

SOUTH AFRICAN
GOVERNMENT
COMMUNICATION
POLICY

REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



government
communications

Department:
Government Communication and Information System
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



CONTENTS

GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATION POLICY

15 OCTOBER 2025

Table of Contents

1. POLICY ON COMMUNICATION FOR SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS 8

| | | |
|------|--|----|
| 1.1. | Introduction | 8 |
| 1.2. | Defining Development Communication | 9 |
| 1.3. | Development Communicators' Approaches | 10 |
| 1.4. | Policy Versus Strategy | 11 |
| 1.5. | Objectives of the Policy | 12 |
| 1.6. | Use of Official Languages in Communication | 13 |
| 1.7. | Application And Authority | 13 |
| 1.8. | Compliance | 14 |
| 1.9. | Funding Communication (Communication's Budget) | 14 |

2. CONTEXTUAL FRAMEWORK 16

| | | |
|-------------|---|-----------|
| 2.1. | FRAMING DOCUMENTS | 16 |
| 2.1.1. | The Comtask Report (October 1996) | 16 |
| 2.1.2. | The Constitution | 17 |
| 2.1.3. | National Development Plan | 17 |
| 2.1.3. | Medium Term Development Plan (MTDP) 2024 – 2029: | 18 |
| 2.1.4. | National Communication Strategy Framework (NCSF) | 19 |
| 2.1.5. | Cabinet memorandums | 20 |
| 2.1.6. | Intergovernmental Relations Framework Act (IRFA), 2005 (Act 13 of 2005) | 21 |
| 2.1.7. | Promotion of Access to Information Act (PAIA), 2000 (Act 2 of 2000) | 21 |
| 2.1.8. | Public Finance Management Act (PFMA), 1999 (Act 1 of 1999) | 22 |
| 2.1.9. | Municipal Finance Management Act (MFMA), 2003 (Act 56 of 2003) | 22 |

3. GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATION: ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES AND STRUCTURES 23

| | | |
|------|---|----|
| 3.1. | Introduction | 23 |
| 3.2. | Communication Roles and Responsibilities of The President | 23 |
| 3.3. | Communication Roles and Responsibilities of Ministers | 24 |
| 3.4. | Roles And Responsibilities of Deputy Ministers | 24 |
| 3.5. | Roles And Responsibilities of Provincial Premiers | 25 |



GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATION POLICY

| | | |
|-------|---|----|
| 3.6. | Roles And Responsibilities of MECs | 25 |
| 3.7. | Roles And Responsibilities of the Mayor | 25 |
| 3.8. | Deputy Mayors | 26 |
| 3.9. | Council Speakers | 26 |
| 3.10. | Roles And Responsibilities of Accounting Officer | 27 |
| 3.11. | Deputies To The Accounting Officers/Subject Experts | 28 |
| 3.12. | Cabinet Spokesperson | 28 |
| 3.13. | Government Spokesperson | 28 |
| 3.14. | Deputies To The Accounting Officers/Subject Experts | 29 |
| 3.15. | The Head Of Communication | 29 |
| 3.16. | Roles And Responsibilities Of The HOC | 30 |
| 3.17. | The Roles And Responsibilities Of The MLO | 32 |
| 3.18. | Responsibilities Of The GCIS | 32 |
| 3.19. | Roles And Responsibilities Of Communication Clusters | 35 |
| 3.20. | Roles And Responsibilities Of The Gcis Cluster Supervisors | 36 |
| 3.21. | Roles And Responsibilities Of The Chairpersons Of The Cluster Communication Committees | 37 |
| 3.22. | Responsibilities Of Heads Of Communication In Cluster Committees | 37 |
| 3.23. | Government Communicators' Forums (National, Provincial and Local Government) | 38 |
| 3.26. | Intergovernmental Communicators' Forum | 43 |
| 3.27. | Public Participation Structures/Forums | 44 |
| 3.28. | Communication Enablers | 46 |
| 3.29. | Professionalising The Public Sector/Building A Capable State | 48 |

4. MEDIA ENGAGEMENT

49

| | | |
|-------|---|----|
| 4.1. | The Context | 49 |
| 4.2. | Roles and Responsibilities | 50 |
| 4.3. | Authorised Spokespersons | 51 |
| 4.4. | Conduct of Government Employees as Private Citizens | 52 |
| 4.5. | Response and Liaison Standards for Media Enquiries | 54 |
| 4.6. | House Style and Standard Formats | 54 |
| 4.7. | Complaints about Media Coverage and Behaviour | 55 |
| 4.8. | Off-The-Record Comments | 56 |
| 4.9. | Public Disclosure and Right to Information | 56 |
| 4.10. | Classified Information | 57 |
| 4.11. | Photographic and Video Coverage/Usage by the Media | 57 |
| 4.12. | Supply of Photographs and Film Footage | 57 |
| 4.13. | Media Engagement Tools | 57 |
| 4.14. | International Missions | 59 |

5. DIGITAL COMMUNICATION PLATFORMS

60

| | | |
|------|---------------------|----|
| 5.1. | Introduction | 60 |
| 5.2. | Government Websites | 61 |
| 5.3. | Email Newsletters | 62 |
| 5.4. | Mobile Applications | 62 |
| 5.5. | Social Media | 62 |



6. CRISIS COMMUNICATION

68

| | | |
|-------|---|----|
| 6.1. | Background | 68 |
| 6.2. | Dealing with Crises | 71 |
| 6.3. | Crisis Protocol | 73 |
| 6.4. | Crisis Spokespersons | 73 |
| 6.5. | Working with the Media | 74 |
| 6.6. | Communication Approval Processes | 74 |
| 6.7. | Employee Communication | 74 |
| 6.8. | Integrity of Communication | 75 |
| 6.9. | Informing Other Government Stakeholders | 75 |
| 6.10. | Social Media Use In A Crisis | 75 |
| 6.11. | Media Monitoring | 76 |

7. BRAND MARKETING AND CAMPAIGN MANAGEMENT

77

| | | |
|------|---|----|
| 7.1. | Government Communicators' Toolkit | 77 |
| 7.2. | Content, Language, Tone, and Image of Marketing Campaigns | 77 |
| 7.3. | Public Relations | 86 |
| 7.4. | Gifts, Donations, and Sponsorships: Arrangements | 87 |
| 7.5. | Publications | 89 |
| 7.6. | Third-Party Advertising and References on Websites | 91 |

8. INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

92

| | | |
|------|-----------------------------------|----|
| 8.1. | Definitions | 92 |
| 8.2. | Aims and Objectives | 92 |
| 8.3. | Planning | 93 |
| 8.4. | Internal Communication Platforms | 93 |
| 8.5. | Internal Communication Structures | 94 |
| 8.6. | Acceptable Use | 97 |
| 8.7. | Monitoring | 97 |

9. RESEARCH

98

| | | |
|------|---|----|
| 9.1. | Communication Research | 98 |
| 9.2. | Public Opinion Research | 98 |
| 9.3. | Roles and Responsibilities of Departments | 98 |
| 9.4. | Monitoring and Evaluation | 99 |
| 9.5. | Compliance with The Communication Policy | 99 |

10. BIBLIOGRAPHY

100

| | | |
|-------|-------------------------|-----|
| 10.1. | Policies And Guidelines | 100 |
| 10.2. | Laws And Regulations | 101 |
| 10.3. | General | 103 |

ABB

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

| | |
|----------|--|
| Brand SA | Brand South Africa |
| CBRN | Small-scale Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear |
| CDW | Community Development Worker |
| CoGTA | Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs |
| DCF | District Communicators' Forum |
| DDG | Deputy Director-General |
| DG | Director-General |
| DGCF | District Government Communicators' Forum |
| DPSA | Department of Public Service and Administration |
| FOHAD | Forum for the Heads of Department |
| FOSAD | Forum of South African Directors-General |
| G-CET | Government Communication Excellence Tool |
| GCF | Government Communicators' Forum |
| GCIS | Government Communication and Information System |
| GCP | Government Communication Policy |
| GNU | Government of National Unity |
| HoC | Head of Communication |
| HoD | Head of Department |
| ICD | Internal Communications Division |
| IEC | Electoral Commission of South Africa |
| IGCF | Intergovernmental Communicators' Forum |
| IMC | Inter-Ministerial Committee |
| IRFA | Intergovernmental Relations Framework Act |
| KPA | Key Performance Area |
| LCF | Local Communicators' Forum |
| LGCF | Local Government Communicators' Forum |
| MEC | Member of the Executive Council |
| MFMA | Municipal Finance Management Act |
| MLO | Media Liaison Officer |



GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATION POLICY

| | |
|---------|---|
| MTDP | Medium Term Development Plan |
| MTSF | Medium Term Strategic Framework |
| NATJOC | National Joint Operations Centre |
| NCSF | National Communication Strategy Framework |
| NDP | National Development Plan |
| NGCF | National Government Communicators' Forum |
| NGO | Non-governmental organisation |
| NIICF | National Integrated Internal Communicators' Forum |
| PAIA | Promotion of Access to Information Act |
| PFMA | Public Finance Management Act |
| PGCF | Provincial Government Communicators' Forum |
| PICF | Provincial Internal Communicators' Forum |
| PLO | Parliamentary Liaison Officer |
| PoA | Programme of Action |
| PR | Public Relations |
| PROVJOC | Provincial Joint Operations Centre |
| RPL | Recognition of Prior Learning |
| RR | Rapid Response |
| SALGA | South African Local Government Association |
| SASL | South African Sign Language |
| SMS | Short Message Service |
| SMART | Specific Measurable Achievable Realistic Time |
| SOE | State-Owned Enterprises |
| SoNA | State of the Nation Address |
| UOLA | Use of Official Languages Act |



* GENERAL EXPLANATORY NOTE

Revisions or new additions are underlined.

1. POLICY ON COMMUNICATION FOR SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS

1.1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1.1. South Africans elected a democratic government in 1994 with the aim of building a successful country that meets the basic needs of all citizens, restores human dignity and fosters a sense of belonging. To achieve this, the government adopted a developmental approach based on collaboration with the people. After 1994, the government adopted a model combining representative, deliberative and participatory democracy – placing communication at the heart of its development strategy.
- 1.1.2. The government immediately began developing and implementing policies and programmes to address the country's deep inequalities, expand access to services, strengthen institutions and create opportunities for all citizens to gain employment. This required careful planning and coordination, particularly in terms of communication. It involved considering the needs and interests of the public, as well as determining how to solicit their feedback. This is ensured through public participation, as guaranteed by the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996 (the Constitution) and other legislation. To date, communication remains an essential tool for effective and efficient implementation of government policies, programmes, services and projects. Communication is a critical strategic function that ensures information is widely available and accessible in public spaces, enabling citizens to engage in discussions on key issues and to participate not only in shaping government policies but also in seizing opportunities that affect their lives. To achieve this, the government adopted a two-way communication approach based on mutual respect and tolerance of diverse views and public opinion.
- 1.1.3. Effective communication also bolsters government efforts by promoting good governance and improving the morale of internal staff and external citizens/stakeholders. It also supports the achievement of government's goals and objectives. When implemented effectively, it can increase public trust and confidence in the integrity of government and help counter negative perceptions in the public space.
- 1.1.4. The Constitution provides the framework for communication within the South African context and recognises freedom of expression and the public's right to information as fundamental rights.
- 1.1.5. **Government communication is guided by the following democratic principles:**
 - 1.1.5.1. Openness;
 - 1.1.5.2. Participation;
 - 1.1.5.3. Transparency;
 - 1.1.5.4. Accountability; and
 - 1.1.5.5. Consultation.



1.1.6. Communication is therefore governed by the following principles:

- 1.1.6.1. Accountability and good governance;
- 1.1.6.2. Collegiality;
- 1.1.6.3. Collaboration and consultation;
- 1.1.6.4. Professionalism;
- 1.1.6.5. Etiquette;
- 1.1.6.6. Integrity;
- 1.1.6.7. Openness and transparency; and
- 1.1.6.8. Respect.

1.1.7. As the custodian of government communication, the Government Communication and Information System (GCIS) developed this Government Communication Policy (GCP) in consultation with communicators from national, provincial and local governments. The policy aims to strengthen government communication across all spheres and support the state to deliver its mandate. This is in line with the government's Development Communication Strategy (DCS).

1.2. DEFINING DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION

1.2.1. The use of communication to promote social and economic progress is known as Development Communication, a concept defined by Nora Quebral 7 as:

“The art and science of human communication is linked to a society's planned transformation from a state of poverty to one of dynamic socio-economic growth that makes for greater equity and the target unfolding of individual potential” (Quebral, 2001).



- 1.2.2. Development communication is based on the principle that citizens and communities should actively participate in communication activities that directly impact their lives. The approach is informational rather than instructional; in this context, it is the government's responsibility to engage with the public and provide socio-economic and developmental information, enabling them to make informed decisions about their lives and livelihoods. In these interactions, the government must listen to citizens, respond to their queries and provide feedback about progress to encourage positive change within communities.
- 1.2.3. Development communication is not a top-down but rather a horizontal process that enables people to make informed decisions about their lives. Messages are not intended as manipulation or propaganda; citizens should interpret them as a genuine effort to elicit responses from communities and to foster a development-oriented partnership.
- 1.2.4. Development communicators should employ a range of communication tools to inform, educate and create opportunities that improve the social, economic and cultural quality of life of the South African public.



