Electronic Mail and Internet Services Policy

1. Policy statement

i) General

Electronic mail (e-mail) and Internet Services are considered as mission critical services for the Government of Malta (Government).

To this effect, Government reserves the right to take appropriate action in order to uphold employee productivity, national security and the Services’ performance and availability levels from the following:

1. Productivity, performance and availability from Spam

2. Security through Content Management

3. Integrity from Counterfeit messages

4. Manageability through System Wide Monitoring and Statistical Reporting

The e-mail and the Internet Services are the principal vehicles for electronic communications within the Public Service and with external entities and individuals. For this purpose e-mail and Internet shall be used primarily for business purposes – with personal use acceptable in limited circumstances that are defined in the accompanying Directives.

The Government e-mail service is provided for business use only, and hence it is deemed to be the property of Government. Thus, (i) any e-mail, including attachments, that are created, sent, received or printed via the e-mail service become the property of Government; (ii) any software or files downloaded via the Internet into the Government of Malta network (MAGNET) become the property of Government; and (iii) any such software or files may only be used in ways that are consistent with their licenses or copyrights.
In order to preserve corporate information, electronic information that needs to be maintained for record purposes should be printed together with envelope information and filed as a hard copy using the official registry filing method.

E-mail and Internet are used for the exchange of information and business decision-making and in doing so, are subject to the same rules and norms used in any conventional paper based work environment.

ii) Implementation

The e-mail and Internet Services shall be granted for use via a Top-Down principle with Knowledge Workers as the primary target population. The following are the key principles underpinning the electronic communication services: (i) to define service levels, (ii) to secure and protect within a defined ICT Security Framework, (iii) to operate within a defined Government ICT Architecture, with access anytime and anywhere, (iv) to operate in conformity with the Laws of Malta and regulations by statutory bodies, (v) including training on the use of these services for Account Holders.

Elements of (ii) and (iii) above are subject to the respective Department's electronic communication needs.

iii) Anti Spam and Counterfeit E-mail

Government does not authorise the use of the MAGNET to accept, transmit or distribute unsolicited bulk e-mail sent from the Internet.

In addition, Internet e-mail sent, or caused to be sent, to or through the MAGNET that makes use of or contains invalid or forged headers, invalid or non-existent domain names or other means of deceptive addressing will be deemed to be counterfeit. Any attempt to send or cause such counterfeit e-mail to be sent to or through the MAGNET is unauthorised. Similarly, e-mail that is relayed from any third party's mail servers without the permission of that third party, or which employs similar techniques to hide or obscure the source of the e-mail, is also an unauthorised use of the MAGNET.

To this effect, Government reserves the right to take all legal and technical steps available to prevent Spam, Counterfeit e-mail or other unauthorised e-mail from entering, utilising or remaining within the MAGNET.

iv) Policy violations

Account Holders may be subject to disciplinary action if they abuse or misuse e-mail and Internet Services in terms of:

(i) The computer misuse provisions in the Criminal Code;

(ii) The supporting documents.
2. **Purpose**

The e-mail and Internet Services are provided to assist in the conduct of Government business operations and to support the Public Service in delivering a service of the highest quality to internal clients and to the public in general.

The purpose of this document is to establish an official policy statement, supported by Standards and Directives, with respect to the Government e-mail and Internet Services and to bring these to the attention of the Account Holders.

The policy helps ensure that e-mail and Internet Services use is not for personal use other than in exceptional circumstances, is not used for purposes prohibited under the Laws of Malta, and does not legally compromise Government.

3. **Who should know this Policy**

Knowledge of this Policy should extend up and down the organisations concerned and be wide spread within them.

- Chief Information Management Officer (CIMO)
- Heads of Department / Entity
- CIMU Communications Executive
- All Account Holders
- Head of Agent
- Account Holders

4. **Scope of applicability**

The provisions of this Policy apply to all e-mail and Internet Services Account Holders of the Government, Agents, Heads of Department/Entity and CIMU, and covers all e-mail and Internet Services use within Government.

