



GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS UNIT

Customer Service Charter



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Office of the President and Cabinet,
Private Bag 301, Lilongwe 3

Foreword

The Charter details GCU commitment to provide a high level of customer service

Government Contract Unit (GCU) is a unit in the Office of the President and Cabinet whose mission is to provide leadership in contracts management to ensure optimal contract performance, value for money, timeliness, and cost effectiveness. GCU has the mandate to review, consider, vet, negotiate and pass contractual proposals before they are concluded on behalf of Malawi Government.

The GCU Charter which complements the Service Charter of the Office of the President and Cabinet details its commitment to provide a high level of customer service. The Charter specifies how shall GCU conducts itself and the standards it endeavours to comply with. The Charter shall be reviewed every three years. The Charter shall provide GCU customers with clear understanding of standards they can reasonably expect when dealing with GCU staff, together with an outline of their general rights and responsibilities.

It is GCU expectation that its customers shall hold it accountable to the extent of its promise of service standards herein. It is GCU expectation that in holding it responsible for the service standards its customers shall do so while having met all their obligations as outlined in this Charter.

Patrick C.R Matanda
Secretary for Government Contracts

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Well negotiated and implemented contracts bring value to Government

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1. Introduction

Government Contracts Unit has the mandate under the Office of the President and Cabinet to provide oversight over the Ministries and Departments and Agencies (MDAs) in the management of contracts. Contracts management has become an integral part of public service management in order to realise savings from efficiencies on contract risk reduction, cost savings from optimal contract performance, achieve expected value and quality outputs from contracts and timely delivery of public services linked to such contracts.

1.1 Our vision

GCU's vision is to maximise value from contracts and concessions.

1.2 Our mission

Mission of GCU is to provide leadership in contracts management to ensure optimal contract performance, value for money, timeliness and cost effectiveness.

1.3 Our core functions

In order to make progress towards achieving the vision and mission and to perform the below core functions, GCU has in its establishment specialists in the field of Finance, Engineering, Procurement, Architecture, Quantity Surveying, Economics and Law. Accordingly the core functions of GCU are as follows;

- Review , negotiate and vet government contracts and concessions;
- Monitor and evaluate the implementation of contracts and concessions;
- Provide legal advice on contracts;
- Provide professional advice on architectural matters relating to all government contracts;
- Provide professional advice on quantity surveying matters relating to all government contracts;
- Provide professional advice on engineering matters relating to all government contracts;
- Offer financial business and management counsel on all government contract matters; and
- Provide professional advice on all procurement matters pertaining to all government contracts.

2. Our service commitment

GCU is responsible for leading the process of government contracts management that efficiently brings value to the Government of Malawi.

Our aim is to ensure our services are responsive to customer needs and provide value for money outcomes to Government. We strive to offer open and equitable

advance to MDAs and private investors and enterprises on contracting services.

2.1 Our customers

We have a broad range of customers but primarily ones are:

- Government Ministries and Departments
- Statutory Corporations
- Local Authorities
- Private Partners
- Contractors
- Consultants/service providers

2.2 Key stakeholders

GCU has a number of key stakeholders in its course of delivering services to its customers. These are institutions that GCU works in partnership with for mutual benefit in delivering the contracting services;

- Office of the Director of Public Procurement
- Solicitor General/Ministry of Justice
- Ministry of Finance
- National Audit Office

- Central Internal Audit Office
- Public Private Partnership Commission
- Anti-Corruption Bureau
- National Construction Industry Council
- Roads Fund Administration
- Buildings Department
- Other regulatory bodies

2.3 Service focus

When dealing with GCU, you can expect a high quality service. This service aims to specifically support the following standards which we aspire to always achieve.