1.3. DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATORS' APPROACHES

- 1.3.1. The South African government has adopted a developmental approach to communication, guided by the core democratic values of openness and participation. Government communicators using the development communication model must:
- 1.3.1.1. provide timely, accurate and clear information to the public about government policies, programmes, plans, services and initiatives in a non-partisan manner, thereby holding government accountable to the people it serves;
 - 1.3.1.2. make information widely accessible to all South Africans with different needs and where possible and within available resources, provide it in their preferred spoken official languages, South African Sign Language (SASL), and in Braille;
 - 1.3.1.3. educate and transform society, foster social cohesion and empower people to participate in shaping government policies;
 - 1.3.1.4. improve access to information to enable the public to participate in the country's transformation and improve their lives;
 - 1.3.1.5. promote dialogue between citizens and government through debate and discussion, and provide feedback mechanisms that allow citizens to participate in shaping government policies, programmes and projects;
 - 1.3.1.6. promote Africa's renaissance, including regional integration and the implementation of people-centred development programmes;
 - 1.3.1.7. identify priorities and communicate these to communities, and address the implementation of the National Development Plan (NDP): Vision 2030 and the Programme of Action (PoA); and
 - 1.3.1.8. establish partnerships with various stakeholders such as the private sector, academia, research institutions and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), to broaden audience reach.

1.4. POLICY VERSUS STRATEGY

- 1.4.1. A policy is a set of rules that guides decision-making and provides a blueprint for how an organisation operates. It is developed to ensure that processes, procedures and outcomes are consistent across an organisation.
- 1.4.2. Strategy, on the other hand, defines the path and actions an organisation must take to achieve its objectives. Multiple strategies can be employed to reach organisational goals.
- 1.4.3. The GCP sets out the rules, processes and procedures for communication within government departments and across national, provincial and local governments. This policy serves as the foundation for developing a Government Communication Strategy, which is drafted every five years and updated annually.





1.5. OBJECTIVES OF THE POLICY

1.5.1. This policy aims to:

- 1.5.1.1. ensure that all communicators operate from a development communication paradigm;
- 1.5.1.2. strengthen a government communication system that enables the public and the international community to participate in and benefit from government policies and programmes;
- 1.5.1.3. ensure that communication at all spheres of government is:
 - i. well-integrated, coherent, coordinated and consistent; and
 - ii. reliable, ethical, open, encourages participation, transformative, professional, credible, effectively managed, impactful and meets the needs of all South African citizens.
- 1.5.1.4. build a citizen-centred and client-focused communication system;
- 1.5.1.5. ensure that communication caters for all official languages, depending on the area;
- 1.5.1.6. coordinate communication so that all government departments and agencies work collaboratively to provide clear and effective communication to all South African citizens;
- 1.5.1.7. prescribe communication policy, provide for regulations, processes and procedures, and assign responsibilities within and across government spheres to ensure that communication objectives are achieved;
- 1.5.1.8. advocate for communication as a strategic function that is allocated the required resources to be able to fulfil its aims and objectives;
- 1.5.1.9. ensure efficient use of the existing government communication infrastructure; and
- 1.5.1.10. create an effective feedback mechanism between the government and all South African citizens.

1.6. USE OF OFFICIAL LANGUAGES IN COMMUNICATION

- 1.6.1. In terms of Section 6 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, all official languages are valued equally and treated fairly. South Africa recognises 12 official languages: Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, siSwati, Tshivenda, Xitsonga, Afrikaans, English, isiNdebele, isiXhosa, isiZulu and SASL.
- 1.6.2. Government communicators must provide the public with access to information that is timely, accurate and accessible. Since South Africa is a multicultural country with a diverse linguistic landscape, all communication implementation activities must use the various official languages and Braille; and
- 1.6.3. The Use of Official Languages Act (UOLA) of 2012, provides the framework for determining language use in communication activities. When deciding on the official language(s) to use, all government spheres must consider usage, practicality, regional circumstances and the needs and preferences of the public.
- 1.6.4. As part of the implementation of the UOLA, each department, province and entity, is expected to adopt official languages under a language policy that applies to its organisation.

1.7. APPLICATION AND AUTHORITY

- 1.7.1. This policy applies to all three spheres of government (national, provincial and local) including government agencies and entities.



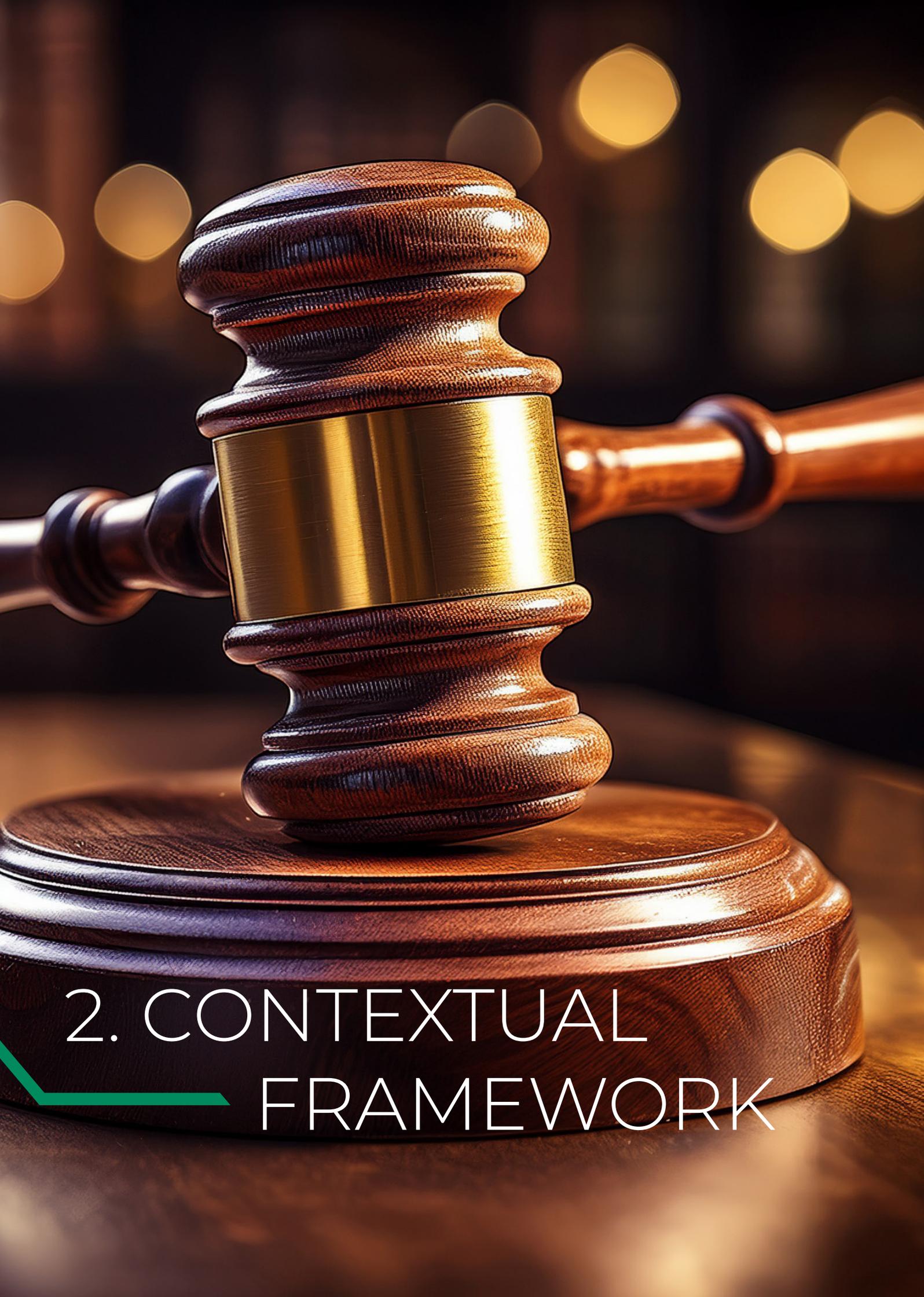
- 1.7.2. While the policy applies equally to all spheres of government, provincial and local spheres may adopt policies that are conducive and responsive to provincial and local conditions. These adaptations must suit the local communication environment while remaining consistent with the policy's objectives and principles.
- 1.7.3. Accounting officers in provincial and local government spheres have the authority to approve their adapted communication policies. Similarly, the Accounting Officers of state entities may modify their institutional policies to meet their needs, in consultation with the GCIS and in alignment with this policy.
- 1.7.4. The Head of Communication (HoC) at each sphere or entity of government must:**
- 1.7.3.1. ensure that management bodies and staff members, particularly government communicators, are aware of the policy;
 - 1.7.3.2. provide oversight of the implementation of this policy;
 - 1.7.3.3. report on implementation progress to political principals and Accounting Officers;
 - 1.7.3.4. participate in policy monitoring and evaluation activities; and
 - 1.7.3.5. ensure that, in consultation with the GCIS, the board or entity adopts or passes a resolution that adapts certain aspects of the policy in line with their processes and structures.

1.8. COMPLIANCE

- 1.8.1. All government communication officials must adhere to this policy within their respective areas of responsibility. HoCs operating at national, provincial or local level are responsible for ensuring that officials are made aware of the policy's content, while political principals and Accounting Officers must ensure compliance with the GCP.
- 1.8.2. The GCIS will report to the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME) on the implementation of the policy. The reporting will be managed through the Government Communication Excellence Tool (G-CET), a self-assessment and standard performance management system for each government entity. The tool is used to monitor and evaluate government communication campaigns, supporting continuous improvement within government departments.
- 1.8.3. All departments' communication strategies must be costed, finalised with an allocated budget and approved by the Accounting Officer before the end of the first quarter of each financial year. The approved strategies must be shared with the GCIS cluster coordinators.

1.9. FUNDING COMMUNICATION (COMMUNICATION'S BUDGET)

- 1.9.1. At least 3% - 5% of the institution's operational budget, excluding employee compensation and transfers, must be ring-fenced and allocated for communication, based on the institution's size and functions.
- 1.9.2. In addition to other standard items, the communication budget should include funding for:**
- 1.9.2.1. sufficient staff to carry out the strategic communication function;
 - 1.9.2.2. training; and
 - 1.9.2.3. internal communication functions.



2. CONTEXTUAL FRAMEWORK



2. CONTEXTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. FRAMING DOCUMENTS

2.1.1. The Comtask Report (October 1996)

2.1.1.1. The Comtask Report (1996) established a set of communication principles, including the requirement for freedom of expression and access to information, as reflected in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996. The Cabinet-approved Comtask Report recommended that:

- i. the GCIS be established to coordinate all government communications;
- ii. each ministry and various spheres of government establish a professional Communications unit to deliver the overarching communication strategy;
- iii. a centralised Communication Service Agency be established to coordinate the bulk-buying of media, conduct research into media needs and trends and assist in developing content;
- iv. Development Communication be adopted as a framework to empower citizens and promote a two-way flow of information as a key principle;
- v. there be direct and unmediated communication with all South Africans; and
- vi. the ongoing development and coordination of training in government communication be prioritised.

2.1.1.2. The Comtask Report was reviewed in 2008 and 2014. While many advances have been made, the principles and approaches that were used remain the same.

2.1.2. The Constitution

2.1.2.1. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996 is the supreme law of the country, and all the obligations that it sets out need to be adhered to. The Constitution envisions a united, democratic, non-racial, non-sexist and prosperous nation founded on human rights and non-discrimination. Everyone is equal before the law and has the freedom to associate freely.

2.1.2.2. In addition, the Bill of Rights confers the following rights enshrined in Chapter 2 of the Constitution:

- i. Section 16(1) states that, “Everyone has the right to freedom of expression, which includes:
 - (a) freedom of the press and other media;
 - (b) freedom to receive and impart information and ideas;
 - (c) freedom of artistic creativity; and
 - (d) academic freedom and freedom of scientific research”.
- ii. The right in subsection (1) does not extend to:
 - (a) propaganda for war;
 - (b) incitement of imminent violence; or
 - (c) advocacy of hatred that is based on race, ethnicity, gender or religion, and that constitutes incitement to cause harm.
- iii. Section 32(1) states that, “Everyone has the right of access to (a) any information held by the State.”



2.1.3. National Development Plan

- 2.1.2.3. The government adopted the National Development Plan (NDP) as a long-term plan to eliminate unemployment, poverty and inequality in South Africa by 2030. The success of the plan requires citizens to actively participate in development; the capacity of the State to be strengthened; and leadership and partnership to be promoted.
- 2.1.2.4. The NDP identified a growing gap between citizens and government, which must be bridged if South Africa is to achieve its developmental objectives. Therefore, the government must proactively communicate and share information with citizens.

2.1.3. Medium Term Development Plan (MTDP) 2024 – 2029 :

- 2.1.3.1. The review of the Medium Term Strategic Framework (MTSF) 2019 – 2024 and its planning methodologies paved the way for the transition to the Medium Term Development Plan (MTDP) 2024 – 2029.
- 2.1.3.2. Communication occurs within dynamic political environments and messages must align with the context. The MTDP 2024 – 2029 is being introduced at a pivotal moment in South Africa's history, following a general election on 29 May 2024, in which no political party secured a majority. The establishment of the Government of National Unity (GNU) provided a path forward. In its Statement of Intent, the GNU committed to ensuring stability and peace. It also pledged to address the triple challenge of poverty, unemployment and inequality. Furthermore, the GNU aimed to uphold constitutional democracy and the rule of law, while building an inclusive South Africa for all citizens. The GNU also pledged to adhere to a set of foundational principles and a basic minimum programme of priorities derived from the manifestos of its participating parties.
- 2.1.3.3. The MTDP 2024 – 2029 aligns with the GNU's Statement of Intent and the NDP: Vision 2030 by outlining the strategic priorities of the 7th Administration. It sets out a programme of interventions and targets for the current term of government and provides a strategic response to the economic and social challenges facing South Africans today.
While the plan identifies three strategic priorities, it emphasises the economy as the key driver for achieving developmental goals. The success of the MTDP depends on a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach.
- 2.1.3.4. The MTDP for 2024 – 2029 aligns with the goals and objectives of the NDP and the government's programme of priorities. The NDP remains South Africa's long-term national plan towards 2030 and is aligned with its international commitments. The MTDP of 2024 – 2029 serves as the medium-term plan towards the achievement of the NDP, replacing the MTSF by adopting international naming conventions and emphasising development outcomes.
- 2.1.3.5. The government has set five goals for the next five years, which are:
 - i. A dynamic and growing economy;
 - ii. A more equal society in which no person lives in poverty;
 - iii. A capable state delivering basic services to all citizens;
 - iv. A safe and secure environment; and
 - v. A cohesive and united nation.



