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RECORDS MANAGEMENT POLICY

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1. Preamble

Sound records management is fundamental to good governance and effective and efficient administration. It forms the basis for formulating policy, managing resources and delivering services to the public. Records management also provides a basis for accountability and protecting the rights of individuals.

To support continuing service delivery and provide the necessary accountability, government bodies should create and maintain authentic, reliable and usable records. Government bodies should also ensure that the integrity of the records is protected for as long as they are required as evidence of business operations.

Records management is a process of ensuring the proper creation, maintenance, use and disposal of records to achieve efficient, transparent and accountable governance. Sound records management implies that records are managed in terms of an organizational records management program governed by an organizational records management policy.

As a public institution, HGDA is required to manage its information resource in terms of the broad policy guidelines contained in the national Archive and Records Services of South Africa Act (No. 43 of 1996) and its regulations.

2. Purpose

- To ensure HGDA continues to create and maintain authentic, reliable and usable records
- To ensure that the integrity of the records is protected for as long as they are required as evidence of organizational operations
- To regulate the management of paper-based records in integrated manner

3. Scope of Applications

This policy applies to all HGDA employees and to third parties that have temporary access to HGDA records. Each Manager is responsible for ensuring that all the requirements for the management of records as prescribed by this policy are adhered to by employees in his or her departments, including temporary employees and contractors.

“This policy applies to the management of paper-based records. The management of electronic records is dealt with the electronic documents management policy”

4. Advantages of an organizational records management system

The benefits of records management system include the following:

- A well-organized file plan makes easy retrieval of information. Records that are correctly filed and stored are easily accessible, and this facilitates transparency, accountability and democracy.
- An orderly and efficient flow of information enables HGDA to perform its functions successfully and efficiently.

- Authoritative and reliable records are created and maintained in an accessible, intelligent and usable manner to support the organizational and accountability requirements of HGDA.
- Efficiency and economy are ensured by eliminating unnecessary duplication of records.
- A retention and disposal program ensure that HGDA maintains on those records it really needs for functional and historical purposes.
- Controls are exercised to ensure that only authorized persons have access to the information, thus preventing information and /or the records themselves from being stolen or damaged. This ensures the protection of privacy and confidentiality, and prevents the inappropriate disclosure of information that could the HGDA or infringes the privacy rights of individuals.

5. Regulatory framework

By managing its paper-based records effectively and efficiently, HGDA strive to give effect to the accountability, transparency and service delivery values contained in the legal framework established by:

- The 1996 Constitution
- National Archives and Records Service of South Africa Act (Act No. 43 of 1996 as amended)
- National Archives and Records Service of South Africa Regulations
- Public Finance Management Act (Act No 1 of 1999)
- Promotion of Access to information Act (Act No. 2 of 2000)
- Promotion of Administrative Justice Act (Act No. 3 of 2000)

- Electronic Communications and Transactions Act (Act no 25 of 2002)

6. Definitions

Archival value: Those values, administrative, fiscal, legal, evidential and/or informational, which justify the indefinite or permanent retention of records

Custody: The control of records based upon their physical possession.

Disposal: the action of either destroying or deleting a record or transferring it into archival custody.

Electronic records: Information that is generated electronically and stored by means of computer technology. Electronic records can consist of an electronic correspondence system and electronic record system other than the correspondence system.

File: An organized arrangement of records on the same subject, accumulated in chronological order within the same cover/folder/container; the physical action of allocating file reference number to records and placing them side the cover/folder/container.

Filing system: The collective noun for a stage systems) in which records are stored in a systemic manner according to a file plan.

Governmental body: Any Legislative, executive, judicial or administrative organ of state (including a statutory body) at the national level of government and, until provincial archival legislation take effect, also all provincial administrations and local authorities.

Non –archival record: Record with a short-lived interesting or usefulness

Policy: This Records Management Policy.

Public record: A record created or received by a government body in pursuance of its activities, regardless of form or medium.

Record: Recorded information regardless of form or medium; evidence of a transaction, preserved for the evidential information it contains.

Retention period: The Length of time records should be retained in offices before they are either transferred into archival custody or disposed of; in an

electronic document management system, the length of time a record is kept online before it is moved to near-line or off-line storage in a hierarchical storage management system.

7. Roles and responsibilities

7.1 Records Manager/HRM

Section 13(5) of the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa Act (Act No. 43 of 1996) requires the head of a government body to designate a staff member at senior management level to be the Records Manager/HRM of the body. In terms of the National Archives and Records Services of South Africa Regulations.

(1458, 2002-11-20) (12), the official designated as the Records Manager/HRM shall:

- Be in possession of an appropriate higher education qualification, and / or have appropriate professional experience.
- Have successfully completed the National Archives' Records Management Course
- Possess a thorough knowledge of the body's organizational structure, functions and records system.

The Chief Executive Officer of HGDA shall designate a senior manager in accordance with the specified criteria to be the Records Manager/HRM.

