

6 Support Services



Administration

Achievements

Support Services was responsible for planning office accommodation for Council and Staff of the newly merged Authority. This was accomplished successfully.

Security was strengthened to safeguard ICASA assets and equipment.

Current service providers and systems were streamlined, to narrow provision to one service provider in each service area e.g. security, cleaning, etc.

Administration at regional offices increased due to the addition of the services of the Broadcasting Division.

Despite limited resources, the Unit performed effectively during the restructuring process.

Constraints

- > Certain projects could not be implemented due to budgetary constraints.
- > Delays in the integration process have caused low staff morale, which impacts on service delivery.

Library and Records

Library and Information Services

ICASA's library has a specialised collection focusing on broadcasting regulation, inherited from the previous IBA library. The library is currently in the process of growing a collection of telecommunication material, which will meet the information needs of its Telecommunication Division. The collection will include copies of telecommunication licence

applications, supporting documentation, licences of national telecommunications operators, copies of submissions made to public hearings, as well as national and international books and journals on telecommunication.

Both the Authority and the external users use the library. External users include broadcasters, researchers, students, telecommunication operators etc. Various departments have submitted documents to the library i.e. the draft frequency plan, the review of the local content quotas, representations relating to amendments to Vodacom's frequency spectrum and telecommunications service licences etc.

Among others, the library keeps staff informed of new developments in the communications industry by distributing press clippings and the content pages of new journals electronically.

Records

ICASA, along with other statutory bodies, falls under the auspices of the National Archives of South Africa Act (Act No.43 of 1996) and is subject to the National Archives Regulations.

The functions of the Records Section is to manage the records of the Authority using classification terms and decentralised file stations with centralised control of the use of records management systems. Trim software is used to manage the database of records and for the purposes of archiving.

Additional financial and human resources are needed to integrate the systems of the two organisations (IBA and SATRA), and provide continued, adequate library and records management services.

Information Technology

Infrastructure

Due to the merger, the two Information Technology Departments were required to integrate all computer systems. However, at the time of this report, the Authority is still operating two different systems.

To address the matter, the two Information Technology Departments joined forces and formed a committee to address integration issues, including IT standards (Software and Hardware). The following projects were identified:

- > LAN Connectivity - Integration of the two remote local area networks;
- > Common Messaging System;
- > WAN Upgrade;
- > ICASA Website Development;
- > Access Control System;
- > Common Platform - Operating System;
- > Common PABX System;
- > Common Financial System;
- > Common Human Resource System;
- > Common Fixed Asset Management System; and
- > Common Internet Service Provider.

Major IT projects, including software upgrades, maintenance of computer equipment, website development, upgrading of the WAN and major Telkom diginet links could not be undertaken as a result of lack of funds. Lack of replacement equipment and time delays in repairing faulty equipment resulted in a backlog.

Software Development

The Information Technology Department is busy re-engineering the Telecommunication's Equipment Licensing system that was previously used by the Equipment Licensing Department.

The current system, which has been in use since 1995, was developed using Microsoft Access, which has certain shortfalls/limitations. Moreover, the current system does not fully support the activities carried out by the department as

prescribed by the SATRA Act of 1996. Some of the shortfalls include security, inflexibility and no provision for the recording of critical information (such as licence conditions). In addition, monthly reporting is tedious.

One of the primary user requirements is to change the current database platform to Oracle, in order to accommodate information growth. The proposed system will provide a robust computing environment, incorporating recording of received application details, recording of registered suppliers, custom/standard report facilities, a relational database management system (DBMS), financial details relating to each application and licences granted, among others.

The financial management module will be developed as part of the system to assist the Finance Department to manage finances generated from application, licence and amendment fees.

Achievements

The link between the two foreign networks has been established using fibre optic cable. The new ICASA domain name has been registered - (i.e. icasa.org.za).

Challenges

Challenges facing the Department include:

- > Development of the new ICASA Website;
- > Integration of the two infrastructures and systems (inclusive of messaging system, intranet, etc);
- > A common PABX System;
- > Wide Area Network (WAN) upgrade; and
- > Development of a robust and secure electronic Equipment Licensing System for the Telecommunications Division.



Public Relations and Marketing

Consumer awareness

Public awareness was created around the discussion paper on Local Content Quotas. Both print and electronic media were utilised. The success of this awareness programme was noted through the number of written and verbal submissions received by the Authority.

