



RICHTERSVELD MUNICIPALITY

Project Title: Reduction strategy on Unauthorised, Irregular and Fruitless & Wasteful (UIF&W) Expenditure

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1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this project is to develop and implement a reduction strategy designed to address current and historical UIF&W expenditures figures and to improve internal controls and thereby improving the audit outcomes of the municipality on occurrence and completeness of UIF&W expenditures.

The project main goal is to reduce the current and historical audited UIF&W expenditure figures by 50% in the medium term.

2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

The Auditor-General findings for each financial year highlights a number of issues in the Consolidated Report on Local Government that include, amongst others, persistent non-adherence to financial management policies and prescripts, as well as the need to improve governance arrangements. A significant number of municipalities have also incurred unauthorised, irregular as well as fruitless and wasteful expenditure and a brief view suggests that amounts in this regard are increasing year on year.

The municipality has incurred unwanted expenditures in contravention of provision of the Act i.e. in the case of unauthorised expenditure resulting from over expenditure on votes; in the case of irregular expenditure flouting of the Supply Chain Management (SCM) legislative requirements; and in the case of fruitless & wasteful expenditure failure to pay various suppliers on time after receipt of invoices thus resulting in interests payments.

3. RELEVANT LEGISLATION

As per the requirements of the Municipal Finance Management, 2003 (Act No. 56 of 2003) (MFMA) Section 32(2) states that a municipality must recover unauthorised, irregular, fruitless & wasteful expenditure from a person liable for that expenditure unless the expenditure, in case of unauthorised expenditure, is authorized in an adjustment budget or certified to be irrecoverable and written off by council after investigations by council committee. In addition, the Act states that in case of irregular or fruitless and wasteful expenditure, the expenditure must be recovered unless it is certified to be irrecoverable and written off by council after investigation by council committee.

In addition MFMA section 32(4) indicates that the Accounting Officer must promptly inform the Mayor, the MEC for local government in the province and the Auditor-General in writing of any UIF expenditure incurred by the municipality, whether any person is responsible or under investigation for such unwanted expenditure, and steps that have been taken to recover or rectify such expenditure and to prevent a reoccurrence of such expenditure.

The MFMA through section 62 sets out the general financial management responsibilities of the accounting officer. The accounting officer is required to take all reasonable steps to ensure that the resources of the municipality are effectively, efficiently and economically utilised and that unauthorised, irregular, fruitless and wasteful expenditure are prevented. In addition, section 62 also obliges the accounting officer to ensure that disciplinary or when appropriate, criminal proceedings are instituted against any official of the municipality who has allegedly committed an act of financial misconduct or an offence in terms of the Act (Chapter 15 of MFMA). The same responsibilities have also been placed upon other municipal officials.

Section 62(1) (b) of MFMA states; "The accounting officer of a municipality ensure that full and proper records of the financial affairs of the municipality are kept in accordance with any prescribed norms and standards.

Moreover, to give effect to the priorities outlined above in government outcomes, and to deal effectively with matters of financial misconduct and to give effect to the concept of consequence management, the Municipal Regulations on Financial Misconduct Procedures and Criminal Proceedings were promulgated on 31 May 2014 to complement the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (Act No 32 of 2000) ("MSA") as amended and the regulations issued in terms thereof. These Regulations must be read together when implemented.

The Municipal Regulations on Financial Misconduct Procedures and Criminal Proceedings will support measures to expeditiously address financial misconduct and mismanagement.

The objective of the Regulations is to set out processes and procedures that a municipality and municipal entities must follow when dealing with allegations of financial misconduct. The regulations will apply to all officials and political office bearers within municipalities and municipal entities.

4. PROJECT GOALS

The main goal of the municipality is to reduce increasing levels of historical UIF&W expenditures and to attain an unqualified audit opinion in future financial year. In order to achieve such the municipality has to implement interventions designed to reduced unwanted expenditures and improvement of internal control to address weaknesses related thereto.

