

MINISTERU GHAT-TRASPORT U
L-INFRASTRUTTURA



MINISTRY FOR TRANSPORT AND
INFRASTRUCTURE

Divizjoni 'Support Services'

Direttorat 'People Management'

Support Services Division

People Management Directorate

WD 106/2008

11th April 2017

**Director Generals
Directors
Head of Sections**

Memo 24/2017

INTERNAL POLICY FOR THE ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT OF TELEWORK ARRANGEMENTS WITHIN THE MINISTRY FOR TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE

1. Introduction

- a. This document is to be read in conjunction with any documentation and regulations related to Telework¹ issued by the People and Standards Division (P & SD) and the internal memos² issued by the Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure (MTI). This document is intended to provide a policy that addresses the specific needs of MTI in the application of the work life balance measures among its employees. The Ministry will seek to respect and address the staff's individual requirements in a manner which suits the needs of both the Ministry and the applicant. It also aims to provide more transparency and accountability in the process.

2. Application and scope

- a. This policy applies to all teleworking activities of the Ministry. All Directors/Head of Departments and all employees within the Ministry should be familiar with the contents of this policy.

¹ Manual on work-life balance measures published in November 2016. Available online at:
<https://mti.gov.mt/telework>

² [Memo No.54/2014 'Telework'](#) issued on 10 July 2014 and [Memo No.75/2015 'Employees on Telework'](#) issued on 23 November 2015.

3. Application procedure

- a. Qualifying employees, whether engaged on a full-time or part-time basis, including persons working on reduced hours, on a definite or indefinite contract can telework. Eligible employees who wish to apply for telework shall complete 'Section 1' of the [Telework Application](#) and submit the application form to the respective Director/Head of Department at least two (2) months in advance. The application shall be supported by the relevant supporting documentation.
- b. The Director/Head of Department must consider the needs of the applicant and ensure that the output and timeliness of the organisation are maintained. If the job suitability and employee suitability criteria (Section 2 of the application form) are all marked as 'Yes', the employee and Director/Head of Department shall jointly discuss Sections 3 and 4.
- c. As per internal [Memos No. 54/2014](#) and [No.75/2015](#), all Telework applications are to include the employees' [workplan](#)³, where the schedule of tasks and the estimated volume of work during Telework sessions are declared in advance and approved by the respective Director/Head of Department. Employees are to furnish an outline of the array of tasks that can be performed remotely. This work plan is considered as an integral part of the Telework Application Form.
- d. Any discussion held between the employee and the respective Director/Head of Department, does not entail automatic approval and granting of Telework.
- e. Telework applications are to be accompanied by a justification for telework and recommendations by the respective Director/Head of Department to the Permanent Secretary through the Directorate People Management (DPM). The Director/Head of Department is requested to use the enclosed template at Appendix A – '[Justification for telework and recommendations to the Permanent Secretary](#)'. Director/Head of Department should also specify the total number of employees carrying out similar duties within the same unit, the total number of employees already availing themselves of a telework agreement and the total number of employees working within the unit. Director/Head of Department will also declare that the telework agreement will not in any way jeopardise achievements required by the Unit and confirm that the work deliverables are justified, attainable and will be monitored on a monthly basis.
- f. All sections in the [Telework Application](#) and accompanying documents should be filled properly otherwise, the application will not be processed further.

³Vide Memo No.54/2014 - Appendix A 'Employee's Workplan: Application for engagement on a Teleworking Agreement

- g. Completed [Telework Application Form](#) and accompanying documents are to be forwarded to the Director People Management. The Director People Management will review the application and note the recommendation/s by the employee's respective Director/Head of Department. Should any clarifications be required these are to be made in writing.
- h. Once the application is reviewed by the Director People Management and endorsed, it will be passed on to the Permanent Secretary. The Permanent Secretary shall consider the request and inform the employee of the decision in writing through the People Management Directorate.
- i. The whole process shall be concluded within six (6) weeks⁴ of receipt of full and complete documentation. Director People Management shall keep record of approved applications for administrative purposes.

3.1 Refused applications

- a. Refused applications should include a justified reason in writing. Employees who feel aggrieved by the noncompliance to [Directive 8.1](#) or by a decision on entitlements or services accessible to them, may resort to the Grievance Redress Procedure as per [Directive 8.1 Annex II](#). If the decision is changed and the application is accepted, it will then be processed as mentioned above.

3.2 Changes in the telework agreement

- a. Where changes are required to be made during the effective teleworking period, the employee is required to complete the [Modification form](#)⁵. Completed modification forms are to be submitted to the respective Director/Head of Department who shall use his/her discretion, in order to make recommendations on the Modification form, to the Permanent Secretary through the People Management Directorate. The decision shall be communicated to the employee in writing, in line with [Directive 8.1](#) parameters. Any revised arrangements shall be effective for the remaining period of the current Telework agreement.

3.3 Renewal of telework agreement

- a. Employees who wish to renew their Telework arrangement for a further period of twelve (12) months, shall complete the [Renewal of Telework Agreement form](#)⁶. If at renewal stage, the

⁴ As per OPM circular No8/2016

⁵ The 'Modification form' is found in the 'Manual on work-life balance measures'.