- 2.1.3.6. To achieve these goals, the MTDP 2024 –2029 identifies three strategic priorities, which will be implemented across the state:
- i. Strategic Priority 1: Drive inclusive growth and create jobs.
 - ii. Strategic Priority 2: Reduce poverty and address the high cost of living.
 - iii. Strategic Priority 3: Build a capable, ethical and developmental state.

2.1.4. National Communication Strategy Framework (NCSF)

- 2.1.4.1. The NCSF is informed by the MTDP and the NDP. It sets out a communications vision and approach for government, including communication tactics for the period, such as considering the role of the GCIS, strengthening intergovernmental communication, enhancing communication at provincial and local levels and building partnerships. A Communication Plan is then developed to support these tactics.

2.1.5. Cabinet memorandums

- 2.1.5.1. Cabinet Memorandum: 8 of 1997
- i. Outlines the establishment of the GCIS following the Comtask Report. The department is to serve as the nerve centre for strategy, policy development, planning, research and administration; and
 - ii. Establishes the function of the HoCs, assigning them responsibility for leading communication across ministries and departments at the Chief Director level. HoCs are expected to participate in regular meetings convened by the Director-General (DG) of the GCIS to coordinate communication across government.
- 2.1.5.2. Cabinet Memorandum: 8 of 1998
- i. Emphasises the need for relevant communication structures and establishes coordinating forums such as HoC meetings and clusters.
 - ii. Emphasises the importance of communication strategies informed by the NCSF.
 - iii. States that available skills in the market will determine the level of the HoC.. HoCs must attend strategic government meetings.
 - iv. It mandates the GCIS to facilitate the placement of all national government campaign advertising through the media bulk-buying contract approved by the National Treasury.
- 2.1.5.3. Cabinet Memorandum: 16 of 2000
- i. Focuses on progress since 1998 and highlights concerns regarding departments that lack the necessary structures.
 - ii. Emphasises that communication should be recognised as a strategic function, and that communication strategies must be submitted to the GCIS.
 - iii. Endorses izimbizo as key public participation platforms.
 - iv. Emphasises the key performance areas (KPA) for HoCs.
- 2.1.5.4. Cabinet Memorandum: 4 of 2017
- i. The Cabinet approved the memo in August 2018 and focused on the norms and standards designed to professionalise and strengthen the government communication system, ensuring it was well-integrated, better coordinated and professional, while enabling citizens to engage with government.



- ii. Defines the structures, functions and processes that ensure the government-wide communication system meets its strategic aims and objectives.

2.1.6. Intergovernmental Relations Framework Act (IRFA), 2005 (Act 13 of 2005)

- 2.1.6.1. The Intergovernmental Relations Framework (IRFA) of 2005 formalises the relationship between the three spheres of government. The Act aims to improve intergovernmental coordination and cooperation among national, provincial and local governments, as well as all organs of state, in support of the principle of corporate governance enshrined in Chapter 3 of the Constitution. This coordination will make implementation of policy and legislation easier, enable the government to operate more effectively and enhance service delivery, policy monitoring and the realisation of national priorities.
- 2.1.6.2. The IRFA of 2005 also provides mechanisms and procedures to resolve intergovernmental disputes if they arise.

2.1.7. Promotion of Access to Information Act (PAIA), 2000 (Act 2 of 2000)

- 2.1.7.1. The PAIA of 2000 was enacted to give effect to Section 32 of the Constitution, which provides that everyone has the right to access information held by the State, as well as information held by another person (or private body) when such information is required for the exercise and protection of rights.
- 2.1.7.2. In general, the PAIA of 2000 emphasises the importance of access to information in a democratic society by fostering a culture of transparency and accountability. It achieves this by promoting a society in which all South Africans have effective access to information, enabling them to exercise and protect their rights fully.

2.1.8. Public Finance Management Act (PFMA), 1999 (Act 1 of 1999)

- 2.1.8.1. The PFMA of 1999 promotes good financial management to maximise service delivery through the effective and efficient use of limited resources.
- 2.1.8.2. The Act also aims to modernise financial management in the public sector, enabling public sector managers to manage while being held accountable. Additionally, the PFMA of 1999 seeks to ensure the timely provision of high-quality information.

2.1.9. Municipal Finance Management Act (MFMA), 2003 (Act 56 of 2003)

- 2.1.9.1. The MFMA of 2003 aims to modernise budgeting, accounting and financial management practices by placing local government finances on a sustainable footing, thereby maximising municipalities' capacity to deliver services to communities.
- 2.1.9.2. It also aims to establish a sound financial governance framework by clarifying and separating the roles and responsibilities of the council, mayor and officials. The MFMA of 2003 is mandated by the Constitution, which requires all three spheres of government to be transparent about their financial affairs.
- 2.1.9.3. It forms an integral part of the broader reform package for local government, as outlined in the 1998 White Paper on Local Government.

3. GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATION: ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES AND STRUCTURES





3. GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATION: ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES AND STRUCTURES

3.1. INTRODUCTION

- 3.1.1. Communication planning must be integrated into strategic departmental planning at management level. This means that communicators must be present during institutional planning, management or board meetings.
- 3.1.2. Communication is a professional function that should remain independent of the volatility of the political environment.
- 3.1.3. **Communicators must participate in:**
 - 3.1.3.1. all strategic decision-making bodies at the political and administrative interface, as well as internal communication structures established to achieve government communication objectives; and
 - 3.1.3.2. structures that integrate and coordinate government communication activities across the three spheres in support of government service delivery objectives.
- 3.1.4. Costed communication and strategy plans must be funded and approved by the Accounting Officer by the end of the first quarter of the financial year.
- 3.1.5. The Forum of South African DGs (FOSAD) must ensure that all Accounting Officers comply with the provisions set out in 3.1.1, 3.1.3 and 3.1.4.

3.2. COMMUNICATION ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PRESIDENT

- 3.2.1. **The President as Head and effective Chief of Government:**
 - 3.2.1.1. is the Communicator-in-Chief;
 - 3.2.1.2. sets the tone for communication in the State of the Nation Address;
 - 3.2.1.3. accounts to the public on government policy, aims and objectives; and reports on deliverables;
 - 3.2.1.4. interacts with the public to solicit views and input on government activities;
 - 3.2.1.5. chairs Cabinet, and GCIS takes its cue from Cabinet decisions to communicate to South Africans; and
 - 3.2.1.6. leads communication during national disasters and can declare a national crisis and lead crisis communication.

3.3. COMMUNICATION ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF MINISTERS

- 3.3.1. **As key government communicators, Ministers must:**
 - 3.3.1.1. take charge of communication functions within their departments;
 - 3.3.1.2. account to the public on departmental policies, aims and objectives, and report on deliverables;
 - 3.3.1.3. ensure that departmental communication aligns with overall government priorities and the NDP;
 - 3.3.1.4. interact with the public to solicit views and input on departmental activities;
 - 3.3.1.5. engage with the media to inform and educate citizens;
 - 3.3.1.6. ensure coherence and consistency of messaging with other government bodies;



- 3.3.1.7. demonstrate visibility and leadership in communication during crises such as natural disasters, and support public participation programmes and stakeholder engagement initiatives; and
- 3.3.1.8. adhere to the protocols and principles for the Executive as outlined in the annexure to this policy.

3.4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF DEPUTY MINISTERS

3.4.1. The role of Deputy Ministers in communication involves:

- 3.4.1.1. communicating on issues within the scope of their delegations as assigned by their Ministers;
- 3.4.1.2. engaging with the media and the public to convey key government messages;
- 3.4.1.3. ensuring that government policies are communicated clearly and effectively; and
- 3.4.1.4. supporting the execution of the Ministry's mandates through public addresses, speeches and outreach programmes.

3.5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF PROVINCIAL PREMIERS

- 3.5.1. Premiers must provide strategic direction for developing and shaping communication policies;
- 3.5.2. Premiers must ensure that messages are coherent and integrated;
- 3.5.3. Premiers must promote effective engagement between government and the public; and
- 3.5.4. Premiers must utilise various platforms to inform citizens, manage the government's image and foster participatory democracy.

3.6. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF MECs

- 3.6.1. Members of the Executive Council (MECs) serve as chief communicators for their provincial department;
- 3.6.2. MECs must leverage their communication teams to develop and implement communication strategies, manage the departmental image, provide information on policies and coordinate public engagement; and
- 3.6.3. Their role extends to building public confidence and promoting the department's vision, mandate and service delivery objectives.

3.7. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE MAYOR

3.7.1. The mayor:

- 3.7.1.1. is the primary voice of the municipality, communicating council policies, programmes, and decisions to the public and the media;
- 3.7.1.2. acts as a central figure, speaking on behalf of the municipality during economic challenges, disaster management or other critical socio-economic issues;
- 3.7.1.3. must promote dialogue and interaction with citizens through various platforms such as izimbizo, public outreach programmes especially community media, public meetings and social media;
- 3.7.1.4. must use digital platforms as local information hubs, sharing relevant, locally focused content to keep residents informed;
- 3.7.1.5. must build broad public support and legitimacy for government programmes and services by clearly communicating their purpose and benefits;



- 3.7.1.6. must be instrumental in communicating during emergencies or crises to deliver crucial information and guidance;
- 3.7.1.7. must adhere to the protocols and principles for the Executive as outlined in the annexure to this policy.

3.8. DEPUTY MAYORS

3.8.1. The role of deputy mayors includes:

- 3.8.1.1. communicating on issues aligned with their delegations;
- 3.8.1.2. engaging with the media and the public on programmes they lead, as per their delegations;
- 3.8.1.3. ensuring that municipal programmes are communicated effectively;
- 3.8.1.4. supporting the execution of the municipality's mandate through izimbizo, community outreaches and dialogues, and using community media to reach broader audiences; and
- 3.8.1.5. adhering to the protocols and principles for the Executive as outlined in the annexure to this policy.

3.9. COUNCIL SPEAKERS

3.9.1. Council Speakers are responsible for:

- 3.9.1.1. facilitating public participation in legislative matters;
- 3.9.1.2. ensuring support is provided to councillors and Ward Committees for communication purposes;
- 3.9.1.3. providing a framework and training to support councillors' communication, and ensuring that all communication reports are submitted in accordance with municipal requirements;
- 3.9.1.4. providing framework and training for Ward Committee communication at ward level, and ensuring that reports are received; and
- 3.9.1.5. adhering to the protocols and principles for the Executive as outlined in the annexure to this policy.

3.10. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF ACCOUNTING OFFICER

3.10.1. Accounting Officers include DGs, Heads of Department (HoDs) and Municipal Managers.

3.10.2. The Accounting Officer must:

- 3.10.2.1. appoint a suitably qualified HoC who will be responsible for ensuring that all other communication functions are adequately staffed;
- 3.10.2.2. have clearly defined roles and responsibilities of communicators included in performance agreements with the HoC in accordance with the Government Communicators' Scorecard;
- 3.10.2.3. ensure communicators and Municipal Liaison Officers (MLOs) attend GCIS induction



- and National School of Government (NSG) communication courses;
- 3.10.2.4. ensure ongoing training of communicators;
- 3.10.2.5. ensure an adequate budget for communication;
- 3.10.2.6. ensure that communication is recognised as a strategic function;
- 3.10.2.7. ensure that communication strategies, policies and plans are approved;
- 3.10.2.8. ensure that the HoC is adequately skilled for the post;
- 3.10.2.9. provide oversight of the HoC's functions;
- 3.10.2.10. assist with the delivery of information to specific forums and the general public when called upon;
- 3.10.2.11. be the primary spokesperson on technical and administrative issues of the department;
- 3.10.2.12. represent the Executive Authority in events where a political principal is not available;
- 3.10.2.13. write opinion pieces on topical issues relating to the department. Such articles serve as reference documents for media and other enquiries, and ensure that the media receives a consistent and integrated message; and
- 3.10.2.14. in National Departments, ensure that Deputy Ministers are supported with communication resources.

3.11. DEPUTIES TO THE ACCOUNTING OFFICERS/SUBJECT EXPERTS

- 3.11.1. Communicate technical details of the subject matter; and
- 3.11.2. communicate on behalf of the Accounting Officer.

3.12. CABINET SPOKESPERSON

- 3.12.1. The Executive Authority responsible for GCIS is the Cabinet Spokesperson, who is responsible for articulating, promoting and defending the decisions of the national Cabinet;
- 3.12.2. Hold media briefings after every Cabinet sitting and inform the public about the decisions of the Cabinet;
- 3.12.3. Co-ordinate Cabinet members and chairs media briefings on issues of communications during crises and or disasters or on cross-cutting government matters;
- 3.12.4. Ensure Cluster media briefings;
- 3.12.5. The Cabinet spokesperson should be supported by a professional and dedicated team of professionals to:
- 3.12.6. advise on what should be included in the Cabinet statement;
- 3.12.7. assist in the drafting of the Cabinet statement; and
- 3.12.8. identify communication issues arising in the environment that require deliberation by Cabinet communication.

