

# REVENUE ENHANCEMENT POLICY



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## STRATEGY

### 1. Billing

- ✓ A substantial amount of income is from the delivery of service. It is therefore important that billing is done correctly, and bills be send out for all services delivered.
- ✓ The billing function drives the cash flow of the Municipality and is critical to the success of the Municipality.

#### 1.1 Elements of successful billing

- ✓ Must have a system with financial integrity to process transactions accurately.
- ✓ Input of data must be accurate
- ✓ Relevant controls must be in place to ensure complete and accurate billing.
- ✓ It is critical that services are billed according to a property as base

#### 1.2 Successful billing relies on

- ✓ Accurate property information
- ✓ Accurate customer information
- ✓ Accurate tariffs associated to property usage, debtor type, zoning and service type
- ✓ Accurate ward information per property

The following information is key to accurate billing

- ✓ Erf number
- ✓ Street name and number
- ✓ Customer name
- ✓ Physical and postal address
- ✓ ID/Company registration/CC/Trust
- ✓ Classification
- ✓ Owner/Tenant

***NB: IF ABOVE INFORMATION IS INCORRECT – NO SUCCESFUL DEBT COLLECTION***

#### 1.3 Billing integrity

The integrity of billing can be enhanced by the following controls:

- ✓ Access control to function on current Financial System
- ✓ Protection of passwords
- ✓ Authority levels on opening and closing of accounts or changing of account details

- ✓ Accounts not billed
- ✓ Accounts with no valuation
- ✓ Abnormal consumption
- ✓ Abnormal billing

#### **1.4 Common problems**

- ✓ Wrong reading
- ✓ Finger problem in data capturing
- ✓ Rollover/ Clock over of meter
- ✓ No valuations

***The control on Credit journals must be closely monitored.***

## **2. Indigent Management**

- ✓ Our household consumers consist of consumers who can afford to pay and other who are poor (indigent).
- ✓ It is unlikely that the same credit control and debt collection processes will be successful for both.
- ✓ This is evident in the high percentage outstanding debt in the previously disadvantaged communities and especially in the low cost housing communities.
- ✓ It is also important to ensure that people that can pay, claim that they are indigent, be picked up during the registration process.

### **2.1 Challenges with indigent applications**

- ✓ Budgetary constraints
- ✓ Capacity shortage
- ✓ Inconsistent application of evaluation criteria when evaluating applications
- ✓ No verification of correctness of information supplied

### **2.2 How to manage indigent subsidy**

#### 2.2.1 Data capture

- ✓ Application process
- ✓ Survey

#### 2.2.2 Verification process

- ✓ Site visit
- ✓ Verifying the accuracy of information contained, completion of questionnaire/application form
- ✓ UIF, Department of Welfare, ITC check, Credit Bureaus

### 2.2.3 Recommendations

- ✓ After verification completed final approval.

### 2.2.4 Indigent committee:

- ✓ The indigent committee that should consist of relevant ward committee member, Chief Financial Officer, Manager Treasury, verification offices, Accountant credit control official.
- ✓ This committee must meet regularly at least once per month.
- ✓ If application declined, applicants must be informed accordingly.
- ✓ If application successful, the indigent register must be updated.

## 3. Credit Control and debt collection

### 3.1 Policy

- ✓ Credit Control and Debt Collection policy plays an important role in the Revenue Enhancement plans.
- ✓ Review of this policy to identify and find solutions to problems identified.
- ✓ The following factors must be taken into account:
  - Defaulter may or may not be able to pay–consider actions
  - Get the support of councilor and ward committee
  - Equity in action taken

***Section 96 of MSA requires that all money due and payable must be collected and must adapt and maintain a credit control & debt collection policy.***

### 3.2 Monthly credit control reports

- ✓ Total debt outstanding, debts collected, arrangements, promises to pay, acknowledgement of debts and debts subjected to legal process.
- ✓ Prescribed debt, debt to be written off plus justification
- ✓ Accounts under query
- ✓ Progress reports on tracing
- ✓ Indigent report
- ✓ All financial aspects of debt collection, commissions, cost, etc.
- ✓ Proposed action plans for following month

### 3.3 Requested data needed for debt analysis

- ✓ Total debtors per age analysis
- ✓ Debtors per service type
- ✓ Debtors per zone type

- ✓ Debtor per ward/suburbs/ towns/ areas
- ✓ Debtors by indigent indicators
- ✓ Debtors per active and inactive indicator
- ✓ Debtor by valuation
- ✓ Payment for last 12 months

