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MEDIA STATEMENT

SITA Responds to DHA Intentions sever ties with ICT Agency

Date: 06 May 2025

The State Information Technology Agency (SITA) has noted with concern the recent media reports indicating the Department of Home Affairs' intention to sever ties with the Agency, purportedly to source "more reliable and cost-effective" IT services externally.

The Agency (SITA) remains committed to working the Department of Home Affairs (DHA) and other clients to improve service delivery challenges enabled by ICT solutions.

SITA will amongst other things seek to obtain an update on the proposals presented to DHA dating back to 2021.

"SITA plays a critical role in the efficient provisioning of ICT solutions to enable government to dispense services to members of the public. These departments have a combined ICT budget of approximately R24 billion annually of which approximately R7 billion is channeled through SITA. This further translates into a technical coverage of 37% of ICT landscape managed, controlled and secured by SITA," said Tlali Tlali, SITA Head of Corporate Affairs.

Notwithstanding the multiple proposals SITA made to DHA, which have yet to be implemented, the department continues to blame SITA for nearly all ICT challenges it is facing.

SITA would like to provide clarity on some of these issues.

On Service Delivery to DHA

SITA has consistently delivered on its commitments to the DHA, including several projects and infrastructure overhauls designed to support DHA's modernisation agenda. These include:

- A five-year R400 million investment to redesign the SITA core network, replacing outdated infrastructure with software-defined network (SDN)-ready systems across 24 switching centres.
- Redundant core links, procured in 2022 and approved by National Treasury, which improved core availability to 99.35%.
- Migration of customer VPNs to new infrastructure and installation of Remote Environment Monitoring (REM) systems to prevent downtime at switching centres.
- Layer 2 services awarded to industry partner, culminating in the complete migration of SITA's core network to a resilient 10Gbps architecture by October 2024.

Non-Executive Directors:

Ms Sedsani Mudau (Chairperson), Mr Willie Vukela, Mr Willie Mathebula, Adv. Johannes Collen Weapond,
Mr Omega Shelembe

Executive Directors:

Mr. G Reddy (Managing Director Acting), Mr. MK Kgauwe (Chief Financial Officer)

Company Secretary:

Ms. B Laka

Furthermore, SITA has delivered pro bono services to DHA, including the proposed Digital ID solution, aligned with ministerial priorities. Despite several engagements, the Department did not formally accept this offer, and the proposal was later absorbed into the broader Inter-Departmental Working Group on government digitalisation—where SITA remains a strategic contributor.

Procurement and Delivery Context

It is important to note that DHA consumes only 20% of its ICT services from SITA, and the majority of that spending relates to mandatory services. Apart from procurement delays affecting a small portion of services, SITA has delivered all agreed-upon outcomes and service milestones, many of which were implemented under significant budgetary constraints from the Department.

SITA has also fulfilled the requirements of a Proof of Concept for multiple access links at Service Level Agreement Gold sites. A report was submitted in March 2022, yet DHA later chose not to proceed with implementation, citing occasional downtime on the legacy core. SITA recommended dual-line redundancy to mitigate this issue—an advice that was not taken forward.

Cybersecurity

SITA has invested in enhancing its cybersecurity posture through continuous control enhancements, strengthening of Security Operations Centre capabilities, incident response, awareness campaigns and adherence to international standards. Where there may be security gaps identified, they are systematically addressed through ongoing security assessments and system upgrades for the protection of sensitive government information. SITA has also carried out cybersecurity maturity assessments and awareness sessions across government to assist in building capability and identifying improvement areas with proposed solutions to improve cybersecurity resilience.

SITA remains firmly committed to safeguarding national information assets and driving the continuous improvement of its cybersecurity environment.

Negative Public Statements

SITA is concerned by the increasing frequency of public statements by DHA leadership that mischaracterise SITA as a “monopoly,” an “artificial construct,” or “unreliable.”

“SITA has become an all-too-convenient scapegoat for project failures or inefficiencies, even in cases where we had no operational role to play. The Department is currently consuming core services from SITA, at a cost of about R 243 million of its R1,2 billion ICT budget allocation,” concluded Tlali.

SITA has acknowledged its past governance challenges and is actively implementing reforms to restore trust and service excellence. Every effort is directed at rebuilding a resilient, transparent, and innovative state ICT agency.

The Agency is prepared to engage the DHA further to clarify misconceptions and to re-establish strategic alignment.

Ends.

Media Contact

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