The Policy and accompanying Standards and Directives encompasses internal and external electronic communications, independently of which network or system they travel on.

Specific policy provisions referring to Generic e-mail Accounts are treated in a separate Policy.

5. **Definitions**

**Account Holder** – a person authorised to use e-mail and Internet Services within Government.

**Agent** – a trusted organisation that has the mandate by Government to provide Information and Communications services.

**Attachment** – indicates textual, graphical, visual or executable files that are attached with an e-mail message.
Corporate information/record – all information under the control of a government institution, regardless of physical mode or medium in which such information is stored. Excluded from the definition are materials held by libraries, which were not prepared or produced by or for the Government.

Counterfeit – e-mail that makes use of or contains invalid or forged headers, invalid or non-existent domain names or other means of deceptive addressing.

Electronic information/communication – information generated, communicated, processed, sent, received, recorded, stored or displayed by electronic means.

E-mail – correspondence between e-mail users over a computer network.

Envelope information – a collection of attributes and the relevant values that describes sender, recipient, subject and time sent, as an example of envelope information.

Head of Department/Entity – the person at the workplace to whom the employee or Account Holder reports.

Internet – a global network connecting millions of computers.

Knowledge Worker – a government employee who gathers data and information for business purposes, analysis and assesses such data and information and adds value to such data and information; and distributes the value added information product to others.

Service Level Agreement (SLA) – a contractual obligation between parties, which stipulates and commits the Agent to a required level of service. An SLA should contain a numerically quantified level of service, support options, enforcement or penalty provisions for services not provided, a guaranteed level of system performance as relates to downtime or uptime.

Spamming – electronic junk mail or any unsolicited bulk e-mail received that is unrelated to work, personal interest and not otherwise justifiable. In addition to wasting people's time with unwanted e-mail, spam also eats up a lot of network resources. Spamming costs the sender very little to send - most of the costs are paid for by the recipient or the carriers rather than the sender.

6. Roles and responsibilities

For the purpose of this Policy, the following roles and responsibilities have been identified:

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<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01. CIMO</td>
<td>i. to promote e-mail and Internet use, especially to Knowledge Workers.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>ii. to maintain this Policy.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>iii. to define service level agreements, numerically quantified and publicly available.</td>
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<td>iv. to audit for compliance.</td>
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<td>02. CIMU Communications Executive</td>
<td>i. to publish and promote this Policy.</td>
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</table>
03. Head of Agent  
i. to instigate documented internal procedures to fully implement this Policy.  
ii. to operate the services according to this Policy.  

04. Head of Department / Entity  
i. to direct Account Holders to the provisions found in this Policy.  
ii. to foster widespread usage (including training) of e-mail and Internet Services as a tool for Knowledge Workers.  

05. Account Holders  
i. to adhere to the provisions of this Policy.  
ii. to use e-mail in preference to paper correspondence.  
iii. to primarily use these services for official use.  
iv. to uphold security provisions as directed.  

7. Supporting Documents  

In support of this Policy, the following Standard and Directive shall apply:  

01. Electronic Mail and Internet Services Standard.  
02. Electronic Mail and Internet Services Directive.  

8. References  

1. Acts and Regulation  
   a. Data Protection Act – Chapter 440  
      http://www.justice.gov.mt  
   b. Electronic Commerce Act – Chapter 426  
      http://www.justice.gov.mt  
   c. Code of Practice for Internet Service Providers  
      http://www.mca.org.mt  

2. CIMU Policies  
   a. Generic e-mail Accounts Policy  
      http://www.cimu.gov.mt  
   b. Security Framework  
      http://www.cimu.gov.mt
9. Modification history

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Version</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Changes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>15.04.2002</td>
<td>Initial Release</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>01.07.2003</td>
<td>First Scheduled Review – Minor changes to the document format.</td>
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10. Maintenance and review cycle

Maintenance and review of this policy is set for six months after the initial release as indicated in the effective date. Subsequent review to this policy shall be based on a twelve month cycle.

Joseph R. Grima

Permanent Secretary, Office of the Prime Minister