



MEDIA RELATIONS

Policies and Procedures

Effective: October 2023

To be reviewed: October 2026

***To help the public service
spend wisely***

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INTRODUCTION

1. The Office of the Auditor General of the Cayman Islands (the “OAG” or “Office”) is committed to disseminating audit findings and keeping the public informed about what we do. The OAG recognises the right of the general public, and the media, to be accurately informed about matters of public interest and the work it does. However, the OAG also understands that there are times when elements of the work we do may be politically or commercially sensitive.
2. The media plays a critical role as a channel of communication with the public in sharing audit updates. Our communication with the media is guided by the principles of integrity, transparency and honesty.
3. This policy outlines how the OAG will provide information and interact with the media in the Cayman Islands and the rest of the world. The primary objective of this policy is to maintain and protect the integrity and reputation of the Office by establishing the necessary principles to be followed when communicating with the media. Such principles will help ensure that only correct information and evidenced views are expressed.
4. This policy supports the UN General Assembly resolution of 22 December 2011, based on the work of INTOSAI to strengthen the independence of supreme audit institutions. The principles include the freedom of the OAG to publish and disseminate its reports once they have been formally delivered to the Parliament as required by the Act.
5. All OAG employees and individuals and suppliers engaged by the Office are expected to comply with this policy.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES OF THE POLICY

6. The strategic objectives of this media policy are to:
 - Guide and manage the Office’s public engagement (through the media) to ensure that we maintain and enhance the Office’s reputation, integrity, image and brand.
 - Ensure that all messages from the Auditor General are based on the information provided in OAG reports.
 - Ensure that all messages from the Auditor General are consistent, well-managed, and support the OAG’s constitutional mandate, strategic goals and vision.

- Make clear the responsibilities of designated OAG personnel when interacting with the media.
- Guide staff regarding their interaction with media, in the workplace and their private lives.

OFFICE APPROACH TO ENGAGING WITH THE MEDIA

7. The Office's approach when interacting with the media is:

- To maintain a mutual understanding between the Office and the media by providing a proactive, professional and interactive information service.
- To ensure optimal value for the OAG brand whilst recognising and adhering to professional standards.
- To deal with the media ethically by building and managing relationships with key individual journalists.
- The Auditor General and designated Deputy Auditor General shall only speak to facts where there is audit evidence to support the statements being made.¹ Comments made to the media shall be consistent with, and based upon, the reports produced by the OAG.
- To be sensitive to our stakeholders and the external environment in which we operate when we make public comments.
- To assist and guide the media on OAG issues to ensure that they (the media) reflect informatively and accurately when writing and publishing their stories about the Office's reports or activities.
- To respond quickly and appropriately to all media inquiries to limit potential damage caused by adverse or incorrect media coverage about the OAG.

8. The Corporate Management Team is responsible for authorising the social media sites that the OAG uses to communicate with the media and the public. The Auditor General or designated Deputy Auditor General shall authorise all input and updates to those social media sites.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE POLICY

9. The Auditor General and designated Deputy Auditor General are responsible for ensuring that this policy is kept up to date and that it is managed effectively at all times.

10. The Auditor General has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy. The designated Deputy Auditor General is responsible for ensuring day-to-day operation and compliance with the policy.

¹ The designated Deputy Auditor General is the Deputy Auditor General (Performance Audit).

COMPLIANCE

11. All media activities within the OAG must comply with the provisions of this policy.
12. All staff are expected to comply with this policy at all times to ensure that the Office effectively interacts with the media.
13. All individuals or firms engaged by the OAG to carry out audit work on its behalf are expected to comply with this policy.

SCOPE

14. This policy applies to all employees and their interactions with the media in the Cayman Islands and beyond.
15. The 'Media' includes all aspects of print, television, radio and internet media including social media, including the following:
 - Broadcast – television and radio (there are currently no television stations in the Cayman Islands).²
 - Print/press – newspapers and magazines
 - Digital– including the OAG website and social media such as Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram. This policy complements the OAG Social Media Policy.
16. The media is categorised as follows:
 - News media such as television, radio stations and newspapers;
 - Trade and professional publications;
 - Popular print magazines; and
 - Foreign media (which may be all or any of the above).
17. This policy will be incorporated into the contracts entered into with individuals and firms conducting audit work on behalf of the Office. The policy, therefore, applies to:
 - All OAG employees without exception;

² Note that at the time of this policy, there were no television channels based in the Cayman Islands.

- All firms and/or individuals who work for the OAG on a contract basis.

DEALING WITH THE MEDIA

18. The OAG interacts with the media in the following ways:

- Disseminating news releases and information about OAG reports and activities;
- Responding to media enquiries;
- Participating in broadcast radio interviews;
- Informal relationship-building activities.

19. The Auditor General and designated Deputy Auditor General are the appointed contact points for the media. All media enquiries should be referred to the Auditor General, or Acting Auditor General, in the first instance.

20. All media interactions – interviews and/or direct responses to media inquiries – about OAG business are undertaken only by the Auditor General or the Deputy Auditors General. As above, all media inquiries should be referred to the Auditor General in the first instance. The Auditor General may then delegate to a Deputy Auditor General to respond on his/her behalf. This approach aims to help convey factual, accurate and consistent messages about the Office in support of and to benefit the strategic objectives and values of the Office.