3.13. GOVERNMENT SPOKESPERSON

- 3.13.1. Co-ordinates government messengers/role-players (Executives/Accounting Officers/HoCs) on issues of government communication;
- 3.13.2. Leads government communication by providing holding statements and/or engaging the media on matters in the environment while content is being developed;
- 3.13.3. Releases media statements, holds media interviews, conduct information sessions, and produces other products to inform and engage the public and media on government issues;
- 3.13.4. Cultivates and maintains positive working relationships with journalists; and
- 3.13.5. Uses other channels to amplify Cabinet decisions.



3.14. DEPUTIES TO THE ACCOUNTING OFFICERS/SUBJECT EXPERTS

- 3.14.1. Communicates technical details of the subject matter; and
- 3.14.2. Communicates on behalf of the Accounting Officer.

3.15. THE HEAD OF COMMUNICATION

3.15.1. STRUCTURES AND AUTHORITY

- 3.5.1.1. The HoC is the most senior communication official in a national, provincial or local government department.
- 3.5.1.2. The HoC reports to the Accounting Officer or the most senior government official at the national, provincial or local level (such as the HoD and Municipal Manager).
- 3.5.1.3. HoCs must be standing participants in the executive/management structures at the national, provincial or local level. This enables the HoC to articulate government policy more effectively, ensure that policy and programmes are communicated clearly, present current affairs and advise on the communication implications of deliberations. Examples of these structures include:
 - i. Nationally: FOSAD, cluster committees and DGs' cluster.
 - ii. Provincially: Cabinet and Executive Council (EXCO), Provincial Premiers Coordinating Forum (per invitation), Municipalities and the Member of the Executive Council (MEC) (per invitation), Provincial Government Communicators' Forum (PGCF), PCF, Provincial Joint Operational and Intelligence Structure and all other intergovernmental relations forums requiring communication input.
 - iii. Metropolitan/district/local: Municipal Council, Mayoral or Executive committees, Section 79 and Section 80 committees (in terms of the Municipal Structures Act, 1998 (Act 117 of 1998) and Municipal Executive Management (meetings between Municipal Managers and Managers accountable to Municipal Managers as per Section 54 of the Municipal Systems Act of 2000).
- 3.5.1.4. The HoC must lead communication structures to ensure proper coordination and integration of communication policies and programmes of the department across all spheres.
- 3.5.1.5. Ensure that information is widely available to all South Africans with varying needs, in their preferred spoken official languages, South African Sign Language (SASL), subtitles on visuals and in Braille;
- 3.5.1.6. Where the HoC is also the MLO, he/she straddles the communication function across the political and administrative entities and is accountable for the overall communication function.
- 3.5.1.7. Possess minimum qualifications to enter the sector.
- 3.5.1.8. Undertakes communication training regularly to ensure professional growth and development.





3.16. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE HOC

3.16.1. The HoC should, among other things:

- i. deliver a costed and integrated communication strategy and plan in line with the NCSF and the guidelines outlined in the Government Communicators' Handbook . This must be approved and funded by the Accounting Officer before the end of the first quarter of the financial year;
- ii. align with the corporate identity and branding of government;
- iii. submit communications plans and strategies to GCIS annually to allow monitoring of implementation and impact;
- iv. align with the corporate identity and branding of government;
- v. undertake communications training regularly to ensure professional growth and development;
- vi. ensure that information is widely available to all South Africans with varying needs, in their preferred spoken official languages, South African Sign Language (SASL), and in Braille;
- vii. submit quarterly reports on Annual Communication Plans;
- viii. allocate 30% of the communication advertising budget to community media;
- ix. establish partnerships with a range of stakeholders to broaden audience reach and improve access to information;
- x. align the communication strategy with the requirements of this policy;
- xi. ensure the implementation of the integrated communication strategy and plan;
- xii. work with the MLO to develop and implement strategies that enhance the reputation of the executive and the organisation;
- xiii. provide advice and make recommendations on communications to the Accounting Officers;
- xiv. manage the coordination and implementation of the communication response to unplanned and urgent communication, including crises;
- xv. write opinion pieces on topical issues relating to the department;
- xvi. provide overall management of the communication team to support effective communication, including but not limited to media engagement, all communication platforms, campaigns, marketing and public relations (PR) functions, as well as research and analysis to measure impact;
- xvii. ensure that the organisation is informed and fully aware of the GCP, and that communicators understand their roles and responsibilities;
- xviii. oversee the ongoing training and capacity-building of communicators, including induction;



GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATION POLICY

- xix. participate actively in all strategic meetings of the organisation;
- xx. act as the custodian of all content emanating from the organisation, and where GCIS is called upon to assist, present the content to be used for communication;
- xxi. sign a performance agreement aligned with the communication responsibilities outlined in the GCIS Generic Performance Scorecard for HoCs;
- xxii. manage and measure the performance of all communicators, especially the delivery of communication strategic plans and the fulfilment of media objectives;
- xxiii. oversee the assessment of annual communication strategies and make adjustments where necessary; and
- xxiv. monitor communication deliverables and report on progress and impact.

3.17. THE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE MLO

3.17.1. The MLO should, among other things:

- 3.17.1.1. enhance the public image of the Executive Authority and manage media liaison for the office;
- 3.17.1.2. strengthen relationships with the media, leading to increased profiling of the executive and the government institution;
- 3.17.1.3. contribute to the development of an integrated communication strategy and plan, particularly by developing the executive's media engagement strategy and plan;
- 3.17.1.4. work with the HoC to ensure that all communication objectives are achieved, the GCP is implemented, and all communication protocols are observed;
- 3.17.1.5. provide communication advice and support to the executive, and act as the spokesperson;
- 3.17.1.6. oversee the development of communication material, including press releases, social media, and website copy, as well as briefing notes, in support of the Executive's outreach activities; and
- 3.17.1.7. monitor print, broadcast, social, and online media reports to respond effectively to issues within the communication environment.

3.18. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE GCIS

3.18.1. The GCIS is the custodian of government communication and must ensure that all spheres of government and state organs adhere to the principles, policies, and standards established for an effective communication system. The role of the GCIS is to:

- 3.18.1.1. Advocate within and across government for communication to be recognised as a strategic and professional function central to service delivery;
- 3.18.1.2. Lead, drive, and coordinate government communication across all spheres of government;
- 3.18.1.3. Chair and coordinate the interdepartmental teams on transversal or crisis issues;
- 3.18.1.4. Determine policy and establish norms and standards for communication best practice;
- 3.18.1.5. Develop tools to support the continuous professionalisation of communication, in line with the Government Communicators' Handbook and Editorial Style Guide;
- 3.18.1.6. Develop the NCSF, which all national, provincial, and local departments and entities must adhere to;



- 3.18.1.7. Determine and drive coherent government messaging;
- 3.18.1.8. Coordinate the induction of political principals;
- 3.18.1.9. Work with DPSA and the NSG to develop a communication professional competency framework that defines the knowledge, skills, and attributes required, valued, and rewarded for specific occupational roles applicable to all government communicators;
- 3.18.1.10. Coordinate daily Rapid Response meetings with heads of communication to identify, discuss, and respond to emerging issues affecting government communications;
- 3.18.1.11. Compile the Integrated Government Communication Plan and monitor its quarterly implementation in alignment with the annual NCSF;
- 3.18.1.12. Review and approve Communication Strategies and Plans of Departments, and report to Cabinet and DPME;
- 3.18.1.13. Review and report on the monthly, quarterly, and annual implementation of the departmental Communications Plan to Cabinet and DPME;
- 3.18.1.14. Monitor and report on compliance with the policy;
- 3.18.1.15. Monitor performance and assess the impact of communication;
- 3.18.1.16. Provide regular reports to the Executive Authority on the communication environment and the operation of the government communication system;
- 3.18.1.17. Guide departments in aligning their communication strategies with the NCSF and cluster strategies;
- 3.18.1.18. Submit a Current Affairs Report reflecting the communication environment fortnightly or whenever the Cabinet meets. This report must highlight any communication issues requiring advice or a decision. The GCIS assists the Government Spokesperson in proactively communicating decisions. Relevant departments must submit their communication issues and key messages to the GCIS promptly, with approved key messages attached as an addendum;
- 3.18.1.19. Manage media queries relating to the post-Cabinet briefings;
- 3.18.1.20. Manage centralised media bulk-buying and related services to ensure that the government realises economies of scale;
- 3.18.1.21. Advise national departments on services including marketing and distribution, copywriting and editing, translations, media liaison, media monitoring and communication research, outreach, digital and social media, and website services;
- 3.18.1.22. Manage, communicate, and uphold the corporate identity and branding requirements of government;
- 3.18.1.23. Coordinate cluster briefings;



- 3.18.1.24. Intervene in departments where the government's reputation may be at risk;
- 3.18.1.25. Provide communication performance indicators for departments, provinces, and local governments to measure effectiveness;
- 3.18.1.26. Provide communication guidelines during election periods; and
- 3.18.1.27. Conduct periodic skills surveys across government to assess practitioner capability and support continuous professional development within the communication function.

3.19. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF COMMUNICATION CLUSTERS

- 3.19.1. The DG of the GCIS is a member of FOSAD and is responsible for presenting communication research, reporting on the implementation of the communication plans, and addressing any other issues requiring direction from the DGs;
- 3.19.2. Communication clusters comprise the HoC from each national and provincial line-function department;
- 3.19.3. These communication clusters mirror the FOSAD clusters and Cabinet committees, grouping departments with complementary and integrated functions. These clusters are:
 - 3.19.3.1. Governance, State Capacity, and Institutional Development and Administration;
 - 3.19.3.2. Social Protection, Community and Human Development;
 - 3.19.3.3. Justice, Crime Prevention and Security;
 - 3.19.3.4. Economic Sectors, Investment, Employment and Infrastructure Development; and
 - 3.19.3.5. International Cooperation, Trade and Security.
- 3.19.4. Similar structures must be established provincially. Where these do not currently exist, PGCFs must fulfil the role of communication clusters until formal structures are formed;
- 3.19.5. The national cluster chair and the GCIS Cluster Supervision must attend the respective DGs' cluster meetings. Similarly, the provincial cluster chair and the GCIS Provincial Director must attend the Forum for the HoDs (FOHAD) coordinated by the Office of the Premier. These planning and strategic meetings ensure alignment across clusters.
- 3.19.6. Communication clusters must meet monthly to:
 - 3.19.6.1. Coordinate and plan cluster communication, briefings, projects, and programmes;
 - 3.19.6.2. Profile programmes and campaigns implemented in line with the PoA of each respective cluster;
 - 3.19.6.3. Agree on the communication priorities and develop and implement strategic plans;
 - 3.19.6.4. Participate, where appropriate, in media briefings;
 - 3.19.6.5. Identify platforms and opportunities to communicate government work and progress in line with its mandate;
 - 3.19.6.6. Prepare reports for monthly DGs' cluster meetings and on the communication environment;
 - 3.19.6.7. Assess and plan for communication issues arising from Cabinet, Executive, Mayoral, and DGs' cluster meetings;
 - 3.19.6.8. Monitor and assess the implementation of cluster communication strategies and programmes, and share relevant information;
 - 3.19.6.9. Develop a Cluster Communication Strategy every five years in line with the NCSF and MTDP; and
 - 3.19.6.10. Develop an annual communication programme for each of the communication clusters.



3.20. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE GCIS CLUSTER SUPERVISORS

- 3.20.1. Provide secretariat services for the communication committee, with support from chairpersons;
- 3.20.2. Prepare draft agendas for cluster meetings, guided by the chairpersons, individual member departments of the cluster, and the GCIS;
- 3.20.3. Structure the cluster agenda in accordance with key outputs identified for the relevant outcome;
- 3.20.4. Compile monthly progress reports for submission to the relevant DGs' Cluster, based on inputs from the cluster chairperson and HoCs;
- 3.20.5. Ensure timely submission and distribution of cluster documentation;
- 3.20.6. Coordinate attendance of members of the Communication Committee;
- 3.20.7. Make logistical arrangements;
- 3.20.8. Coordinate cluster briefings;
- 3.20.9. Follow processes relating to protocol and accountability; and
- 3.20.10. Provide strategic leadership on communications in line with the GCP.

3.21. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CHAIRPERSONS OF THE CLUSTER COMMUNICATION COMMITTEES

- 3.21.1. Convene meetings and set agendas;
- 3.21.2. Lead and chair monthly communication cluster meetings and other planning sessions for cluster activities, including media briefings and izimbizo, as required;
- 3.21.3. Promote coherent cluster communication and guide the HoCs on strategy and messaging;
- 3.21.4. Facilitate the development of cluster communication strategies, annual plans, and briefing documents;
- 3.21.5. Identify platforms and opportunities to communicate cluster work;
- 3.21.6. Assess and plan for communication issues arising from Cabinet and DGs' cluster meetings;
- 3.21.7. Attend the monthly DGs' meetings and provide cluster members with immediate feedback on DGs directives; and
- 3.21.8. Attend monthly cluster chairs' meeting with the GCIS EXCO.