### **3.4 Indigent debt**

- ✓ Indigent debt is regarded as non-collectable and should be excluded from debt collection processes. Debt indicated as indigent are unlikely to be recovered;
- ✓ The following problems may contribute to debt collection problems
- ✓ Lack of political will to enforce credit control measures due to
  - Lack of accurate data on which credit control measures can be taken
  - Credit control measures taken on indigent households
  - Councilors influencing the operations of officials
- ✓ Lack of skills and capacity to manage the collection of outstanding debt
- ✓ Lack of adequate debt collection administrative systems
- ✓ Lack of integration and co-ordination among the financial management, credit control and debt collection systems within municipalities
- ✓ Incorrect interpretation of legislation pertaining to credit control and debt collection procedures

## **4. Data Cleansing**

- ✓ Data cleansing is an important link in the revenue enhancement process.
- ✓ It is important that the information on which the municipal billing system is based is accurate and up to date.
- ✓ This is essential to the financial wellbeing and viability of the municipality
- ✓ The objective is the maximization of revenue potential and the prevention of losses resulting from inadequate or incorrect information

### ***Legislative Requirements***

#### ***The MSA requires municipalities to***

- ✓ ***Ensure people liable for payments receive regular and accurate accounts that indicate the basis for calculating the amounts due (Section 95(e))***
- ✓ ***Collect all money due and payable (Section 96(a))***

### **4.1 Desktop data cleaning**

- ✓ All billing data must be checked for inaccuracies and anomalies, mistakes must be rectified, anomalies must be recorded and investigated.
- ✓ Use the following criteria

- Valuation roll
  - Name of owner
  - Zoning of property
  - Size of property
  - Valuation
- Debtor type
  - Customer should be changed according to debtor type/zoning
  - **THE BASIS OF TARIFFS IN RESPECT OF LAND USAGE AND LAND ZONING MUST BE DETERMINED.**
- Tariff analysis
  - The debtor type(usage/zoning) must be compared to tariff charged;

The following errors may occur:

- Owner not charged all services
- Tenants charged by owner services
- Business uses charge domestic tariff
- Domestic users charge business tariff
- Free basic services apply
- Services
  - ✓ Once all the above has been done, ensure that all services are connected to a customer/erf.

#### 4.2 Returned mail cleaning

- ✓ Returned mail is a big problem in debt collection processes. It is important that returned mail be analyzed for reasons why the accounts are returned.
- ✓ It must be split as follows:
  - Customer no longer at given address
  - Postal address incorrect
  - Physical address incorrect
- ✓ Once reason for non-delivery has been established, contact should be made to consumer by either:
  - If telephone number is available; contact telephonically to clarify detail
  - If telephone/cellphone contact not possible do ITC/Title deed search to contact owner/tenant
  - Ensure that correct detail is captured on system once customer has been located

#### 4.3 Physical field audit

- ✓ Field audit become necessary if desk research is not able resolve anomalous accounts
- ✓ It must be carefully planned

- ✓ The following preparation is necessary
  - Appropriate fieldwork questionnaire to obtain following
    - Customers correct name, postal address and physical address
    - Correct erf number
    - Classification of debtor
    - Verification of meter numbers
    - Ward allocation
    - Indigent status

## 5. Effective communication

- ✓ Make public aware of the Action Plans for Revenue Enhancement.
- ✓ Communication must be credible, it is essential to be honest, good and bad news have equal value.
- ✓ People must understand the message
- ✓ The target audience must understand what is communicated.
- ✓ Way of communication :
  - Pamphlets
  - Posters
  - Ward Committee
  - Workshops
  - Public meetings
  - Radio
  - Newspaper

### 5.1 Billing system

- ✓ Inform community on the layout of customer accounts by using household information.
- ✓ Provide training to ward committee on all aspects of Billing System
- ✓ May combine the campaign with promotion of Indigent grant policy.

### 5.2 Indigent applications

- ✓ Purpose of grant
- ✓ Who is eligible?
- ✓ What people need to do to apply
- ✓ Where applications can be made
- ✓ What information and documentation should be supplied
- ✓ How long the grant lasts
- ✓ How much the grant is worth
- ✓ What conditions apply
  - ✓ Must provide training to ward committee members on all aspects of Indigent Policy and procedures.
- ✓ Information must be published in Community newspaper.