



**Western Cape
Government**

Department of the Premier

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DG CIRCULAR NO. 24 OF 2020

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INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY CONSIDERATIONS FOR WORKING REMOTELY

1. Purpose

The impact of the COVID 19 pandemic on our operations is driving an increasing need for our employees to work from home. The purpose of this circular is to provide guidance to departments on the ICT considerations in the event where employees are required to work remotely.

2. What is required to work from home?

In order for our staff to work from home remotely the following are some or all of the requirements to be considered:

- Laptop or a desktop that is able to connect to the Internet (via a router/cell phone hotspot)
- Printer/scanner
- Telephone/cell phone
- Access to applications: National or departmental specific
- Data Connectivity device
- Data
- Collaboration tools
- Remote Service Support
- Unified Communications Headphones

3. Laptop/Desktop and Printer/Scanner

A large contingent of our staff use laptops to perform their daily functions and are therefore adequately equipped to work from home if required. However, there are staff who do not have laptops that will be required to work from home. Departments should consider alternatives within their procurement or asset management prescripts to equip the officials with the relevant end-user devices.

Employees are to ensure that their devices have been updated with the latest anti-virus software.

Ce-I is exploring the viability of establishing hot desks and printing/scanning facilities available at selected sites across the province for employees that do not have printing facilities at home. The list of sites will be communicated in due course.

4. Data Connectivity Device

This refers to a device such as a router, pocket router or a cell phone with hotspot capability which provides access to a data network.

Ce-I is in the process of procuring routers for Ministers and HODs and certain key employees in order to ensure that they are adequately equipped to execute their functions during this crisis period. A process is underway to identify the ten to twenty key staff members per department that need to be equipped with these devices. Please note that this will not be permanent allocations as the devices will later be deployed to our frontline facilities.

In addition to the aforementioned key employees, departments are advised to source mobile routers for their staff who will require connectivity at home. This should be done in accordance with departmental specific procurement process.

All connectivity devices used at home for official purposes, whether it is procured by departments or personal devices, **MUST** be secured by a password that restricts access

to that network. We strongly advise against the use of Public Wi-Fi access as the security risk is high.

5. Data

Employees who will be working from home will have significantly higher than normal data requirements. While departments do have individual cell phone and data policies in place it is advisable to procure additional prepaid data bundles for staff working from home. These prepaid data bundles should preferably be a minimum of 20GB as many of our staff will be uploading data and communicate via video conferencing.

As the data to be procured for working remotely will have no content restrictions, staff should be advised to minimise the use of social media applications that are known to be bandwidth intensive as the data usage is high. This will have an impact specifically on capped mobile data accounts.

6. Telephone/Cell Phone

All cell phone requirements are to be managed in accordance with departmental cell phone policies.

7. Access to Applications

Accessing e-mails, the internet and web-based applications remotely does not require any special approvals. However, other business applications hosted on the WCG corporate network need virtual private network remote access (VPNra) for staff to access the application remotely. To apply for VPNra users are required to complete the attached form and submit it to the Ce-I Service Desk. Normal turnaround times to activate VPNra can however not be guaranteed during this period.

Please note that both the Provincial Treasury (national systems) and the Department of the Premier (departmental specific solutions) are in the process of obtaining this information from departments to proactively activate the required access for the relevant employees.

8. Collaboration Tools

In order to improve collaboration between dispersed teams, Ce-I will be deploying **Microsoft Teams (MS Teams)** to all devices that have the required software profile (Windows 10 and Office 365 Pro Plus). **MS Teams** is a chat-based collaboration tool that enables users or dispersed teams to work together in a digital space and share information whilst ensuring that the correct security controls and network support are in place.

After completion of the deployment process users will notice a **MS Teams** icon on their desktops and will be able to access it either via the **MS Teams** application desktop icon or the "All Apps" link on the Microsoft Office Home portal (O365 online). The normal WCG logon credentials will apply.

While the basic functionality of the MS Teams solution is reasonably intuitive, first time users will be able to access a 15 minutes training webinar as well as being provided with link to useful training documentation and informative training videos.

Staff will have access to the following useful features, namely:

- Immediate access to team chats and private discussions;
- Voice and video conferencing;
- Collaborate and work on documents with colleagues and teams in real time;
- Access Microsoft Teams across all devices whether it be via one's laptop, desktop, tablet or smartphone (app available on Android, IOS and Windows);
- Real-time chat history across all devices; and
- Collaborate both internally and externally in a secure manner

Furthermore, the following must be noted:

- MS Teams is fully integrated with the normal productivity applications such as Word, Excel, PowerPoint, OneNote and Outlook.
- Online training for collaboration tools for MS Teams will be made available via the IT Training unit.
- Devices that are not compliant will be upgraded to Windows 10.
- Video conferencing software used by departments which is not a WCG standard is used at their own risk and will not be supported by Cel.

9. Remote Service Desk support

Please note that the ICT Helpdesk onsite support will be limited to WCG corporate buildings and that staff working remotely will be assisted telephonically only. Actual response times and assistance may be impacted by the numbers of staff working remotely.

These working arrangements will be reviewed as required by the relevant circumstances.

Kindly contact your Departmental Government Information Technology Officer (DGITO) (see attached schedule) should you require any further information in this regard.

Kind Regards,



**MR HC MALILA
DIRECTOR-GENERAL**

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CENTRE FOR E-INNOVATION

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