

# **Jigawa State Government**



## **Central Service Charters Guideline**

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## **Foreword by the Head of Civil Service**

We are sincerely proud to clearly state that Jigawa State Government under the able leadership of Alhaji Sule Lamido CON has shown its readiness at all times to accept positive changes that will go a long way in providing good governance to the people of the State. The Civil Service reforms going on in the State Civil service in collaboration with the Department for International Development (DFID) - State Partnership for Accountability, Responsiveness and Capability (SPARC), a development partner, will in no small measure enhance effective service delivery, particularly with the preparation and implementation of service charters by Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) using the 'Central Service Charter Guideline'.

The benefit of the Central Service Charter Guidelines on preparation and implementation of service charters cannot be quantified for effective and efficient service delivery. For example, the clients will be brought on board to be duly informed about services rendered by the MDAs and their rights regarding services provided, and even to provide inputs and feedback on the services and service standards. In other words, a gap will be bridged between the public being the clients and the agencies of government for responsible governance and quality service delivery. As the Civil Service is an indispensable instrument and the engine of governance, the preparation and implementation of service charter documents in our various MDAs will make the Civil Service stronger, functional and success-oriented.

I am aware of the technical support provided by SPARC, a programme of DFID, for which the Jigawa State public service is appreciative.

It is apt to place on record that Jigawa State has reached significant milestone in the on-going reform process of the Civil Service institution, as such I enjoin all our MDAs to use the Central Service Charter Guideline, believing that this will further enhance our ability to provide sustainable high quality service to the people of Jigawa State.

Alhaj Mustapha Aminu mni  
Head of the Civil Service  
Jigawa State

## Abbreviations and acronyms

BEPD	Budget and Economic Planning Directorate
CSC	Civil Service Commission
DFID	Department for International Development
HoCS	Head of the Civil Service
MDAs	Ministries, Departments and Agencies
MoFEP	Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning
OHoCS	Office of the Head of the Civil Service
OSSG	Office of the Secretary to the State Government
PSM	Public Service Management
SCST	Service Charter Support Team
SPARC	State Partnership for Accountability, Responsiveness and Capability

## **Executive Summary**

This service charter guideline is for the use of the central Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) (e.g. the Office of the Head of the Civil Service [OHoCS], Budget and Economic Planning Directorate [BEPD], Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning [MoFEP], the Civil Service Commission [CSC], and the Office of the Secretary to the State Government [OSSG]) of the Jigawa State public service. It sets out the broad guidelines for developing, monitoring and implementing Service Charters in the MDAs.

The Jigawa State Government produced a service charter guideline, called 'Central Service Charter Guideline', initially for the use of central agencies of government such as the OHoCS, OSSG, CSC, MoFEP and BEPD. This was done under the auspices of the OHoCS with technical support of the State Partnership for Accountability, Responsiveness and Capability (SPARC), a Department for International Development (DFID) sponsored programme. After the use of the guideline by the central agencies, the guideline will be adapted or adopted for wider use in the Jigawa public service. Among other things, the guideline covers:

1. Meaning of service charter
2. Benefits of implementing service charters
3. Implementation structure of service charter in the Jigawa State public service
4. Preparation of service charter
5. Typical content of a service charter.

There is also an appendix on basic service charter checklist.

## Section 1: Introduction

This manual sets out the broad guidelines for developing, monitoring and implementing Service Charters by central MDAs of the Jigawa State public service (e.g. OHoCS, BEPD, MoFEP, CSC, and OSSG). The general idea of service charters is that the client is informed in advance about what kind of services can be expected, required and demanded from the MDAs. After the use of the guideline by the central agencies, the guideline will be adapted or adopted for wider use in the Jigawa public service.

### 1.1. Definition of service charter

A Service Charter is a public document that informs clients about an organisation's services, outlines their rights and responsibilities as well as relevant avenues for communication. It specifies standards of service delivery in the form of a series of commitments, entitlements or promises upon which clients can expect and demand quality service as a right; and to which they can have recourse when service fails or is not adequately rendered.

Essentially, therefore, a Service Charter describes the service experience a client can expect and contains key information about an organisation's service delivery approach and the relationship clients will have with the organisation. Service charter programmes incorporate a range of quality assurance techniques including setting service standards, consultative mechanisms, information to clients, complaints and redress mechanisms, and service review and updating.

In the context of this guideline, a service charter is broadly defined as a published statement endorsed by the government or the leadership of the public service containing:

- Details regarding an MDA's services
- Service delivery performance standards
- Rights and responsibilities of the clients, and
- Information relevant to the relationship between the clients and the MDA for service charter review and implementation.

### 1.2. Benefits of preparing and implementing service charters

There are many reasons and benefits for an MDA to prepare and implement a service charter. Such benefits are shown in Table 1.1.