3.22. RESPONSIBILITIES OF HEADS OF COMMUNICATION IN CLUSTER COMMITTEES

- 3.22.1. Attend and contribute to the standard monthly cluster meetings;
- 3.22.2. Participate in ad hoc meetings, such as planning sessions for media briefings;
- 3.22.3. Assess and plan communication for legislation, policies, and programmes arising from Cabinet and DGs clusters' meetings;
- 3.22.4. Share content on programmes, interventions, projects for use in cluster media briefing statements, fact sheets, messages, media tours, opinion pieces, and other communication products;
- 3.22.5. Ensure that key messages are communicated to political principals;
- 3.22.6. Identify platforms and opportunities to communicate the cluster's work; and
- 3.22.7. Address issues in the communication environment and implement the recommendations of the Communication Committee.



3.23. GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATORS' FORUMS (NATIONAL, PROVINCIAL AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT)

- 3.23.1. National, provincial, and local coordinating forums ensure integration, consistency, and coherence in government communication;
- 3.23.2. The GCP must guide national, provincial, and local departmental communication policies; and
- 3.23.3. Integrated government communication ensures that messages reach their intended audience and that government structures are aware of national, provincial, and local levels to inform their strategies. The following forums exist across different levels of government:

3.23.3.1. The National Government Communicators' Forum (NGCF)

- i. The NGCF, also known as the GCF, is a strategic forum of government communicators from national, provincial, and local levels. It enables government communicators to plan and identify opportunities across all spheres and sectors of government through substantive discussions and joint planning, supporting the government's commitment to accelerate service delivery to improve citizens' lives. The forum forms part of the formal cycle that determines the strategic approach and messaging for government communications.
- ii. The Communication Cluster chairpersons must lead in shaping the GCF agenda and content.
- iii. The Minister and Deputy Minister responsible for the GCIS may provide political guidance to NGCF when required, challenging communicators to address key political priorities raised in Cabinet, Cabinet Lekgotla, and other committees and forums.
- iv. The NGCF meetings must discuss the NCSF and provide a framework for monitoring compliance and implementation across all government departments. All government communication should support the implementation of the NCSF, guided by the PoA and State of the Nation Address (SoNA) pronouncement.
- v. There may be two or more sittings of the GCF per year, following the government's communication planning and review cycle.
- vi. The first GCF addresses communication priorities guided by the January Lekgotla decisions and SoNA announcements, to develop a communication programme to support the PoA for the year. The GCIS coordinates this forum; and
- vii. The second GCF focuses on the achievements and review issues raised during the July Lekgotla discussions. Communication priorities may be refocused if necessary, and the meeting's duration should be guided by the content and issues in the environment.

3.23.3.2. The Internal Government Communicators' Forum (IGCF)

- i. The IGCF was established to improve understanding of government priorities and outcomes, help government employees to stay informed about government programmes, and share best practices among internal communicators. The objectives of the IGCF are to:
 - a. bring together Heads of Internal Communication and relevant support staff;
 - b. develop internal communicators as communication agents who can mobilise public servants to contribute to more effective communication between government and the public;



- c. promote effective communication between employers and employees; and
- d. share best practices, knowledge, successes, products, and experience.

3.23.3.3. THE PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATORS FORUM (PGCF)

The PGCF comprises:

- i. The Office of the Premier (convener);
- ii. GCIS provincial offices and provincial government departments;
- iii. District HoCs;
- iv. Representatives of national departments in the province;
- v. Representatives from state-owned enterprises (SOEs); and
- vi. The South African Local Government Association (SALGA).

3.23.3.4. The SALGA National Communicators Forum (SNCF)

- i. The SNCF, also known as the National Communicators' Forum (NCF), comprises Heads of Communication, Marketing, and communication practitioners from municipalities, parastatals, stakeholders, and other local government structures. The forum is convened annually by SALGA, in consultation with CoGTA and GCIS, to ensure alignment, coordination, and coherence in government communication across the local government sector.
- ii. The role of the SNCF/NCF is to serve as the principal coordinating platform for local government communication. It ensures that communication is responsive to community needs and that the government effectively engages with citizens. The forum also prioritises capacity building for communicators across the sector while ensuring that communication practices remain current, innovative, and aligned with evolving industry standards and trends.
- iii. The SNCF/NCF serves as a platform for the tripartite to collectively engage with, listen to, and address issues raised by all municipalities. It also provides an inclusive space for stakeholders across the communication value chain, strengthening collaboration, integration, and coherence in local government communication.

3.23.3.5. The Provincial Core Team

- i. The Provincial Core Team, comprising the Tripartite (GCIS; SALGA COGTA), is responsible for overseeing the functioning of communication teams in the province:
 - a. Meets monthly or as required;
 - b. Supports the optimal functioning of municipal communication;
 - c. Provides hands-on support where needed;
 - d. Oversee the convening of all municipal communication structures.

3.23.3.6. The District Government Communicators' Forum (DGCF)

- i. The District Communicators' Forum (DGCF) is established as a structured platform to deliberate on marketing and communication matters within the district. Its purpose is to promote collaboration and mutual support, facilitate the sharing



of best practices, address communication challenges, and pool resources to strengthen communication capacity and impact across municipalities.

- ii. It comprises:
 - a. HoCs of district municipalities;
 - b. Municipal communicators;
 - c. Provincial and national departments operating in the district;
 - d. Community Development Workers (CDWs); and
 - e. Parastatals and any other government-related structures in the district.

3.23.3.7. The Local Government Communicators' Forum (LGCF)

- i. The Local Government Communicators' Forum brings together all municipal communicators on a single platform to deliberate on communication policies, review sector developments, provide training, and exchange best practices. The forum serves as a collaborative space to strengthen coherence, build capacity, and enhance the overall effectiveness of local government communication.
- ii. The LGCF comprises HoCs of all municipalities and the Provincial Core team.
- iii. This forum should be convened by the Core Team, comprising the Tripartite - SALGA, GCIS, and the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA); and
- iv. The LGCF is to be monitored by the Core Team.

3.23.3.8. The Local Communicators' Forum (LCF)

- i. The Local Communicators' Forum (LCF) is constituted by all government communicators operating within a local municipality, including representatives from local offices of government departments and entities. The forum provides a platform to deliberate on communication matters specific to the local context, such as crisis communication and other area-based issues, aiming to ensure coordinated, responsive, and effective communication.
- ii. This forum should be convened by the Head of Communication in the respective local municipality; and
- iii. The LCF should be monitored by the District Communicators' Forum.

3.23.3.9. Digital Media Forum (DMF)

- i. The Digital Media Forum (DMF) meets biannually and comprises all communicators responsible for digital media within their respective departments. The forum provides:
 - a. Best practices;
 - b. Training and networking opportunities for government communicators; and
 - c. Opportunities for digital media communicators to collaborate and share resources.



3.24. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE FORUMS

- 3.24.1. The GCFs should, among other things:
 - 3.24.1.1. Discuss strategic government communication issues within the NCSF, MTDP and SoNA;
 - 3.24.1.2. Assess the implementation of government's communication programme and the strategies aligned to them;
 - 3.24.1.3. Share information and address communication problems;
 - 3.24.1.4. Present case studies, share lessons learned, and establish best practice;
 - 3.24.1.5. Establish relations with communication partners and stakeholders at national, provincial, district and local levels;
 - 3.24.1.6. Support capacity building and the development of communication strategies;
 - 3.24.1.7. Coordinate a calendar of events, ensuring activities are streamlined to avoid duplication and waste of resources; and
 - 3.24.1.8. Strategise and plan communication activities for the upcoming year.

3.25. GOVERNANCE ISSUES

- 3.25.1. The Local Municipal Forum (LMF) is required to meet monthly, while all other communicators' forums must meet at least quarterly. Monitoring of these forums should enable the following:
 - 3.25.1.1. The DCF to monitor the LCF and LGCF;
 - 3.25.1.2. The PGCF to monitor the DCF; and
 - 3.25.1.3. The NGCF to monitor the PGCF.

3.26. INTERGOVERNMENTAL COMMUNICATORS' FORUM

- 3.26.1. The Intergovernmental Communicators' Forum (IGCF) meets quarterly and comprises the GCIS Management Committee; nine provincial HoCs; nine GCIS provincial directors, SALGA HoC and CoGTA HoC;
- 3.26.2. The IGCF is responsible for, among other things:
 - 3.26.2.1. Share information and address communication challenges in the province and local levels;
 - 3.26.2.2. Review and provide input on provincial communication strategies and action plans;
 - 3.26.2.3. Align provincial strategies and action plans with the National Government Communication Strategy;



- 3.26.2.4. Approve and monitor provincial communication strategies and plans;
- 3.26.2.5. Receive progress reports from provinces on implementation of communication programmes at provincial and local levels;
- 3.26.2.6. Review the implementation of provincial and local communication strategies and initiate the planning process;
- 3.26.2.7. Assist with capacity-building and profile case studies to share best practices, establish norms and standards, and facilitate the cross-pollination of ideas;
- 3.26.2.8. Share technical information and research, and guide common support initiatives within government;
- 3.26.2.9. Share information from the local environment that may impact communication, strategic planning and implementation;
- 3.26.3. Develop and roll-out capacity-building programmes for political principals and communicators; and
- 3.26.4. The GCIS/CoGTA and SALGA to monitor communication guidelines and prepare status reports for relevant political structures: GCIS to FOSAD, and provincial HoC to FOHAD.

3.27. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION STRUCTURES/FORUMS

- 3.27.1. Government supports development communication that:
 - 3.27.1.1. Respond to the needs of the community;
 - 3.27.1.2. Functions as a two-way communication system, sharing information, engaging communities in dialogue, and incorporating feedback — public participation and direct engagement are central to a development approach.
- 3.27.2. Communicators must plan and participate in direct communication activities as part of community outreach;
- 3.27.3. These structures must comply with the Intergovernmental Relations Act to manage protocol and related processes; and
- 3.27.4. Establish structures supporting development communication initiatives to include the following:

3.27.4.1. Communication Through Thusong Service Centres

- i. Thusong Service Centres are one-stop, integrated community development centres that facilitate two-way communication between government and the public, promote public participation, and support service delivery.
- ii. Communicators can use Thusong Service Centres to:
 - a. Engage communities and identify their information and service needs;
 - b. Provide government information that aims to improve people's lives;
 - c. Establish a two-way communication system between government and communities;
 - d. Increase community participation in government decision-making processes;
 - e. Strengthen cooperation among the three spheres of government in service delivery;
 - f. Facilitate access to and use of information and communications technologies to support communication and build informed communities; and



- g. Ensure that where Thusong Service Centres are unavailable, the local municipality serves as a one-stop hub for government information, using facilities such as clinics, hospitals, and libraries to provide services to the public.

3.27.4.2. Izimbizo

- i. Government communicators must develop public participation communication programmes as part of their communication strategies.
- ii. A national task team, comprising GCIS, The Presidency, CoGTA, other national departments, and provincial and local government HoCs, is responsible for coordinating the public-participation process.
- iii. At the provincial, district, and local levels, political principals and Accounting Officers are responsible for coordinating a public participation process in consultation with SALGA, CoGTA, and the GCIS.
- iv. Preparations for Izimbizo should include research into the needs and issues of the community in the area where the forum will be held. Before attending the Imbizo, political principals and/or Accounting Officers must be briefed in advance to respond appropriately; and
- v. Role-players in public participation events include:
 - a. Community members: Beneficiaries of the public-participation process.
 - b. Administration: The national department, province or municipality must provide resources, implement capacity-building programmes, and integrate all processes, programmes and activities into the public-participation cycle.
 - c. Elected public representatives: This includes provincial and local government Speakers (who oversee the process), Mayors (carrying out their responsibilities), members of the Mayoral Committee, and Chairpersons of Portfolio Committees.
 - d. Ward committees: Advise and represent the interests of their wards; and
 - e. CDWs: Work directly in communities as fieldworkers.
- vi. External players:
 - a. Other provincial and national government departments;
 - b. Representatives from provincial and national structures (with integrated programmes);
 - c. The provincial legislature and the National Council of Provinces;
 - d. CDW coordinator at the district level;
 - e. Members of the district council, and
 - f. Stakeholder groups such as business, labour, and NGOs.
- vii. An Imbizo should be recorded and monitored, and feedback must be shared with national, provincial, and local communication structures to inform marketing communication strategies and plans at all levels.



3.28. COMMUNICATION ENABLERS

3.28.1. Communication enablers are structures, processes, and documents that facilitate and support communication activities for communicators.

3.28.1.1. Cabinet/Council Memos

- i. The national and provincial Cabinets, and local councils hold meetings to discuss government policies and programmes, and to reflect on key issues in the environment;
- ii. A communication plan must accompany the Cabinet or Council memorandum, detailing internal and external activities designed to ensure effective communication of the memorandum's content; and
- iii. When a Cabinet or Council decision affects a department or municipality, the HoC must work with GCIS to implement the communication plan.

3.28.1.2. RAPID RESPONSE (RR)

- i. RR meetings are held daily at national and provincial levels to discuss media issues that may affect the government's reputation and require an appropriate response. This includes developing key messages, statements, and other forms of rebuttal. Where feasible, districts should establish similar structures to address issues affecting local governments.
- ii. Opinion pieces and press statements may be drafted in response to identified issues and provided to the media for publication.
- iii. RR must plan proactively around issues the government wishes to highlight in the media during the week, and where applicable, daily.
- iv. When an issue requires communication intervention, GCIS will advise national, provincial, and local government departments on developing communication plans and providing guidance on key messaging.
- v. The effectiveness of RR depends on the cooperation and active participation of departments, entities, and institutions across government.
- vi. The DG or Deputy DG (DDG) of the GCIS chairs the RR at the national level, while at the local level, the Municipal Manager chairs the meetings.
- vii. Government departments affected by media-related issues are invited to attend and present a communication plan for discussion and approval.
- viii. At provincial level, the DG in the Premier's Office chairs RR meetings, which should include the HoC, MLO and provincial core team representatives, namely the GCIS, SALGA and CoGTA; and
- ix. At the local level, RR must include district HoCs in collaboration with communicators from local municipalities affected by media issues. When distance prevents district HoCs from meeting in person, virtual meetings should be used.