⁶ The 'Renewal of Telework Agreement' form is found in the 'Manual on work-life balance measures'.

teleworker requests changes to his/her existing agreement, the applicant is to fill in the respective fields specifying the new arrangements being requested. Completed renewal forms are to be submitted to the respective Director/Head of Department who shall use his/her discretion, in order to make recommendations on the application for renewal, to the Permanent Secretary through the People Management Directorate. The decision shall be communicated to the employee in writing, in line with [Directive 8.1](#) parameters.

4. Conditions

4.1 Working Hours and obligations

- a. The standard minimum time to be spent working from the office shall be 60% per week or higher. This is intended to enable the performance of tasks at office and attendance to face-to-face meetings as necessary. An agreement between the Director/Head of Department and the applicant is to be set for the time spent working at the place of work. In exceptional circumstances such as medical or serious humanitarian and/or family reasons, the granting of more than 40% Telework weekly, may be considered at the Permanent Secretary's discretion upon a justified request endorsed by the relevant Director/Head of Department.
- b. Tasks that require the employee's ongoing physical presence at the office, or jobs that require face-to-face contact with the public and/or other members of staff, are not to be considered as suitable for telework. Employees working on shift basis, particularly night shifts cannot be granted teleworking.
- c. Directors/Head of Departments are to stipulate the specific duties and/or obligations which teleworkers may be assigned and which are not necessarily covered in the general telework policy. These duties should be outlined in the telework agreement and should include the daily time-period (not less than 3 hours) considered to represent the core hours during which the teleworker is expected to be stand-by and immediately reply to queries. Core hours are to be established in line with each section's requirements. The ideal core hours for those teleworking during the morning or full day, should be between 09:00 and 12:00 hours. In all circumstances, officers are to ensure they are reachable by phone and by email.
- d. Employees who are engaged on Telework during a particular day are not eligible to work overtime on the day in question.
- e. The office telephones of teleworkers must be diverted to their home landlines during the teleworking hours which fall within the normal office hours. The teleworking employee has no right of refund of any telephone expenses (whether on fixed lines or mobile phones), made in connection with teleworking.
- f. Should the need arise for *ad hoc* changes to the work schedule, when possible, a notice of two working days should be given to the teleworker. In the case of meetings scheduled during teleworking hours, employees are expected to be present for such meetings.

- g. Persons engaged on Work-Life balance measures are forbidden from undertaking any type of private work, even outside working hours.

4.2 Staff Ratios

- a. It is important that appropriate ratios are maintained between officers performing their entire duties at their offices and Teleworkers, at all times during the day. Such ratio depends on the nature of the work performed by the section concerned. In determining such ratios, Directors/Head of Departments are to ensure that these do not adversely affect the service provided by the respective sections, and most importantly, the services provided to the public, as the main focus should remain on job performance and meeting business demands.
- b. Directors/Head of Departments should ensure that effective contact facilities for the public and other sections within the Department (such as Customer Care Offices) are provided at all business times within their respective sections including by those engaged on telework.
- c. Directors/Head of Departments are to exercise transparent and fair methods on how to distribute the indicated telework opportunities in their respective sections. Directors could consider aligning the termination date of all agreements regulating work-life balance measures to allow for better overall visibility, especially when considering both existing and new applications and evaluating their impact at work. Any new applications received throughout the rest of the year, if considered eligible, could be accommodated through an agreement with a shorter timeframe that terminates concurrently with the other agreements.
- d. Directors/Head of Departments are encouraged to adopt job shadowing, where parallel tasks are given to different members of staff, ensuring that duties related to such tasks can be performed and followed up as necessary.
- e. Where telework opportunities are not possible in a particular section, Directors/Head of Departments may wish to consider other solutions as long as these are transparent, fair and do not negatively affect the operations of that section. Such solutions should, where applicable, have the consent of the affected employees and should be adopted in consultation with the relevant stakeholders (including other senior and/or middle managers in other sections), such as:
- transferring incumbent and/or new applicant to another section where telework could be performed and replaced by a non-teleworker from that section;
 - increasing the number of hours which telework incumbents work at the office to possibly enable new applicants to be offered telework;
 - carry out a business process re-engineering of their relevant sections in order to possibly create new telework opportunities.

5. Evaluation of Applications

- a. Directors /Heads of Department, in order to take a good, fair and objective decision when selecting applicants for telework, are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the ['Guidelines on the implementation of telework by Public Service and Public Sector employees'](#),⁷ especially paragraphs 11.2 and 11.3.
- b. The general telework policy states that in considering whether to agree to a telework arrangement, the Director/Head of Department must take into account the needs of the applicant but also ensure that the output and timeliness of the organisation are maintained.
- c. Notwithstanding that giving a justification/reason is not a mandatory requirement in the application for work-life balance measure, when such information is voluntarily provided by the applicant, Directors/Heads of Department could consider giving due weight to the reasons provided when evaluating requests. The following criterion is only meant to provide a guide for Directors/Head of Departments to evaluate telework applications, especially where the number of incumbents and new applicants for telework exceeds the limit of telework opportunities in a particular section.
- d. Priority should ideally be given to telework incumbents and/or applicants in the following order:
 - Applicant has a dependant family member with special needs
 - Applicant has children under 3 years of age
 - Applicant lives with dependent parent/s who need/s one's constant care and attention
 - Applicant has children aged from 3 to 12 years of age
 - Applicant has a medical condition, which could be alleviated if telework is granted
 - Other particular situations at the discretion of management with the approval of the Permanent Secretary
- e. The granting of a telework agreement is not solely linked to a family need but also if the applicant's job performance, traits and skills as well as the nature of the job is suitable for telework. The emphasis of the arrangement must therefore remain on job performance and meeting business demands.