**Table 1.1: Key Benefits for Implementing Service Charters**

S/N	Benefits
1.	Implementing service charters in MDAs helps bring about a positive change towards better client orientation.
2.	Helps MDAs to manage the expectations of service users.
3.	A service charter provides machinery for consultations with clients.
4.	Implementing service charters gives MDAs an incentive to measure and assess their performance.
5.	Implementing service charters, increases the probability of enhancing the satisfaction of the public with services provided by government.

## **Section 2: Implementation Structures for Service Charters**

As the implementation of Service Charters is part of the reform initiatives in Jigawa State, the Head of the Civil Service (HoCS) coordinates Service Charter implementation in the Jigawa State public service. The Head of the Civil Service will be assisted operationally by the Service Charter Support Team (SCST), made up of 9-11 senior public servants appointed by the Head of the Civil Service. Each MDA preparing and implementing a service charter should establish a Service Charter Task Team. The roles and relationships involved are indicated as follows:

### **2.1. Head of the Civil Service**

The Head of the Civil Service gives the overall direction and approval on commencing, preparing and implementing service charters in the Jigawa State public service. The HoCS also oversees the monitoring and review of service charters by the MDAs.

### **2.2. The Service Charter Support Team**

The SCST is responsible for:

1. Providing support and guidance in the development of the Service Charter.
2. Undertaking periodic monitoring and evaluation of MDA compliance with service standards, including complaints handling standards; and reporting outcomes as appropriate.
3. Ensuring effective resolution of complaints by facilitating continuing engagement of aggrieved customers with MDAs.
4. Providing technical support and guidance to MDA's Service Charter Task Teams in the development, implementation, monitoring and review of Service Charters in the central MDAs.
5. Maintaining a regular and functional link with MDA's Service Charter Task Teams
6. Recommending for the approval of the Head of the Civil Service, service charters prepared by the MDAs before they are uploaded on the government's website(s).

### **2.3. MDA's Service Charter Task Teams**

Each ministry, extra-ministerial department or agency will establish a Service Charter Development and Implementation task team, or MDA Service Charter Task Team, headed by the head of a core department delivering services to the public.

MDA's service charter task teams are to drive the preparation, implementation, monitoring, assessment and review of service charters in their MDAs. They are to engage in the following tasks, among others:

1. Initiating robust discussion of purpose and workings of Charters at top management meetings.
2. Communicating with staff about the need for Service Charters.
3. Ensuring that the process is linked to the wider business planning process within the MDA and that the Service Charter aligns with other accountability mechanisms of the MDA, such as budget statements, annual reports, strategic plans, sector strategies/expenditure frameworks.

4. Ensuring that clients and other stakeholders are involved in development, monitoring, review and reporting of standards contained in Service Charter.

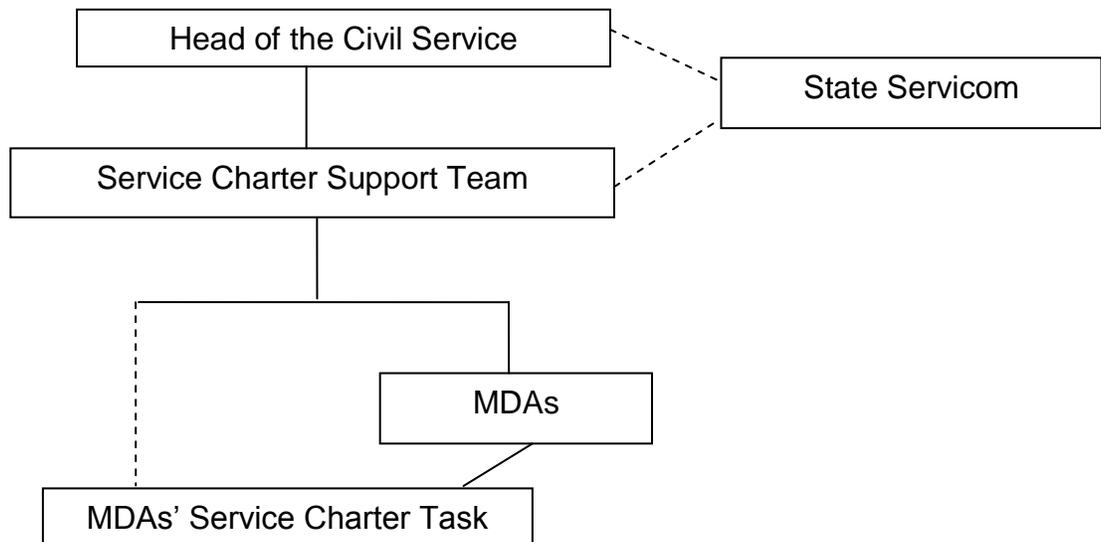
#### 2.4. State Servicom

In line with the resolution adopted at the forum of Secretary to the Government of the Federation and Secretaries to State Governments held in Owerri, the Imo State Capital in 2008, the Jigawa State Government set up a SERVICOM Committee for the State as was done at the Federal level. Currently the Jigawa State Servicom works in the following three pilot ministries and their agencies:

1. Ministry of Education
2. Ministry of Health and
3. Ministry of Water Resources.

The Jigawa State Servicom will keep copies of all approved service charters for reference purpose as well as copies of the service standards performance reports submitted to the Service Charter Support Team by the MDAs. It will assist the Service Charter Support Team in documenting and communicating lessons learnt in the implementation of service charters.