3.28.1.3. PARLIAMENTARY QUESTIONS

- i. Parliamentary sessions and questions provide communication opportunities for government departments. Questions may be directed to individual ministers or cover cross-cutting issues.
- ii. Parliamentary officers in departments receiving a parliamentary question must refer it to their Parliamentary Liaison Officer (PLO). The PLO must collate the necessary information and submit it to the DG or designated official for approval.
- iii. All parliamentary questions must include input from the HoC;
- iv. The HoC or MLO of a department receiving a parliamentary question must develop a communication strategy or statement to support these parliamentary interactions; and
- v. The GCIS manages a system to coordinate communication implications and responses to cross-cutting parliamentary questions directed at multiple departments.

3.29. PROFESSIONALISING THE PUBLIC SECTOR/BUILDING A CAPABLE STATE

- 3.29.1. All political principals, Accounting Officers, and communicators are required to attend a communication induction session. This induction introduces the GCP to promote integration within the government communication system and to develop an understanding of the strategic importance of communication as a function across government activities.
- 3.29.2. The HoC must ensure that all communicators are trained on the policy and fully informed of their specific roles and responsibilities.
- 3.29.3. Each institution must allocate a budget for the training and development of communicators, including funding for ongoing programmes to ensure skills remain current and relevant. This allocation should constitute a reasonable percentage of the institution's overall training budget.
- 3.29.4. The GCIS will provide a list of accredited training providers in the field of government communications. Departments or communicators can request this list from the GCIS. Otherwise:
 - 3.29.4.1. Senior communicators (HoC/MLOs/chief directors) must hold a postgraduate qualification and/or have at least five years' experience in the communications field. They are also required to complete management training.
 - 3.29.4.2. All communicators must hold a relevant communications qualification and/or have at least three years' experience in their specific field of specialisation.
 - 3.29.4.3. Experiential learning will be recognised and formalised through a process of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) in terms of the Public Service Act, 1994 (Act 103 of 1994) and the Directive on Policy Guidelines and Procedure for the Implementation of Recognition of RPL in the Public Service, 2021; and
 - 3.29.4.4. Communicators must undergo comprehensive workplace orientation, including introductions to all political principals, Heads of Units, and leaders of institutions.

4. MEDIA ENGAGEMENT





4. MEDIA ENGAGEMENT

4.1. THE CONTEXT

- 4.1.1. All communication with the news media — including media releases, advisories, statements, interviews, conferences, webinars and briefings, letters to the editor, opinion pieces (op-eds), technical announcements, and other material provided to media representatives — falls under the government's media engagement activities.
- 4.1.2. News media representatives include, but are not limited to, reporters, editors, writers, and researchers for newspapers, magazines, scientific journals, and trade publications; staff of radio or television stations or networks; online news services; bloggers; and any other electronic or print media that serve as information outlets.
- 4.1.3. The media engagement provisions of this policy apply to public-speaking engagements and written articles intended for publication or circulation to the general public. The policy applies to all government employees, regardless of department or geographic location.
- 4.1.4. Government officials responsible for the social media accounts of departments must engage on issues related to their departments through those platforms; and
- 4.1.5. All media, including small commercial and community media outlets, must be given equal access to information, and all interactions must be professional. The Media Development and Diversity Agency Act, 2002 (Act 14 of 2002) defines community media as “any media project that is owned and controlled by a community where any financial surplus is reinvested in the media project.” The target audience determines which media the government engages.

4.2. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- 4.2.1. The media engagement function should be assigned to a person employed at a managerial level, such as a Director, Chief Director: Media Engagement, or MLO.
- 4.2.2. If a government institution does not have a Chief Director or Head: Media Engagement/MLO, owing to organisational structure or capacity, alternative arrangements must be made to ensure the function is fulfilled.

4.2.3. **The Chief Director or Head: Media Engagement must:**

- 4.2.2.1. Lead media engagement activities within a department, province, district, or local municipality;
- 4.2.2.2. Manage staff within the media engagement unit;
- 4.2.2.3. Serve as the official point of entry for media into the department on issues of a technical nature or relating to adopted policy;
- 4.2.2.4. Design and implement a proactive media relations strategy and plan;
- 4.2.2.5. Respond to media queries within the stipulated time frames.
- 4.2.2.6. Build and maintain relations with the media, and report to the HoC on all media engagement matters affecting the government institution; and
- 4.2.2.7. Monitor media coverage and, where necessary, craft responses.



4.3. AUTHORISED SPOKESPERSONS

| Authorised spokesperson | Issue |
|---|---|
| The Executive Authority and their official spokesperson (MLO) at the national and provincial levels, as well as the Mayor or Speaker at the local government level, are responsible for issues within the institution, with a focus on strategy, policy, and performance. | This includes any issue within the institution, particularly those related to strategy, policy, and performance. |
| The political principal, the Accounting Officer, and the HoC. | All matters that may affect the government's image fall under this provision. When a matter is declared a crisis, the crisis communication protocol will be implemented (see paragraph six (6) of this policy). |
| Technical spokespersons and Accounting Officers must act in consultation with the HoC. | This refers to technical issues in which the person has the necessary expertise, including language proficiency. |
| The Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC) chairperson and officials are responsible for this function. | This applies to issues affecting multiple departments or where an IMC has been established. |

- 4.3.1. All media spokespersons must adhere to the following:
- i. Possess the necessary training for the role, including induction into government communications, and participate in ongoing media training to hone their skills; and
 - ii. Complete the compulsory communications induction with the GCIS within the first six months of employment in government communications.
- 4.3.2. The HoC, the GCIS, or their designated agents will manage media engagement and communication training prior to an employee's appointment as a media spokesperson. Media spokespersons who were already employed without this training at the time this policy directive was issued must complete it.
- 4.3.3. The HoC must maintain a list of all staff members who have received the required media training and are authorised to speak on behalf of the organisation. The list must be updated annually.
- 4.3.4. This policy does not restrict the right of elected representatives of recognised trade unions or staff associations to express their views to the media on matters within the scope of their work. Such representatives are fully entitled to comment on behalf of their organisations; however, they are not permitted to speak for or represent the government institutions.
- 4.3.5. Media enquiries relating to the organisation must first be referred to the Director: Media Liaison, who will consult with the HoC before any comment is provided to the media; and
- 4.3.6. The GCIS may advise organisations on all aspects of media relations and assist in developing strategic approaches. All potentially sensitive, contentious, or controversial media enquiries regarding an organisation's activities must be reported to the GCIS.

4.4. CONDUCT OF GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES AS PRIVATE CITIZENS

- 4.4.1. Any media communication issued by government employees in their personal capacity (e.g., digital platforms or letters to the editor) must comply with the Public Service Act of 1994 and the Code of Conduct for Public Servants. Information obtained while on duty must not be used to express personal opinions for personal gain.



- 4.4.2. GCIS and DPSA should collaborate to define a code of conduct for government communicators, providing a standard against which their actions can be assessed. The code should include safeguards against misinformation and fake news, as well as accountability measures for any breaches.
- 4.4.3. Inappropriate media engagement is prohibited. This includes any engagement that:
 - 4.4.3.1. Brings the government, its departments, or stakeholders into disrepute;
 - 4.4.3.2. Compromises working relations with the media, including but not limited to bribery, sexual activity, bullying and harassment of journalists;
 - 4.4.3.3. Undermines the integrity and reputation of the government, its leadership, or its stakeholders;
 - 4.4.3.4. Presents a personal viewpoint as a position held by the department;
 - 4.4.3.5. Discloses sensitive or classified departmental information without proper authority; and
 - 4.4.3.6. Comments on pending or ongoing legal matters relating to the department.
- 4.4.4. Any communication expressing an employee's personal opinion as a private citizen, and not related to the department, province, or municipality, does not require any approval. However, the employee must ensure that the media is aware that they are expressing personal views and that these views are their own.
- 4.4.5. Senior government communicators (HoCs, MLOs, DDGs, chief directors, managers, etc.) act as representatives of the government, and their opinions or comments — even in private settings — are likely to be interpreted as official by the media. Communicators at this level are not permitted to engage in private communication on any platform or express views that could bring the department into disrepute.
- 4.4.6. When the media perceives a government employee as a media practitioner or government representative, and the opinion or comment is likely to be interpreted as official, prior approval from the HoC is required before it is submitted.
- 4.4.7. Government communicators must not contradict the communication messages of any other department or sphere of government in the media.

4.5. RESPONSE AND LIAISON STANDARDS FOR MEDIA ENQUIRIES

4.5.1. TRADITIONAL MEDIA PLATFORMS (PRINT, BROADCAST AND ONLINE)

- 4.5.2.1. A government institution must adhere to media deadlines and provide fair and equal access to all news media.
- 4.5.2.2. Media enquiries should be responded to promptly, with timing appropriate to the type of medium — print, broadcast, or online.
- 4.5.2.3. Deadlines should be agreed upon between the media and the government spokesperson, and any changes must be communicated promptly.
- 4.5.2.4. Communication channels should always remain open, and the media should be kept informed of any pending enquiries.
- 4.5.2.5. Government spokespersons must be available and accessible within reasonable timeframes to handle media enquiries and return phone calls timeously.
- 4.5.2.6. To meet deadlines, HoCs at national and provincial levels must be authorised to approve media statements. At the municipal level, approval should be obtained in consultation with the political principal or Accounting Officer.



4.5.2. SOCIAL MEDIA

- 4.5.2.1. Digital technology has transformed the way people communicate and share information. Platforms such as Facebook and X operate in real time, enabling citizens to engage in online discussions and breaking news; and
- 4.5.2.2. To operate effectively in this dynamic environment, the HoC must be innovative, creative, and flexible in providing relevant content and responding to issues as they arise.

4.6. HOUSE STYLE AND STANDARD FORMATS

- 4.6.1. Media releases, statements, and advisories must adhere to predetermined standards. All communication should be presented in plain language without compromising accuracy and in a manner that the target audience can understand. Departments, provinces. Or municipalities may choose the relevant language(s) when issuing these communications, but this must comply with South Africa's language policies, including the UOLA of 2012. Training on managing gender-sensitive content should also be considered.
- 4.6.2. All email correspondence with the media, whether intended for publication or sent as a private note, should be written so that, if published, it does not bring the department into disrepute.
- 4.6.3. The tone, content, and language standard (including grammar and spelling) of electronic correspondence with the media should always assume that the correspondence may be made public; and
- 4.6.4. Short Message Service (SMS) abbreviations must never be used in official correspondence or when communicating with the media.

4.7. COMPLAINTS ABOUT MEDIA COVERAGE AND BEHAVIOUR

- 4.7.1. Complaints from within government regarding media performance, such as the content or tone of coverage, or a reporter's conduct in dealings with government, should be directed to the Office of the HoC
- 4.7.2. Any unethical behaviour by journalists should be reported to the relevant organisation.
- 4.7.3. The Office of the HoC is responsible for determining the appropriate response to such complaints. If the HoC believes the matter warrants further action, the following steps may be taken:
 - 4.7.2.1. An official letter must be sent to the media institution outlining the nature of the complaint and the recommended remedial action.
 - 4.7.2.2. If the HoC is not satisfied with the response from the media institution and the matter concerns media content, a complaint may be lodged with one of the following bodies:
 - 4.7.3. Press Council of South Africa for print media or online media; Broadcasting Complaints Commission of South Africa for broadcasting media; and
 - 4.7.3.1. Independent Media/Ombud for independent media.



- 4.7.4. For media houses that do not subscribe to the press code, communicators must follow the internal complaints mechanisms of the organisation. Departments may also consult their legal services units for advice.
- 4.7.5. Complaints regarding editors or the industry as a whole may be directed to the South African National Editors' Forum; and
- 4.7.6. In consultation with their legal team, the HoC must determine whether the complaint is serious enough to warrant further legal action.

4.8. OFF-THE-RECORD COMMENTS

- 4.8.1. Government employees are not permitted to speak to the media "off the record." An "off the record" comment is not intended for publication and must not be quoted. The only exceptions are the political principal and the MLO/HoC with the authority of the political principal, who may be required to do so in certain circumstances.

4.9. PUBLIC DISCLOSURE AND RIGHT TO INFORMATION

- 4.9.1. The PAIA of 2000 requires all public bodies to compile a PAIA Manual outlining how the institution will handle requests for records under the Act. All state institutions must process PAIA requests in accordance with their PAIA Manual.
- 4.9.2. When the media makes a verbal request to the department, it should, where possible, be recorded in writing. The HoC must ensure that the requester signs and dates the document, which should also be timestamped.
- 4.9.3. If a media representative requests information that is already public, the department must provide it within a mutually agreed-upon timeframe. Withholding publicly available information may lead the media to seek it from unofficial sources.
- 4.9.4. The HoC must be informed of all PAIA (2000) requests, as such disclosure may enter the public domain and affect future media coverage of the department; and
- 4.9.5. All personal information collected during media engagements must be handled in accordance with the Protection of Personal Information Act, 2013 (Act 4 of 2013).