5. SITUATIONL ANALYSIS

Municipalities have for a number of years, struggled with an ever increasing amount of UIF&W expenditure. This is mainly due to the following:

- No preventative mechanisms to eliminate reoccurrence
- No effective internal controls measures
- No detailed reasons for incurring of UIF&W expenditures as captured in the registers according to National Treasury Circular 68 Annexure A
- Lack of investigation on identified UIF&W
- Lack of knowledge of processes to be followed when dealing with UIF&W
- Lack of consequence management (Financial Misconduct)

In order to mitigate the above-mentioned challenges, the Accounting Officer (AO) and/or the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) should ensure that municipality's expenditure transaction records incorporate all but not limited to the following SCM legislative requirements per transaction (Where applicable in terms of pricing) with a view to curb irregular expenditure:

- Three quotations
- Purchase Order
- Invoice
- Payment report
- Goods or service delivery register
- Evaluation report by SCM i.e. Bid Evaluation Committee (BEC)
- Approved deviation report by the Accounting Officer (signed)
- Proof of bid advertisements & results published on the municipality's website.

- Proof of projects registered in the register of construction contracts with the CIDB
- Preference point system to be utilized should be included in the advert.
- Central Supplier Database (CSD) Printout reflecting declarations and tax status of supplier or service provider.
- Municipal Bidding Documents (MBDs) applicable to ranges of procurements.
- Service Level Agreement/contract to be attached on payment batches

The main contributor to irregular expenditure in terms of monetary value is the awarding of contracts/tenders without following proper SCM legislative guidelines.

The Auditor-General has identified that the effective and appropriate disciplinary steps were not taken against officials who made or permitted unauthorised, irregular and fruitless & wasteful expenditure, as required by section 32(4) of the MFMA.

6. PROJECT RESOURCES AND TEAM MEMBERS

The resources that will be implementing the project are the currently employed officials who are also responsible for their day to day activities.

7. PROJECT DELIVERABLES

DELIVERABLES	TARGET DATES
1. Develop UIF&W reduction strategy	
2. Develop and implement standard operating procedure on the identification, recording and reporting of UIF&W expenditure.	
3. Conducts monthly meetings to identify instances of UIF&W expenditure.	
4. Conduct training on the identification, recording and reporting of UIF&W expenditure.	
5. Assign officials to populate and manage the UIF&W expenditure register on a monthly basis.	
6. Register of UIF&W expenditure be submitted to PT on a monthly basis as per NCPT Instruction Note 1.	
7. Detailed supporting documentation be prepared and tabled in council/DC board for investigations on a monthly basis	
8. Quantitative percentage targets of reduction vs. the total historical UIF&W audited figures.	
9. Implementation of recommendations by the MPAC or DC board.	

8. PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Task	Activity	Desired Outcome	Completion date	Responsible Official
1. Start-up phase	Initiate a meeting with the Project team members to agree on the approach thus developing and adopting the UIF&W reduction strategy	Approved project plan/strategy document		
2. Policy and Standard Operating Procedures	Develop and implement standard operating procedure on the identification, recording and reporting of UIF&W expenditure.	Approved SOPs		
3. Conducts monthly meetings	Conducts monthly meetings to identify instances of UIF&W expenditure.	Compliance to procurement checklist		
4. Conduct training	Conduct training on the identification, recording and reporting of UIF&W expenditure.	Training		
5. Assign officials responsible for UIF&W register	Assign officials to populate, manage and monitor the UIF&W expenditure register on a monthly basis. Register of UIF&W expenditure be submitted to PT on a monthly basis as per NCPT Instruction Note 1.	Job assignment Updated register		
6. Investigations	Detailed supporting documentation be prepared and tabled in council/DC board for investigations on a monthly basis	Monthly reports on UIF&W expenditure		
	Breakdown of reduction percentage targets vs. the total historical UIF&W audited figures.	Monthly investigation report on UIF&W expenditure		
	Implementation of recommendations by the MPAC or DC board.	Monthly investigation report on UIF&W expenditure		

9. BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

The project will be implemented by the existing employees within the available working hours.

10. ASSUMPTIONS

It is assumed that all role-players are committed to the time schedule.

11. RISKS

The following are the identified risks:-

<i>RISK DESCRIPTION</i>	<i>PROBABILITY</i>	<i>IMPACT</i>
Lack of MPAC/DC board investigative capacity		
Non-adherence to procurement processes		
Limited data to deal with historical UIF&W expenditures		

A 3-point scale where 1 is the lowest and 3 the highest is used.

12. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Progress on the implementation of the project on reduction of UIF&W expenditures will be monitored by the municipality as well as by the Audit Committee and other stakeholders such as the Auditor-General and Provincial Treasury. Regular evaluation of the plan will be done.

APPROVAL

Approved by council: council resolution number : **RVM009/05/2023**