The following structure is proposed for implementing service charters in the Jigawa State public service:



## Section 3: Preparation and Implementation of Service Charters by MDAs

### 3.1. Terms of reference of the MDA service charter task teams

Each MDA should create a 'Service Charter Task Team' reporting to the Permanent Secretary, Director-General or Chief Executive and which is integrated with the performance management of the MDA. The service charter task team will include at least one staff member from each department handling a specific service area or set of service areas targeted by the service charter. The Service Charter Task Team will consult widely with stakeholders on all key service items (e.g. service targets, service measures and service levels) and agree ownership of them with all service owners, i.e. staff members offering the services.

The core aspects of the terms of reference of the 'Service Charter Task Team' is contained in Table 3.1.

**Table 3.1: Core Activities of an MDA's Service Charter Task Team**

<b>S/N</b>	<b>Activity</b>
1.	Facilitate the clarification/re-focusing of the MDA's core mandates in line with the reviewed MDAs' Mandates manual/compendium
2.	Facilitate the identification of key services, service standards, service levels/performance targets, key clients or groups of clients, key stakeholders and key partners
3.	Hold consultations with the staff, clients, development partners, and other relevant stakeholders (including civil societies)
4.	Develop the service standards and performance targets in consultation with service owners, i.e. staff members directly providing the services, with input received from target client groups, development partners and other relevant stakeholders
5.	Develop the approaches for service charter implementation in the MDA in consultation with service owners, i.e. staff members directly providing the services
6.	Prepare a draft of the MDA service charter for consultation with staff members, representative clients, development partners, and some relevant stakeholders in accordance with the format in this manual.
7.	Present the draft service charter to the Permanent Secretary, Director-General or the Chief Executive as appropriate for submission to the Service Charter Support Team.
8.	Facilitate the production of the service charter approved by the government and its communication to staff members, clients and partners and other relevant stakeholders
9.	Regularly liaise with the Permanent Secretary, Director-General, or the Chief Executive on addressing clients' concerns and in reviewing the progress of service charter implementation in the MDA, and representing the MDA in service charter forums in the State.
10.	Facilitate the review of the MDA Service Charter in line with the provisions of this guideline

### **3.2. Review of service charters by MDAs**

MDAs should prepare, and review their charter at regular intervals specified below, and submit the prepared/reviewed charter to the Service Charter Unit in the OSSG, which will further review it for the input of the Service Charter Support Team before it goes to the Head of the Civil Service for approval:

1. Public-facing MDAs covering similar sectors and which jointly operate one service charter for their sector should review their service charter every three years
2. Other MDAs and non-public-facing MDAs (i.e. MDAs which service the Jigawa state public service) should review their service charters every other year or as the need arises.

## **Section 4: Typical Content of a Service Charter**

There are no strict formats for drafting a service charter, however, an MDA's service charter would normally include:

1. Brief information on your MDA: name, purpose/mission statement, core values and client base.
2. The rights and responsibilities/obligations of your clients: remember that rights are normally set in law while obligations or responsibilities are what you require of your clients to be able to give them the service you guarantee in your charter.
3. Your key services: outline the services you offer but try to keep this as short, simple and specific as possible.
4. Your standards of service: these performance targets may be a separate section or included under the section of your key services.
5. How clients/stakeholders can give feedback, suggestions or lodge complaints: include information on how clients can give feedback or lodge complaints and state how your MDA will put things right when it is at fault.
6. Information on how your clients can reach you – your address, telephone numbers and e-mail addresses.
7. Additional information e.g. when the next review of service charter will be done, where clients can get further help on charter fulfilment, and where clients can access the service charter.

## **Annex 1: Basic Service Charter Checklist**

The service charter should be:

1. Clear about what your MDA does: its mission and core values.
2. Specific about the standard of service clients can expect (e.g. key performance indicators and level of service attached to each indicator).
3. Clear about basic client rights and responsibilities.
4. Specific about options for providing feedback and making a complaint.
5. Specific on information about how to contact you.
6. Easily understood and accessible to target client-groups or the general community (including relevant civil society organisations).
7. Dated for when it was approved.
8. Dated for when it was last reviewed.
9. Specific about when the next review of the service charter will be done.