



MEMORANDUM

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FROM: Jane Wilson

CC: Ankica Gavrilovic

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RE: **PROPOSED COMMUNICATION POLICY:** Communication Coordinated by MOFTER

REAP committed to develop a proposed communication policy for MOFTER and in this document submits such proposal. It is merely a draft, and REAP is interested in discussing it with MOFTER at its convenience. It is based on the concept that MOFTER is the coordination body for the sector and the country with regard to energy. This means that MOFTER is a communication hub.

Any body that is a central communication hub, first relaying information outward and then collecting and collating feedback to funnel a coordinated response to the original sender of the request for response, has a critical and central role. Every organization has difficulties with this function: it is common that various branches/departments/arms of organizations do not communicate well, if at all, with each other. Handled well, though, this function becomes a central and critical role within an organization, be it a government, private or publicly-owned business, political organization, or any other organization.

MOFTER is part of a wide organization that includes the Entity Ministries, other Ministries at the State and Entity Level, the ISO and TRANSCO, the regulators, the International Community, and perhaps others. This is a sprawling organization, but an organization nonetheless.

Anybody that has a coordination function must focus on its communication procedures. In MOFTER's case, this means that information must be sent as quickly as possible to the appropriate parties for information purposes or to request feedback. There are numerous problems with carrying out this task: Several example (although there are many more) are: (i) important emails can get lost among a heavy email day; (ii) if a document is sent in hard copy to the Minister, it can be delayed on the way to the Energy Department; or

(iii) the recipient may be out of the office. Members of MOFTER's Energy Department are often absent on business trips (and of course on vacation and holidays), and conveyance of information or requests for comments can be delayed because the addressee is absent. To provide failsafe communication, MOFTER needs to have a carefully thought-through process so that there is a back-up process, such as forwarding emails to a personal email address so that email can be checked daily while on trips, having an assistant check emails and then forward them to back-up personnel, a close colleague can check emails, or some other solution.

If a communication coordination body does not act with dispatch and delays sending information or requests information from its organization at the last minute, not allowing a reasonable amount of time for responders to collect their thoughts and respond in a measured way, then the coordination body becomes a focus point for criticism, rather than a body that is relied on by the organization. A good coordination body with good procedures can make an organization efficient and admired; while a body that is dilatory in communication can make an organization look disorganized and not serious. The actions of the coordination body reflect on the entire organization.

Thus, it is important that MOFTER develop its communication procedures and unflinchingly implement them every time a piece of information comes to it. The following procedure outline is a suggestion that can be elaborated changed or elaborated as necessary:

Proposed MOFTER Communication Procedure

1. Information to be Shared.

- a. Err on the side of sharing more rather than less information. Doing so will result in the entire organization trusting that MOFTER will always forward information. It is better that MOFTER act as a conduit (a true coordinator role) rather than acting as a filter by making arbitrary decisions that others in the network have no need to know or give the impression that MOFTER is hoarding information (based on the old theory that "Information is power.")
- b. Information received should be forwarded, rather than rephrased, summarized or rewritten independently, so that recipients can see that MOFTER forwarded the information shortly after MOFTER received it and that it is the original information.
- c. Language. Much information received is in English. A decision should be made as to whether to translate information at all; however, if it is to be translated, there should be no delay in sending it immediately in English, with a cover note that it will be sent in local language as soon as possible.¹

¹ The subject of translation, even informal translation, is an important one. REAP is of the opinion that important documents should always be translated into local language. In addition to Ministry translators, it may be possible to organize stakeholders to cooperatively translate lengthy documents. The EPs, regulators

2. Material Requiring Feedback from Recipient by a Certain Deadline.
 - a. Information that requires feedback that will be coordinated by MOFTER must be sent out immediately, with a deadline for response that will allow quick collation of the information by MOFTER.
 - b. It is important that no comments be ignored, even if they are difficult to incorporate into the prepared document. Various mechanisms can be used to ensure information is conveyed – for example, footnotes, annexes or explanations in the text. If protocol or other reasons deem that certain comments not be incorporated, then courtesy would have the collator respond to the commenter with an explanation as to why a particular comment was not incorporated. The coordinator should not ignore comments so that it can convey information that the original requestor wants to hear: rather, MOFTER should be an honest broker of information that can be trusted by the organization.
 - c. If necessary to collect information, a meeting should be had. However, no meeting should be called to ask parties to tell MOFTER orally what to write down without notice and the originating document (and all supporting documentation) already sent to attendees in time for the parties to have read it in sufficient time to form their own organizational position.
 - d. If a meeting is held on to discuss a country position once material is received, then it is important that MOFTER as the communication organization prepare a structured document to guide discussion, so that time is not wasted and the discussion does not wander with no benefit for MOFTER's collation of comments.
 - e. If time allows, the collated document should be circulated for comments.
 - f. Once information is received back as requested by MOFTER, collated (possibly being circulated again) and sent back out in response to the original query, all parties who were requested for information (even if no feedback was sent) should be copied.

3. Timing is Key.
 - a. As can be seen from the above, the timing of circulation of information is key. If the originator is late in sending, then MOFTER cannot be blamed for that. However, MOFTER should take action about the short timeframe.
 - b. If an originator sends information very late requesting a response within an unreasonable period of time, then MOFTER should contact the sender to attempt to negotiate a more reasonable period of time (still short but sufficient, working at a fast pace.) It is unfair to ask the broader organization to respond in an unreasonable time period; they will just as likely ignore the request.

and REAP have translators that could coordinate to translate large documents, such as the World Bank Whole Market Study.

4. EPs. The EPs have generally been omitted from all communication flow between MOFTER and the rest of the government network. It is important that some way be worked out to streamline communication to the EPs, for example, by copying a member of the Ministries who have responsibility to communicate with the EPs.

The above communication policy is submitted to MOFTER pursuant to a commitment made earlier by REAP. REAP would like to discuss the contents with all members of the Energy Department whenever it is convenient.

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