

INFORMATION COMMISSION

- 1.1. The Information Commission, set up under the Access to Information Act, 2018, is mandated to foster transparency, accountability, integrity in public service and administration through enforcement of the right to information.
- 1.2. An audit of the Commission was undertaken for the period June 2019 to 31 August 2020 and the matters arising were communicated to the management through an interim management letter dated 14.10.2020, discussed with management in an exit meeting held on 16.11.2020, and the issues remaining unresolved were included in a management letter dated 02.12.2020.

Goods and Services

- 2.1 During the year under review (2019), the Commission incurred an expenditure of R1,996,802, against a budgetary provision of R2,836,088, under goods and services. Audit examined a sample of 24 payments relating to the procurement of goods and services for a total of R331,312 noted the following:
 - a. procurement of furniture, toners, and removal of existing and installation of new network were made for R66,050, R23,400, R18,669 and R15,999 respectively, without obtaining competitive quotes for price comparison;
 - b. PV 106P190035 dated 18.10.2019 for R16,040 was for the purchase of table and chairs which were not procured at the lowest of the rates received in three quotations (R16,800, R16,040 and R6,075) with a justification that the furniture was of better quality similar to the ones already purchased and the supplier provide delivery service and give credit facility;
 - c. PV 106P190095 dated 10.12.2019 for R17,320 was for the purchase of office furniture for which 3 quotes of R17,320, R9,770 and R6,590 were received but the procurement was made at the highest rate (R17,320) on the basis that it had all the furniture required and it was similar to the ones already purchased; and
 - d. The commission hired a car on daily basis and made three payments totaling R12,600, towards car hire rental for 18 days at the rate of R700 per day without 3 quotes obtained for price comparing.
- 2.2 *The Management, in response, informed that the procurement of network installation had been made by the Department of Information before the Commission started operating. Procurement of the new installation was made at the lower of the 2 quotes and the selected supplier had previously delivered satisfactorily. As regards furniture procurements, since the Commission did not have a driver or a vehicle at that time, quotes were sought via email and it was not always possible to receive the same. Where 3 quotes were available requisite/matching items could not be found; such as, tables offered by other suppliers were without drawers, cupboard and locker and not matching with the existing ones. For uniforms, although they had approached other suppliers but the selected supplier only was providing all materials. The car hire was the only supplier who willingly agreed to rent the car on credit basis and at short notice. Monthly rate was not negotiated as hiring was not for a whole month as delivery of a vehicle was awaited. Advice was also sought from Ministry of Finance before seeking the service.*

Fixed Assets

- 3.1 Assets costing R477,848 were acquired by the Commission during the period under review. Audit noted that 16 fixed assets were not included in the Fixed Asset Register (FAR). Further, Audit performed physical verification and observed that the identification number on two chairs were not as stated in the fixed asset register provided.
- 3.2 *The Management, in response, informed that since the fixed assets management software was new to the entity, this was an oversight and that there has been no proper training. However, the register was amended and the labels updated accordingly. In the reply dated 18.10.2021, the Commission stated that the 16 items were transferred from the Vice President's office and still do not reflect on the register and matter is being taken up by the MoF.*

Inventory

- 4.1 On physical verification of a sample of 19 stationery items and 8 consumables, Audit observed discrepancies between the quantities stated on Bin Cards and their actual physical count. The Bin card reflected 2 printer yellow cartridge 410A while actually available were 3 units. The management explained that the office assistant had requested for the item but did not take from the stock (has not been used yet).
- 4.2 *The Management, in response, informed that all consumables are under lock and key and accessible to authorised personnel only. Furthermore, the Commission will consult Ministry of Finance and DICT to assist with the Inventory Management Software. In the reply dated 18.10.2021, the Commission stated that though the software is installed the staff have not been trained to use it and matter is being taken up with DICT. However, the manual inventory is up to date.*