The Records Manager/ HRM shall be responsible for promoting the effective, efficient and accountable management of HGDA's records and ensuring its compliance with the provisions of the Act and all other relevant legislation. In order to fulfill the above function, the Records Manager/HRM must, among other duties, execute the following specific duties:

- Ensure that HGDA has a Records Management Policy, Records Management Guideline and records management systems that have

been approved by HGDA and the National Archives and Records Services.

- Liaise with the National Archives and Records Services of South Africa on behalf of HGDA.
- Work in conjunction with the (IT Manager) to ensure that electronic records are properly managed, protected and appropriately preserved for as long as they are required for business, legal and long-term preservation purposes.
- Ensure that all staff members are made aware of their joint responsibility to maintain sound records management practices.
- Convene Records Management Committee meetings at least once per quarter.

7.2 Records Management Committee

A Records Management Committee is needed to ensure that sound records management practices are adhered to throughout the organization, and that every department's needs and specific circumstances as far as records are concerned are considered during the development and implementation of each department appointed by the CEO.

The roles and responsibilities of members of the Records Management Committee include:

- Recommending to Manco any amendments to the Records Management Policy and guidelines.
- Implementing the filing system and other measure that shall improve sound records management practices within the organization.
- Promoting proper records management in their own departments by ensuring that records are managed according to approved Records Management Policy and Guidelines

- Serving as liaison between the Records Manager/HRM and their own departments regarding the needs or records management- related problems of the departments.

These responsibilities shall be included in the performance management contracts of the Records Management Committee members.

Records management Committee members are MANCO members chaired by the HRM.

The Managers have ultimate responsibility for ensuring that all records in their control are properly managed and used to support HGDA operations, as well as fulfilling legal and other obligations.

8. Management of records

8.1 Identification

All records created or received during the execution of HGDA functions (including electronic records, e.g. e-mail) are public records and must therefore be managed in accordance with this policy as well as with the electronic communications policy, the electronic document management policy and the information security policy.

HGDA records shall be classified and stored in way that ensures easy retrieval, thereby facilitating transparency and accountability.

8.2 Record classification system

Only a classification system that has been approved by the National Archivist shall be used for paper-based records. The classification system is outlined in the *Guideline for Records Management*. No revision and additions shall be made to the classification system without the Records Management Committee's approval. The Records Manager/ HRM must be contacted when difficulties are experienced with the allocation of reference numbers.

8.3 Disposal of records

HGDA has a disposal programme which enables it to dispose of its records regularly, either by transferring records of archival value to an archives repository or by disposing of non-archival records when they are no longer required for administrative, legal or functional purposes.

No public records may be destroyed, erased or otherwise disposed of without prior written authorization from the National Archivist, to be obtained by the Records Manager/HRM. All paper-based records of archival value must be kept for a period of 20 years before they are transferred to an archive repository, unless agreement on a shorter retention period is reached with the National Archivist.

Retention periods for non-archival records shall be determined by the Records Management Committee and shall be in the *Guidelines for Records Management*. Decisions on exceptional cases not covered in the Guidelines shall be made by the Committee. Due consideration shall be given to transparency, accountability, the requirements of democracy, any other legal obligations and the departments/organization's functional needs when determining the retention periods.

8.3 Custody and Security

The Records Management Committee shall be responsible for the storage, physical care and safety of the records of their departments in accordance with the Guidelines. They shall ensure that records are stored in neat and properly organized storerooms and that access to these is controlled. Extra precautionary measures should be taken to secure private, confidential and vital records, the loss of which would render the organization partially or totally unable to carry out its normal functions.

The Records Manager/HRM shall keep a list of names of the Records Management Committee members. The Manager shall inform the Records

Manager/HRM Timorously should there be changes to their representation in this committee.

Only the Managers can make decisions to send records of their departmentss to an off-site storage location. This storage location must be approved by HGDA.

8.4 Version Control

Directors or their delegates shall ensure version control of documents. This shall be achieved by clearly indicating version numbers on document and by ensuring that the latest version of a document is in use.

In respect of correspondence and reports, Managers or their delegates shall be responsible to ensure that copies of the approved and signed version are archived, both in hardcopy (paper-based) and electronically (scanned).

Managers or their delegates shall also ensure that documentation towards validating performance information against the target contained in the Annual Performance Plan (Strategic Plan) is archived and readily accessible for both internal and external audit purposes. In order to monitor compliance with this clause, the Secretariat will shall conduct periodic audits.

8.5 Inspection by the National Archive and Record Service

The National Archives and Records Service, subject to the exemption provision contained in section 13(2) of the National Archives and Records Service Act of 1996 as amended, is entitled to full and free access, at all times, to all public records in HGDA's custody.

9. Relationship to other policies and documents

Other policies that are closely related to the Records Management Policy are:

- The electronic communications policy

- The electronic document management policy
- The information security policy

10. Monitoring and review

The Records Management Committee shall monitor the implementation of this policy and recommends any necessary amendments to the Management. This policy shall be reviewed at least every three years, and adapted appropriately to ensure that it continues to meet the business and service delivery requirements of HGDA. The Human Resource Management is the custodian of this policy.