4.10. CLASSIFIED INFORMATION

- 4.10.1. Unauthorised disclosure of classified information to the public or the media will result in disciplinary action against the responsible government official.

4.11. PHOTOGRAPHIC AND VIDEO COVERAGE/USAGE BY THE MEDIA

- 4.11.1. Media photography or videography on government property is strictly prohibited without prior approval from the HoC or their designated representative; and
- 4.11.2. If authorised by the HoC, media representatives may enter government facilities under the supervision of an HoC representative for photographic or video recording related to interviews, documentaries, news releases, or other approved applications.



4.12. SUPPLY OF PHOTOGRAPHS AND FILM FOOTAGE

- 4.12.1. Any government institution submitting photographs and video footage to the media must indicate that the GCI, supplying department, or municipality holds the copyright, and that this ownership must be acknowledged in the credits.
- 4.12.2. Government institutions must ensure that the photographs and visual material provided are used solely for the purposes for which they were requested. The relevant government institution must also receive a final copy of the completed product; and
- 4.12.3. In accordance with copyright law, communicators must obtain written permission from the copyright holder before using any artwork or media in their communication materials.

4.13. MEDIA ENGAGEMENT TOOLS

- 4.12.4. As the authorised custodian of Corporate Identity standards and formats, the GCIS has developed a range of media engagement templates to promote consistency across all spheres of government and public entities. These templates are available from the GCIS Directorate: Media Engagement.

4.13.1. Media schedules

- 4.13.1.1. Specific interventions must target the media based on the news value of the release and the profile of their audience; and
- 4.13.1.2. The department, province, or municipality must provide the GCIS with a copy of its quarterly media schedule at least 14 days before the start of the media engagement programme for the quarter.

4.13.2. Media releases

- 4.13.2.1. All media releases must be approved and signed by the HoC, MLO, or their designated representative.
- 4.13.2.2. Media statements must be posted on the department's or institution's website immediately after release to the targeted media.
- 4.13.2.3. Media statements mentioning a campaign partner must be issued with the partner's approval.
- 4.13.2.4. Joint press releases may only be issued with non-profit organisations; and
- 4.13.2.5. The Media Engagement unit must monitor all media releases, statements, and advisories.

4.13.3. Media conferences

- 4.13.3.1. Political principals and Accounting Officers must approve all media conferences. Wherever possible, requests should be submitted at least five days before the planned media conference, unless it is convened in response to an unplanned and rapidly emerging issue or reputational crisis; and
- 4.13.3.2. The HoC, MLO, or a designated official must preside over the press conference or briefing.



4.13.4. Paid media coverage

- 4.13.4.1. Government departments are encouraged not to pay the media for any form of editorial coverage. The policy is to achieve reputation-enhancing, earned media coverage based on the newsworthiness of departmental activities and announcements; and
- 4.13.4.2. All government communicators must actively leverage editorial opportunities.

4.13.5. Opinion pieces

- 4.13.5.1. The HoC, with the assistance of appointed and recognised specialists, may write opinion pieces on topical issues relating to the department. These articles serve as reference materials for media and other enquiries and ensure that the media receives a consistent and integrated message.

4.13.6. Positioning papers

- 4.13.6.1. The HoC, with the assistance of appointed and recognised specialists, may prepare positioning papers on topical departmental issues. These papers serve as reference materials for media and other enquiries, ensuring consistent and integrated messaging; and
- 4.13.6.2. Approved positioning papers must be distributed by the HoC to authorised spokespersons within the department within 24 hours of the final approval processes.

4.14. INTERNATIONAL MISSIONS

- 4.14.1. South African missions abroad are required to:

- 4.14.1.1. project a positive view of a democratic South Africa internationally;
- 4.14.1.2. assert and defend its position as an advocate for peace, democracy, and development;
- 4.14.1.3. advance the African agenda; and
- 4.14.1.4. promote economic development, investment and trade in the country.

- 4.14.2. The Head of Mission and the Press Attachés are responsible for communication at international missions. Each mission must have a trained Communication Officer or Press Attaché whose primary responsibilities will include:





GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATION POLICY

- 4.14.2.1. act as the spokesperson of the mission;
- 4.14.2.2. write media advisories and statements;
- 4.14.2.3. arrange media briefings guided by key messages provided and according to the brief;
- 4.14.2.4. Ensure that all media releases are posted on the mission's website immediately after being provided to targeted media.
- 4.14.2.5. Ensure that media releases conform to approved government Corporate Identity standards and format.
- 4.14.2.6. Respond to media queries on the advice of the Head of Public Diplomacy.
- 4.14.2.7. Write articles or opinion pieces, including those that communicate the country's foreign policy; and
- 4.14.2.8. Interact with other missions to share information and best practice case scenarios.



5. DIGITAL COMMUNICATION PLATFORMS



5. DIGITAL COMMUNICATION PLATFORMS

5.1. INTRODUCTION

- 5.1.1. The rapidly changing communication environment is characterised by technological innovation. Government must keep pace with these advancements and understand how technology can serve the public; and
- 5.1.2. Communication campaigns must consider the most appropriate communication channels and methods for their target audience. Where necessary, the government should continue to use traditional media alongside digital platforms to avoid excluding members of the public who may not have access to new technologies.

5.2. GOVERNMENT WEBSITES

- 5.2.1. The government frequently uses websites to publish information and engage with the public.
- 5.2.2. All national, provincial, and local government departments must maintain a website that is accessible 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and regularly updated by a designated employee or team. Websites must be updated with new information within eight working hours of its availability. The communications division should manage website content and branding, and the HoC or their designate must verify all content before publication.

5.2.3. Government websites must:

- 5.2.3.1. provide current, factual, and official information to the public;
 - 5.2.3.2. market the department to external and internal stakeholders;
 - 5.2.3.3. comply with the GCIS web content guidelines available on the GCIS website, which establish a consistent look-and-feel, incorporate relevant Corporate Identity standards, and define search functions and minimum content requirements; and
 - 5.2.3.4. provide links to the South African Government Online, relevant advisory or statutory bodies associated with the department, and other pertinent national and provincial websites. Departmental websites must not include links to commercial websites.
- 5.2.4. In line with the government's Constitutional obligations to ensure access to information by all citizens, regardless of physical ability, all government digital platforms must comply with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG).
 - 5.2.5. Paid advertising, including endorsement or promotion of commercial products, is not permitted on government websites; and
 - 5.2.6. When government departments play a significant role in an event, such as a conference organised by a commercial event management company, the event may be promoted, and a link to a website for more information or registration may be provided. Organisations sponsoring departmental activities may only be mentioned in the text of the relevant page.

5.2.7. The HoC or their designated representative must:

- 5.2.7.1. decide whether the logos of organisations sponsoring government events may be displayed on a website;
- 5.2.7.2. review websites annually to ensure that they accurately reflect branding obligations, carry accurate messaging, and comply with all government requirements; and
- 5.2.7.3. approve website content.



- 5.2.8. Only information suitable for public access may be posted on the website. Classified information or content intended for departmental officials must not be published; and
- 5.2.9. A feedback mechanism must be established to receive, acknowledge and respond to public inputs or queries. Electronic enquiries should be acknowledge within 24 hours and fully answered within 48 hours.

5.3. EMAIL NEWSLETTERS

- 5.3.1. Email newsletters, in a communication context, differ from regular email correspondence used in the day-to-day operations of a department. They serve as a communication tool to keep users informed about important policies, programmes, campaigns, and activities within the department or across the public sector.

5.4. MOBILE APPLICATIONS

- 5.4.1. Mobile applications are internet-based services that run on mobile devices, such as smartphones; and
- 5.4.2. The rules governing website development and use also apply to mobile applications.

5.5. SOCIAL MEDIA

5.5.1. THE CONTEXT

- 5.5.1.1. Social media channels include blogs, wikis, and social networks such as Facebook, X, YouTube, Instagram, Tumblr, TikTok, WhatsApp, and LinkedIn. Many other platforms exist, and new ones continue to be developed. The Policy applies to all current and future social media platforms; and
- 5.5.1.2. The use of social media platforms is increasingly common across all spheres of government worldwide. It enables two-way communication between the government, the public, partners, and stakeholders, allowing for faster and more frequent engagement; and
- 5.5.1.3. Social media also presents new challenges requiring the government to address public expectations, navigate differences in communication culture, and clearly distinguish between official and personal use.

5.5.2. SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNT MANAGEMENT

- 5.5.2.1. The HoC, or their designate, is responsible for:
 - i. developing an overarching social media strategy and plan;
 - ii. overseeing the creation, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and closure of social media accounts;
 - iii. ensuring that all official social media sites of the government institution are active and that all links are available on the government website; and
 - iv. defining and communicating to all employees the type of government information that may be shared publicly.



GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATION POLICY

- 5.5.2.2. Each national, provincial, and local department must appoint an employee responsible for:
 - i. setting up and managing social media accounts for the government institution, and ensuring they have the necessary skills;
 - ii. maintaining a list of official and active social media platforms, along with the employees responsible for this oversight;
 - iii. ensuring that all social media pages comply with the government's Corporate Identity and branding guidelines;
 - iv. monitoring and reviewing content for accuracy and alignment with consistent government messaging; and
 - v. acting as the appointed custodian and primary point of contact between the institutions and its provincial, national, and local counterparts, as well as the GCIS.
- 5.5.2.3. Employees assigned to social media function must have these responsibilities incorporated into their job descriptions;
- 5.5.2.4. Communication personnel should have access to all official social media platforms within their sphere of government to monitor emerging issues and follow relevant public debates;
- 5.5.2.5. The HoC, or their designate, must respond to issues and debates in the social media environment; and
- 5.5.2.6. Periodic evaluation reports must be submitted, including recommendations to enhance social media responsiveness.

5.5.3. ACCEPTABLE USE

- 5.5.3.1. Only the HoC, or their designate, may discuss government operations on official social media sites. Any unauthorised communication is strictly prohibited and will not be regarded as an official position.
- 5.5.3.2. Government employees recognised as official spokespersons or representatives by the media or in the public may not comment on government activities or provide commentary that contradicts the official government position on official or private social media sites. They may, however, share content from press releases, conferences, and other official events on their private social media accounts.
- 5.5.3.3. Government employees who use social media sites in a personal capacity must be made aware of the Code of Conduct for Public Servants, as well as relevant privacy and confidentiality laws and regulations. They must clearly state that they are expressing personal views to prevent their comments from being misconstrued as representing the official position of the government.
- 5.5.3.4. Any personal or non-government social media accounts, whether existing or created in the future, must not register using a government-issued email address. This applies to any platform requiring an email account for registration. Such accounts must use private email addresses and contact details.
- 5.5.3.5. Public servants are not permitted to use government-related usernames or handles when creating personal social media accounts (e.g., DeptHealth_Joseph); and
- 5.5.3.6. When an employee or contractor leaves government service, they must update all social-media accounts to indicate that they are no longer employed by the government.



5.5.4. CONTENT

- 5.5.4.1. All social media content published by departments must adhere to the GCIS's Government Online Content Guidelines, available on the GCIS website.
- 5.5.4.2. Government resources must not be used to access or share fraudulent content, harassing, threatening, bullying, embarrassing, sexually explicit, profane, obscene, racist, sexist, intimidating, defamatory, or otherwise illegal or inappropriate.
- 5.5.4.3. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, guarantees everyone the right to freedom of expression. This right does not extend to speech that constitutes war, propaganda, incitement to imminent violence, or advocacy of hatred based on race, ethnicity, gender, or religion that incites harm.
- 5.5.4.4. All government employees are prohibited from disclosing any information about the government's physical or information security practices and procedures, or any other information that could be used to compromise security. The Information Security Manager must remain informed about new and emerging information security threats relating to social media use.
- 5.5.4.5. All content posted on personal or official sites must reflect government values and maintain a professional standard.
- 5.5.4.6. To ensure an informed public and timely access to information, all official government social media accounts must be updated regularly, with daily updates where possible.
- 5.5.4.7. Content protected by copyright must not be published without proper authorisation.
- 5.5.4.8. When engaging in social media activities, government employees must adhere to these fundamental principles:
 - i. the use of social media must consider the needs of society and should not serve as an agenda-setting communication tool;
 - ii. information shared on social media platforms must be relevant, timeous, and helpful;
 - iii. interactions on social media must reflect the government's responsibility to be understanding and empathetic to requests and consultation; and
 - iv. requests for information must be handled promptly to promote transparency in government operations and decision-making.
- 5.5.4.9. Each government entity is:
 - i. responsible for ensuring that content on all social media platforms is current and relevant, and that derogatory comments are removed, where possible;
 - ii. expected to respond to positive and negative engagement on their social media accounts;
 - iii. expected to ensure that social media campaigns are supported through other media channels; and
 - iv. required to manage their own content on their assigned social media accounts.



5.5.5. SECURITY

- 5.5.5.1. All entities must change the passwords for their social media accounts quarterly. Users who leave the operation team must be removed from account access. Passwords must comply with the organisation's IT security policy and must contain at least one special character, one number, and standard text.

5.5.6. LEGAL ISSUES

- 5.5.6.1. All entities, through their social media account managers, are required to keep a record of all information posted online. All social media content and correspondence must be documented and archived. While most social networks do not provide this functionality, third-party services can be used to meet this requirement.
- 5.5.6.2. When publishing information or providing advice online, all necessary records must be captured, retained, and filed in accordance with the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa's Records Management Policy; and
- 5.5.6.3. Any removed content, including the time, date, and identity of the poster, must be retained in accordance with the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa's Records Management Policy.