The Communications Unit assisted with the development and adoption of a new corporate identity for the merged organisation. The new logo was designed and launched at an official function in November 2000. This event was the Authority's first interaction with Stakeholders since the merger.

During the period of review, no public awareness programmes were undertaken by the Telecommunications Division, due to lack of resources and funds.

The Authority notes with concern that to date consumers and the general public remain largely unaware of ICASA and its functions. It is important that ICASA informs and educates the public of their rights and their form of recourse in cases where operators fail to meet their obligations.

Human Resources (HR)

Broadcasting Division

Achievements

The job evaluation system was approved and HR embarked on grading all positions based on the FSA - Contact Peromnes grading system.

The following positions, which were crucial within the IBA, were unable to be filled due to the merger with SATRA:

- > Internal Audit;
- > Head of Department: Finance;
- > Head of Department: Licensing and Monitoring;
- > Head of Department: Policy;
- > SPA to the Council; and
- > Unit Head: Technical.

Due to financial constraints, training and development was kept to a minimum. However, the following employee training and development was achieved:

- > Computer training (4 employees);
- > Business administration skills (12 employees);
- > Salary restructuring training (2 employees); and
- > Records and Library courses (4 employees).

A training and development panel was formed, which approved 22 applications for former IBA employees to use the IBA study scheme for study through various institutions.

Salary negotiations with employees' representatives were finalised without problems.

Challenges

- > To maintain a good working relationship with the Communication Workers Union;
- > To continuously review and develop HR policies and procedures to ensure that the Authority is on par with new legislation/developments e.g. Labour Relations Act, Employment Equity Act, Basic Conditions of Employment Act and Gender issues; and
- > To ensure that all ICASA jobs are properly graded, in line with the industry within which we operate.

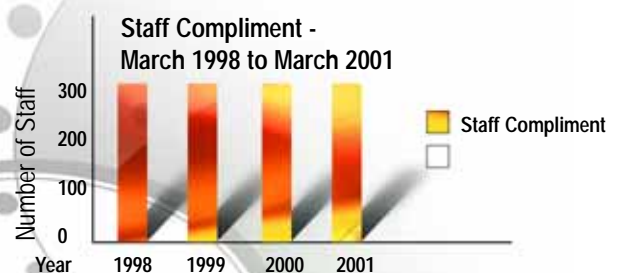
Constraints

- > Lack of funds has limited the implementation of training and development of staff members; and
- > The merger with SATRA caused uncertainty within staff and led to the resignation of key staff members.

Future Needs

- > To install and implement a performance appraisal and HR system.

Telecommunications Division



Staff Complement

The total staff complement in the Telecommunications division as at end of March 2001 was 210, lower than the previous year 1999/00 (218).

The average personnel turnover for 2000/01 financial year was 7,34% compared to 5,77% in 1999/00. This is mainly attributable to fear and uncertainty about the restructuring process, low salaries and enhanced career opportunities in the industry.

Few appointments were made in the year under review. This was largely due to the merger between SATRA and IBA and budgetary constraints.

Human resources development

The development of human resources is an integral part of building capacity and meeting the regulatory challenges that the Authority is facing because of the dynamic nature of both the international and national telecommunication industry.

Seven people attended courses abroad thanks to sponsorships by organisations such as USAID. The courses included areas such as management, marketing, laboratory techniques, Internet Protocol Networks, DSL technologies and methods of approval of radio equipment. Fewer staff members attended conferences due to financial and other constraints. Conferences attended include the ACT Summit, the ITU World Telecommunications Policy Forum and the World Radio-telecommunications Conference.

About 30 staff members received bursaries for undergraduate and post-graduate part-time studies. Of the 30 bursaries awarded by ICASA, 86,6% were awarded to black bursars and 36,6 % to females.

During the year 2000/01 the Skills Development Facilitator for ICASA was registered with the Information Systems, Electronics and Telecommunications Technology SETA (ISETT SETA) as required by law. The Authority also obtained a seat as part of a special interest group on the board of ISETT SETA.

Regionally, the Authority played a role in the TRASA's Training Co-ordination Committee, which co-ordinates the implementation of training initiatives for TRASA members and other stakeholders in the Southern Africa telecommunication sector.

Labour relations

The management of the Telecommunications Division engaged the Communications Workers Union (CWU) in negotiations on salary increases. It is expected that the Union will play a pivotal role in shaping the future of the organisation during the process of restructuring.