Our services are delivered expediently, promptly and professionally with timelines as indicated below;

- We acknowledge receipt of each contract submission for review within 48 hours of receipt with specific details of what follow up action will be taken;
- We respond to all enquiries of contract proposals requiring a written reply promptly within three working days;
- We explain our advice and decisions and ensure they are well founded, relevant and timely within 5 working days; and

- We discharge our duties with high degree of expertise, skill and competence

2.4 Our specific services

2.4.1 Pre-contract reviews

- We carry out all pre-contract reviews for MDAs within 10 days of receipt of the same;
- We communicate to all customers the information required for a pre-contract review. The list of documentation required for a pre-contract review is available on request at GCU and downloadable from the GCU website at www.opc.gov.mw.
- We communicate results of all pre-contract reviews within 10 days of the review.

2.4.2 Contract vetting process

- We carry out vetting of all government contracts to ensure transparency and accountability in processes leading to award of a contract within 10 working days.
- We provide details of the requirements to the customer requiring vetting services from GCU. The Checklist for Vetting are available at GCU and on our website at www.opc.gov.mw.

- We communicate the outcome of the vetting in a timely manner within the provided 10 days or within the agreed period.

2.4.3 Technical audits and investigations

- We perform audits and investigations as part of GCUs commitment to ensure contract compliance and value for money.
- In normal audits and investigations we provide notice of our intention to undertake the audit or investigation within 10 days before commencement. The notice shall indicate the scope and nature of audit for customer's preparation.
- The outcome of the audit and investigation will be fully explained to MDAs within 30 days to ensure that you understand the issues identified.
- The required information for purposes of the Technical Audits and investigations are available from our website at www.opc.gov.mw

2.5 Access to information and resources

We make relevant information and resources easily accessible;

- We provide access to our information through our websites, via post, email, telephone and in person through our specialists. Our offices are open for

information during the official working hours from 7:30am to 5:00pm.

2.6 Manner of our service delivery

Our services are delivered fairly and equitably;

- We process all contract submissions on first come first served basis;
- We act with integrity and impartiality to ensure customers are treated equally;
- We ensure our services are error free, however where errors occur we acknowledge and rectify;
- We treat all customers with courtesy and respect; and
- We respect the customers right to be heard.

2.7 Privacy and confidentiality

GCU respect customers' privacy in relation to any information held by it. GCU only discloses any confidential information in accordance with the dictates of the Laws of Malawi.

2.8 Partnership

We respect the roles of the key stakeholders in the contract management cycle and shall always consult them on matters that fall within their jurisdiction. We endeavour to complement the stakeholders' roles and

avoid duplicating their work in order to ensure maximum value from contracting processes.

3. Customer rights and obligations

Our commitment to providing the high level of service is dependent on customers fulfilling their rights and obligations. GCU expectations, therefore, are that customers shall do the following:

3.1 Customer rights

GCU customers and stakeholders have the right to:

- information on the nature of services;
- be heard on the suggested solutions and recommendations on contracts matters;
- provide us with feedback;
- privacy and confidentiality; and
- be treated with courtesy and respect.

3.2 Customer obligations

GCU customers are obliged to:

- provide GCU with the information required for the different services as provided in the guidelines available on its Website. Hard copies of the guidelines are available at the GCU on request;

- provide GCU with any updates on any submission being processed;
- respond to GCU promptly whenever there are requests for additional information in the course of provision of any service;
- treat GCU staff with courtesy and respect;
- punctually attend to scheduled appointments;
- abide with legal requirements from relevant laws;
- desist from offering gifts, favours or inducements to GCU staff or soliciting the same; and
- give GCU feedback regarding its services and delivery.

4. Service improvement, feedback and review of Service Charter

There may be occasions where standards outlined in this document do not satisfy customers' requirements and if this occurs, GCU encourages all its customers to provide it with feedback to improve its services.

- Customer feedback is essential for improving GCU services. Should customers have positive or negative feedback about service provided to them by GCU, please let GCU know through the complaints and

feedback system of the Office of the President and Cabinet.

- Customers feedback will be considered and response will be provided to them within 21 days of receipt.
- The Service Charter will be reviewed every three years.

5. Contacts

The Principal Secretary
Government Contracts Unit
Plot No.: Area 3/60
Office of the President and Cabinet
Private Bag 301
Capital City, Lilongwe 3
Tel: +265 1 755 230
www.opc.gov.mw