

# ETHICS SURVEY — 2001

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KPMG, the South African Public Service Commissioner and Transparency South Africa jointly undertook the first South African ethics survey during 2001. The objective of the ethics practice survey was to measure the extent to which South African organisations (public service, private corporations and civil society organisations) succeeded in establishing certain basic ethics management practices. The sample comprised 166 respondents, representing the public sector (30 respondents), private sector (76 respondents) as well as civil society (60 respondents).

The main findings can be summarised as follows:

- A basic ethics infrastructure (such as codes of conduct and whistle blower protection) seems to be in place in most of the surveyed organisations. The existence of written documents that outline the organisation's values and principles was reported by eighty-four per cent of respondents.
- Fifty-four per cent of respondents indicated that their organisation has a confidential reporting mechanism.
- It seems that many organisations do not acknowledge the importance of tasking a senior-level manager with ethics responsibilities.

More broad-ranging ethics management strategies and procedures are lacking:

- Ethics training is too brief to be effective and also not focused on important groups of employees, such as new entrants and managers:
  - 27% of the respondents indicated that new employees are trained in the application of the organisation's code of ethics;
  - 13% said that new employees are taught ethical decision-making skills; and
  - 12% indicated that new employees are assisted in integrating ethics into their everyday activities.
- In most cases, ethics criteria do not form part of performance, reward or promotion criteria.
- Ethics-related evaluations are present in around half of the surveyed organisations. One can expect that this will increase when the full implications of both King II (private sector), the Public Finance Management Act (public service) and the civil society codes of ethics such as the code of ethics of the South African Non-governmental Organisation Coalition (SANGOCO) become more apparent.

- Ethics was reported to be part of organisational risk assessment in just more than half (56%) of the participating organisations.
- Approximately half of the respondents indicated that their organisations have an explicit strategy focused on promoting ethical values and practice in their day-to-day activities. This indicates that a lot of work remains to be done in convincing organisations of the importance of integrating ethics management practices as an integral part of all processes into their organisations.

More information is available on:

- <http://www.kpmg.co.za> (private sector)
- <http://www.tisa.org.za> (private sector)
- <http://www.gcis.gov.za/gov/psc/home/psc.htm> (public service)