature, extent and purpose of the message (s) to be conveyed. OFAG may consider the suggestions below (the list is not exhaustive):

### On the work of the office

- ♦ Annual reports
- ♦ Information sessions to broaden awareness
- ♦ Office website



### On office policies, decisions, etc. regarding personnel issues

- ♦ Bulletin boards, posters, information racks
- ♦ Office newsletter
- ♦ Employee handbook
- ♦ Letters or pay inserts
- ♦ Recognition of performance (awards, promotions, etc.)
- ♦ Access to employee personnel record
- ♦ Access to superiors

### On feedback from employees

- ♦ Suggestion boxes
- ♦ Attitude and morale surveys
- ♦ Periodic issue-specific discussions with superiors

### On contingencies

- ♦ Grievance procedures
- ♦ Focal points (gender, HIV/AIDS, other)

### On non-work related issues

- ♦ Sports, music and dance, anniversaries, and other celebratory events
- ♦ Open house for employees' families

## CONTINGENCIES

When employee interest generated or heightened, it is likely that from time to time controversial issues may arise. It is essential that a strategy be put in place to deal with such situations. The main element of such a strategy should be the existence of a respected and experienced individual or core group, such as the focal persons on gender and

HIV/AIDS issues that the aggrieved party can go to. Each situation has to be assessed on an individual basis and the actions that need to be taken will vary depending on the nature and importance of the issue.

## 11. RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

Research and evaluation play a crucial role in ensuring that the money spent on internal communication is well directed. Periodical survey through questionnaires and/or interviews is a helpful way of evaluating the effectiveness of the internal communication strategy. The effectiveness of the internal communication activity should be assessed at an early stage because it will help to make a quick adjustment before more money and time are invested.

The benchmarks for assessing the success of OFAG's internal communication activities could include:

- ♦ Better informed and aware employees
- ♦ Improved working relations and greater cooperation with employees
- ♦ Greater degree of trust and confidence between management and employees
- ♦ Increase in the number of communication channels
- ♦ Increase in the number of upward, horizontal and diagonal communication activities
- ♦ Others



OFAG senior management should be committed to the implementation of its internal communication strategy. To put meaning to this commitment and to win the trust and confidence of employees, OFAG must invest time, energy and resources to establish a well-staffed and well-equipped Communication Department. The Head of the Communication Department should be a senior and influential professional who is part of OFAG's senior management team and has access to all information. This may need a review of OFAG's organizational structure.

Management should encourage 360-degree communication. Accordingly, following the Civil Service Reform Program, two-way communication is being encouraged and both supervisors and subordinates are expected to act promptly to speed up operational activities.

More upward (from subordinates to superiors), horizontal (between two or more employees at the same level) and diagonal (between one employee with another at a higher or lower level) communication needs to be encouraged. OFAG must find ways of doing this.

An office policy should also be developed regarding the responsibilities of other departments, such as Finance & Administration, Training, IT, etc. in supporting the activities of the Communication Department. Management should support the establishment of a documentation center, which is essential to ensure the effectiveness of the Communication Department

and provide the resources necessary for additional communication and public relations (PR) training.