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FIRST OF ITS KIND ETHICS SURVEY GAINFUL



A first of its kind survey to assess the effectiveness of the Ethics and Integrity Management Programme (EIMP) was conducted by the department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (Cogta) in the fourth quarter of the 2021/2022 financial year. Thirty-seven (37) responses were received from participants. Questionnaires were sent through a link to all departmental employees.

Ms Nomathamsanqa Mosehana (**left**), Director for Risk and Ethics Management in the department said the objective of the survey was to assess the ethical culture of employees and how “deeply the core values are rooted in (their) day-to-day operations.” “It was also done to establish a benchmark against which change can be made and to develop a comprehensive Ethics Risk Register for the department,” said Ms Mosehana.

She explained that the method applied was for the Directorate to develop a questionnaire which had a list of potential ethical events that may be applicable to the department. “Data was then collected to assess the overall Ethical Culture, employee’s perception of leaderships’ ethical positions, employee’s understanding of EIM. We also assessed how well the Ethics Programme has been communicated and personal ethical culture and values of the participants,” added Ms Mosehana.

She said the responses per question were then calculated and overall percentage provided to quantify the number of responses per response option. The analysis showed that 93% of the participants indicated that they were aware of what was expected of them. “Only 45% of the participants had a positive opinion on those in leadership positions and their regards to ethical conduct.

Ms Mosehana said 67% of the participants indicated that they were aware of the ethics resources available in the department which include Ethics Policy and ethics trainings afforded by the department. “However, less than 50% of employees believe that they are required to sign a code of conduct.



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“Only 34% of the participants considered that ethics in the department is well communicated and as such most participants were not aware of mechanisms of reporting unethical conduct within the department. This also suggests that employees are not aware of where to seek ethics related advice or how to consult with an Ethics Officer,” she added.

In addition, she said 83% of the participants indicated that they understand the values and beliefs that are morally essential in managing relationships with individuals whom they may have dealings with.

She said positive conclusions drawn from the survey results were that the participants were aware that the department has an approved Ethics and Integrity Management Policy in place. “They acknowledged the importance of maintaining confidentiality, protecting departmental data and therefore preventing leakage of information. Employees are aware that they need to decline inappropriate requests and appreciate the diversity within the department, which is a key component in effective people management,” she said.

Ms Mosehana said participants also reported that they utilize their authority properly ensuring that rules are adhered to. “They do not abuse the power that comes with their positions and challenge themselves to do the right thing, which allows them to grow, learn new things and therefore increase employee positivity.”

Ms Mosehana encouraged management to set a good example of ethical behaviour, promote an ethical culture, create a supportive environment for ethical behaviour to thrive within Cogta. “Employee awareness is critical in helping them navigate potential wrongdoing in the workplace. An informed Ethics Risk Register and Implementation Plan has been developed, it will be monitored and reported on, on a quarterly basis to the Ethics & Integrity Management Committee of the Department,” she said.

She further encouraged officials to continue participating in the Ethics Survey in future to better enhance the department’s control environment relating to ethics and integrity management. **By Vatiswa Voorslag- Xakisa**