21. The Auditor General or designated Deputy Auditor General is responsible for disseminating all news releases on behalf of the Office. OAG staff may draft news releases to promote our work or activities and submit them to the relevant Deputy Auditor General and Auditor General for review. The Auditor General, or Acting Auditor General, will approve and sign off all media releases prior to them being issued.

22. The Office promotes its work and activities on social media. The Auditor General, designated Deputy Auditor General and Audit Manager (Quality and IT) are responsible for updating the OAG's social media pages. It is our policy to publish images alongside any social media posts. The OAG will request all staff to complete a release form allowing their images to be used in our reports and social media posts. The OAG will only include staff images if their permission has been given in the release form. The release form is included at Appendix A to this policy. In circumstances where the Office plans to use an image that includes people that are not OAG employees we will ask for their permission to do so, prior to publishing.

23. When the media requests public comment on behalf of the OAG, the Auditor General or Acting Auditor General is authorized to respond. When designated, a Deputy Auditor General can respond

to that request only. Other employees are not authorized to make public statements on behalf of OAG.

24. The OAG's policy is to respond to media enquiries as soon as possible or by a mutually agreed response timeline. This is to ensure that journalists can meet their deadlines. If the Office does not respond to media enquiries or fails to meet their (media) deadlines, the media will go ahead and print, publish or broadcast a story without the OAG's point of view. It is in our best interest to cooperate with the media by meeting their deadlines wherever possible. However, meeting deadlines should be guided and driven by our commitment to provide the media with relevant facts. When we cannot meet tight media deadlines, the policy of the OAG is never to use "no comment". We should instead respond along these lines: "Much as we would like to comment on this matter, we would rather give the public complete facts on this issue when we have all the relevant details at our disposal."

AUDIT REPORTS NOT YET PUBLIC

25. The OAG will not comment on the details in any audit reports until they have been made public.

USE OF THE OAG'S NAME BY SUPPLIERS AND CONTRACTORS

26. No service provider or vendor, audit firm, or contractor who provides services on behalf of the OAG may use the Office's name in their media campaigns without alerting, consulting, and obtaining the consent of the Auditor General. For example, if a vendor or service provider wins a contract with the OAG, they cannot make a media announcement mentioning the Office without consent.
27. The OAG should explain this provision when signing agreements with their vendors and service providers.

EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT THE REPUTATION AND INTEGRITY OF THE OFFICE

28. All OAG employees have an obligation, expressed in the OAG Staff Code of Conduct and Ethics, to act in the best interest of the Office at all times.
29. Employees are expected and encouraged to participate fully in the Office's consultation and decision-making processes on all official OAG matters and to refrain from debating opinions on such internal matters through the media.

30. Employees are prohibited from:

- Leaking or releasing any OAG information/documents to the media or any external party. This includes airing internal grievances in public through the media. Aggrieved employees who feel they have been wronged or treated unfairly by the Office are encouraged and advised to follow existing internal channels and procedures to register their concerns for proper investigation and resolution;
- Expressing views and opinions in the public domain that the Auditor General believes could discredit the Office; or
- Expressing views on behalf of the Office unless authorised to do so by the Auditor General.

31. Failure to observe and adhere to the principles stated in this policy is a serious disciplinary transgression and the necessary disciplinary steps will be taken against those employees who are in breach of this policy.

CONTACT WITH THE MEDIA BY OAG EMPLOYEES AS PRIVATE INDIVIDUALS

32. The Office acknowledges that employees may at times interact with the media outside their scope of OAG work. For example, as an individual or on behalf of their social organisations (e.g. sports clubs or societies).

33. In such instances when employees discuss with the media or write about matters outside their areas of work, they should observe the following:

- They should make it clear that they are speaking as private individuals and not as employees of the Office;
- The use of OAG position titles, letterheads, emails, or postal addresses is prohibited in this context; and
- OAG property/buildings should not be used as a backdrop for filming or photographic purposes.

34. It is acknowledged that there are times when employees may refer to their positions in the Office when, for example, participating in a professional organisation or service organisation. Where employees wish to use their position at the Office in their private capacity, they should request permission from the Auditor General.

APPENDIX A – CONSENT FOR THE USE AND RELEASE OF PERSONAL IMAGES

I, _____, hereby grant permission to Officer of the Auditor General, its agents and employees, to use my name, image, likeness, comments, and any content I have provided for the following purposes:

- **Social Media:** To share my content, including but not limited to photos, videos, and comments, on the Office of the Auditor General’s official social media profiles, which may include, but are not limited to, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn.
- **Reports:** To use my content in OAG reports, including the Annual Report.
- **Promotional Materials:** To use my content in promotional materials, including brochures, flyers, posters, presentations, and the Office of the Auditor General website.
- **News Releases:** To include my content in news releases and articles.

I understand and agree to the following:

1. The Office of the Auditor General will not use my content in a manner that is defamatory, offensive, or misleading.
2. My content may be used in both print and digital formats.
3. I will not receive any compensation for the use of my content.
4. I will not be provided with copies of any materials in which my content appears.
5. My consent is voluntary, and I have not been coerced or pressured to provide this consent.
6. This consent is valid indefinitely unless I request revocation in writing.

I have read and understood this consent form and agree to its terms.

Full Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____