6. Approval of Telework

- a. When an application for telework is approved, a ['Telework Agreement'](#) is to be signed by the employer, namely the Permanent Secretary on behalf of the Ministry for Transport and Infrastructure, so that both parties understand the rights and responsibilities of Telework and the specific terms under which the teleworker will operate.

⁷ The 'Guidelines on the implementation of telework by Public Service and Public Sector employees' are found in the Manual on work-life balance measures.

- b. There will be a one-month trial period during which time the teleworking arrangement may be reversible at any time at the request of either the teleworker or the Director/Head of Department. At the end of the trial period the Director/Head of Department makes an evaluation of the arrangement and makes recommendations for the continuation, modification or termination of the agreement. Following a successful trial period Telework arrangements should be reviewed every 3 months during the six-month trial period, and every 6 months thereafter. A teleworking agreement is valid for a period of twelve (12) months and may be renewed annually.
- c. When an employee's request for telework is approved/refused, it does not necessarily mean that another request for telework from another employee working in the same office has to be accepted/refused. Requests for telework are treated on a case by case basis.

7. Monitoring Telework and Teleworkers

- a. [Return Reports](#) (Vide Appendix B titled 'Return of MTI employees on a Teleworking Agreement' – Memo 54/2014) should be compiled electronically on a monthly basis by the teleworker; endorsed by the respective Director/Head of Department and forwarded to the People Management Directorate on telework.mti@gov.mt, by the end of the first week of the ensuing month. Return forms will be archived for record purposes.
- b. Failure to submit monthly telework reports for two (2) consecutive months, entails immediate termination of telework.
- c. The teleworker's failure to meet the agreed standards and workload entails immediate termination of telework.

8. Terminating Telework Arrangements

- a. Notwithstanding the above, the respective Director/Head of Department, in consultation with the Permanent Secretary, reserves the right to withdraw a telework agreement at any time by giving the employee a notice of thirty days in writing, as per '[Telework Agreement](#)' Paragraph 8.2.2. The employee may appeal the decision to the Permanent Secretary. Likewise, the employee can also terminate his/her own telework agreement in the manner as explained above.

- b. The officer on telework is to ensure that upon termination of the telework agreement, all Government property must be returned to the Government.

9. Effective Date, Transitory Provisions and Applicability

- a. All prospective Teleworkers are requested to abide by the conditions as laid down in this document in submitting their application.
- b. Directors/Head of Departments must ensure that the present agreements are to comply with the new parameters once either reviewed, modified or renewed.

10. Conclusion

- a. This policy is directly in line with Government policy and is intended to encourage work life balance measures. It is to be deemed as a sustained effort to facilitate the take-up of such arrangements, while ensuring that quality and timeliness of work are maintained.

Ms Sharon Galea Iriele
Director
People Management Directorate

JUSTIFICATION FOR TELEWORK AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE PERMANENT SECRETARY

To be completed by the Director/Head of Department

- (i) I consider that the tasks to be performed referred to in section 3 'Agreed Arrangements', in a telework environment are suitable: Yes No

Please justify:

- (ii) I consider that the needs of the employee deserve such a telework agreement. Yes No

Please justify:

- (iii) Please specify:

Total number of employees carrying out similar duties within the same unit	
Total number of employees already availing themselves of a telework agreement within the same unit	
Total number of employees working within the unit	

To be filled in by the Director/Head of Department:

Such Telework Agreement will not in any way jeopardise achievements required by this Unit.

I confirm that the work deliverables are justified, attainable and will be monitored by the undersigned on a monthly basis. This applicant is considered as suitable for Teleworking.

Official Stamp

Full name _____ Signature _____ Date _____

Resources:

URL: <https://mti.gov.mt/telework>

[Manual on work-life balance measures Memo No. 54/2014 - 'Telework'](#)

[Memo No. 75/2015 'Employees on Telework' Application form for Telework](#)

[Justification for telework and recommendations to the Permanent Secretary](#)

[Directive 8.1 – Decision-Making Standards Related to HR Entitlements and Services offered by the Public Service to its Employees](#)

[Directive 8.1 \(Annex II\): Grievance Redress Procedure](#)

[Modification Form](#)

[Renewal of Telework Agreement Form](#)

[Guidelines on the implementation of telework by Public Service and Public Sector employees](#)

[Return of MTI employees on a Teleworking Agreement \(Appendix B - Memo 54/2014\)](#)