5.5.7. PUBLIC CONDUCT

- 5.5.7.1. All government entities must inform the public of their social media policy when engaging with the government. Public commentary on social media will be removed if it:
- defames, insults, abuses, harasses, threatens, or attacks any individual;
 - contains obscene or offensive language;
 - contravenes the principles of the Constitution or discriminates against any race, gender, sexual preference, religion, or any other protected group;
 - advertises or promotes commercial interests; and
 - promotes illegal or unethical activities.
- 5.5.7.2. If an individual or group continues to breach the relevant organisation's social media policy, they must be blocked or removed and reported to the service provider.

5.5.8. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

- 5.5.8.1. Social media accounts and platforms must be monitored daily to track the following:
- comments on published content and their adherence to social media guidelines;
 - enquiries received through comment or inbox/direct messages;



GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATION POLICY

- iii. shift in online sentiments, particularly increasing negativity; trends and audience behaviour;
- iv. identification of fake accounts;
- v. conversations and hashtags referencing government departments or the GCIS;
- vi. activities related to campaigns; and
- vii. use of social media analytics to inform monitoring and reporting.

5.6.2 Periodic evaluation reports must be submitted, including recommendations for improving social media responsiveness.



6. CRISIS COMMUNICATION



6. CRISIS COMMUNICATION

6.1. BACKGROUND

- 6.1.1. A crisis is an unforeseen or unexpected event beyond the control of the institution that threatens its operations and may have severe negative consequences. A crisis can be man-made and may affect public safety, cause financial loss, and damage the institution's reputation. If not managed effectively, a crisis can escalate into an emergency.
- 6.1.2. The National Disaster Management Act, 2002 (Act 57 of 2002) defines a disaster as a sudden or progressive, widespread or localised, natural or human-caused event that causes or threatens to cause death, injury or disease; damage to property, infrastructure or the environment; or disruption to the life of a community.
- 6.1.3. All government institutions must take proactive measures to prevent a crisis. This requires that political principals and Accounting Officers stay connected with the public, monitor public mood, and conduct research or activities that may help avert a crisis.
- 6.1.4. Communicators must help identify potential crises or be alerted to emerging risks and manage communication activities to prevent or mitigate them.
- 6.1.5. Any crisis, whether an emergency or a disaster, requires an immediate communication response. Effective communication management during such events enables the government to demonstrate leadership and helps the institution maintain or restore the public's confidence.
- 6.1.6. This policy outlines the key communication actions and processes to be implemented during a crisis and sets out the criteria for referring a crisis to the GCIS for communication leadership and guidance. It supplements, rather than competes with or replaces, other government disaster and crisis-management protocols and must be read in conjunction with the relevant prescripts; and
- 6.1.7. Communicators should be familiar with relevant national and provincial disaster management strategies, as well as the National Joint Operations Centre (NATJOC) and Provincial Joint Operations Centres (PROVJOCs), to guide their approach to crisis communication. A crisis can be identified and declared at the national level by:
 - i. The President and/or through a Cabinet decision;
 - ii. The IMC on Communication;
 - iii. a decision of the relevant RR;
 - iv. a War Room;
 - v. a NATJOC; and
 - vi. a National Disaster Management Committee.
- 6.1.7.1. Provincially and locally, a crisis can be declared by:
 - i. the Premier or Mayor, or through a Council decision.
 - ii. a decision of the relevant RR;
 - iii. a War Room;
 - iv. a Provincial Disaster Management Committee; and
 - v. a PROVJOC.
- 6.1.8. Once a crisis has been identified, each institution must establish a communication crisis committee and develop a Crisis Management Plan along with an aligned communication strategy. The crisis communication plan must adopt a strategic approach, ensuring a single, consistent message to avoid confusion caused by multiple or conflicting messages.



- 6.1.9. A Crisis Communication Plan must be incorporated into the national, provincial, or local disaster management plan to ensure that all stakeholders are aware of their roles and responsibilities in the event of a natural or human-induced disaster. The plan should be reviewed and updated regularly, taking into account lessons learned and insights gained from each crisis.
- 6.1.10. The GCIS, as the custodian of government communication, should be involved from the outset, respond promptly, and be prepared to assume a leading coordination role as the coherent and authoritative voice of government.
- 6.1.11. Any institution experiencing a crisis must notify the GCIS, provide details of the actions being taken to address the situation, and request assistance if needed. Updates must be submitted to GCIS, including any shortcomings and limitations in managing the crisis.
- 6.1.12. In the event of a transversal crisis, no government institution should issue media statements that contradict those of other departments without first consulting with the relevant communication officials.
- 6.1.13. Crisis communication resources must be aligned with approved campaigns and adhere to corporate identity guidelines to ensure consistency.
- 6.1.14. A comprehensive set of crisis communication resources must be available for communicators to use as needed to develop, manage, and sustain an effective crisis management capability.

6.2. DEALING WITH CRISES

- 6.2.1. Crises involving the following transversal issues are classified as potential emergencies and must be immediately referred, at the national or provincial level, to the relevant Political Principals and Accounting Officers, as well as to the GCIS for guidance on appropriate response to the issue. These are:
 - 6.2.1.1. acts of terror committed in South Africa;
 - 6.2.1.2. international acts of terror affecting South Africa and/or its citizens;
 - 6.2.1.3. major natural disasters;
 - 6.2.1.4. issues affecting national security;
 - 6.2.1.5. incidents impacting the safety and well-being of communities in South Africa;
 - 6.2.1.6. crises arising from the communication of controversial issues, unintended consequences of government's actions or communication, or violent protests, including the actions of political or administrative structures or individuals; and
 - 6.2.1.7. crises stemming from the personal conduct of an official.
- 6.2.2. Various forms of crisis include:
 - 6.2.2.1. Malicious attacks**
 - i. attacks on publicly accessible locations;
 - ii. attacks on infrastructure;
 - iii. attacks on transport;
 - iv. cyber attacks;
 - v. small-scale Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) attacks;
 - vi. medium-scale CBRN attacks;
 - vii. larger-scale CBRN attacks; and
 - viii. undermining the democratic process *.



6.2.2.2. Serious and Organised Crime

- i. serious and organised crime – vulnerabilities;
- ii. serious and organised crime – prosperity; and
- iii. serious and organised crime – commodities.

6.2.2.3. Environmental hazards

- i. coastal flooding;
- ii. river flooding;
- iii. surface water flooding;
- iv. storms;
- v. low temperatures;
- vi. heatwaves;
- vii. droughts;
- viii. severe space weather;
- ix. volcanic eruptions;
- x. poor air quality;
- xi. earthquakes;
- xii. environmental disasters overseas; and
- xiii. wildfires.

6.2.2.4. Human and Animal Health

- i. pandemics;
- ii. high-consequence infectious disease outbreaks;
- iii. antimicrobial resistance; and
- iv. animal diseases.

6.2.2.5. Major accidents

- i. widespread electricity failures;
- ii. major transport accidents;
- iii. system failures;
- iv. commercial failures;
- v. systematic financial crisis;
- vi. industrial accidents – nuclear;
- vii. industrial accidents – non nuclear; and
- viii. major fires.



6.2.2.6. Societal risks

- i. industrial action; and
- ii. widespread public disorder.

6.2.3. In responding to these transversal emergencies, government/political principals will:

- 6.2.2.1. Establish a Crisis Committee/Command Centre/Ops Room (hereafter referred to as Crisis Command Centre), led jointly by the GCIS and the lead department, to manage communication collectively; or
- 6.2.2.2. Assign communication leadership to a specific department in the case of a cluster or national response, with the GCIS playing a supporting role.

6.3. CRISIS PROTOCOL

6.3.1. The HoC must:

- 6.3.1.1. be notified immediately of emerging or unfolding crises;
- 6.3.1.2. gather and verify information about the crisis, assess its severity, and consider whether it should be escalated to the GCIS for leadership (in the case of emergencies or controversial issues), or managed at the institutional level;
- 6.3.1.3. draft a holding line or statement to be used until a broader decision is made regarding the management of communication;
- 6.3.1.4. serve as a member of the Crisis Committee, Crisis Command Centre, ensuring permanent representation;
- 6.3.1.5. be responsible for developing the strategy and tactics for releasing information;
- 6.3.1.6. determine the target audience for communication across multiple platforms, appoint a spokesperson, and draft a holding statement; and
- 6.3.1.7. communicate facts quickly and accurately, remaining open and accessible to all audiences, while observing confidentiality, legal, and privacy considerations; and
- 6.3.1.8. avoid causing panic and frustration, and provide updates, even if information is limited.

6.4. CRISIS SPOKESPERSONS

- 6.4.1. The political principal, Accounting Officer, and HoC are the official spokespersons during a crisis.
- 6.4.2. In consultation with the HoC, the political principal and the DG/municipal manager must identify departmental managers or staff who possess the knowledge and/or technical expertise to provide specialist input for media responses or to act as official representatives of the department.
- 6.4.3. Designated spokespersons must be available to:
 - 6.4.3.1. participate in communication planning and the development of key messages related to the crisis; and
 - 6.4.3.2. respond promptly to media enquiries, using all appropriate communication tools, including the Crisis Command Centre.

6.5. WORKING WITH THE MEDIA

- 6.5.1. All media enquiries must be directed to the Accounting Officer, HoC, or designated spokesperson. During a crisis, daily media briefings and interviews should be conducted.
- 6.5.2. The Crisis Committee must determine the frequency of media briefings — hourly, daily, weekly, or monthly — based on the severity of the crisis.



- 6.5.3. All media enquiries should be addressed as promptly as possible, with a detailed response provided within 24 hours after verifying the facts; and
- 6.5.4. After the release of information, the HoC must monitor news coverage and respond appropriately, as needed.

6.6. COMMUNICATION APPROVAL PROCESSES

- 6.6.1. The HoC and Crisis Command Centre must establish an approval process to expedite decision-making during a crisis; and
- 6.6.2. All approvals should adhere to a strict timeline while ensuring the quality and accuracy of the information released.

6.7. EMPLOYEE COMMUNICATION

- 6.7.1. In collaboration with Human Resources, the Accounting Officer and HoC must use established internal communication channels to inform departmental employees about the crisis. This communication should occur before or simultaneously with the release of information to external audiences.

6.8. INTEGRITY OF COMMUNICATION

- 6.8.1. During a crisis, it is essential to communicate accurate information to the public while avoiding unnecessary panic.

6.9. INFORMING OTHER GOVERNMENT STAKEHOLDERS

The HoC must organise a stakeholder forum to provide updates on the crisis and its management.

6.10. SOCIAL MEDIA USE IN A CRISIS

- 6.10.1. Organisations with innovative social media strategies are better equipped to manage social media during a crisis. Pre-emptive and early detection mechanisms must be in place to identify a potential crisis.
- 6.10.2. As part of crisis management, each government institution must appoint a person responsible for managing social media by:
 - 6.10.2.1. developing a social media strategic plan aligned to the Crisis Plan;
 - 6.10.2.2. implementing social media measurement tools to monitor engagement;
 - 6.10.2.3. ensuring that information and updates are posted promptly on the organisation's social media sites and webpages, and that these platforms are used as an alert and feedback mechanism for the public;
 - 6.10.2.4. monitoring all social media sites for any mentions of the crisis, and preparing appropriate responses;
 - 6.10.2.5. responding to fake news, misinformation, or disinformation;
 - 6.10.2.6. addressing any activity on the organisation's own social media profiles promptly; and
 - 6.10.2.7. monitoring algorithmic manipulation that could distort the crisis or promote misinformation, and implanting response mechanisms accordingly.



6.11. MEDIA MONITORING

6.11.1. The HoC must:

- 6.11.1.1. Monitor international, national and regional print, broadcast, online, and social media daily;
- 6.11.1.2. Maintain regular contact with the political principal and Accounting Officer, advising departmental leadership on emerging issues and the portrayal of government, which may lead to a reputational crisis;
- 6.11.1.3. Adjust the communication response as needed to limit rumours, correct inaccuracies, and maintain confidence in the department; and
- 6.11.1.4. Summarise relevant media coverage and provide it to the Crisis Management Team at least twice a day during a crisis.

6.11.2. After the crisis has passed, the HoC must:

- 6.11.2.1. Organise a debriefing session with members of the Crisis Committee/Command Centre/Ops Room and prepare a close-out report; and
- 6.11.2.2. Provide the Crisis Committee/Command Centre/Ops Room, the DG, the Minister, and GCIS with a summary of news coverage related to the crisis.

6.11.3. Members of these structures must review this report and evaluate the affected department's performance. The team must note:

- 6.11.3.1. The overall success or failure of the crisis communication effort;
- 6.11.3.2. Problems to be avoided in the future; and
- 6.11.3.3. Appropriate follow-up measures.

6.11.4. Attention must also be given to identifying and implementing measures to improve the Crisis Action Plan.





7. BRAND MARKETING AND CAMPAIGN MANAGEMENT



7. BRAND MARKETING AND CAMPAIGN MANAGEMENT

7.1. GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATORS' TOOLKIT

- 7.1.1. Marketing and campaign management strategic plans must be developed annually and aligned with the department's overall Communication Plan. These plans must include the following elements:
- a. Identification and segmentation of target audiences;
 - b. Recommendations for relevant content and messaging; and
 - c. Determination of the most appropriate medium for the intended audience.
- 7.1.2. The GCP does not cover the full range of promotional tools available to marketers, such as sales and sales promotion, packaging, merchandising, and word-of-mouth marketing. Instead, the emphasis is on marketing tools, which constitute the core of the government communicators' toolkit, namely:
- i. content, language, tone, and images;
 - ii. advertising and media bulk-buying;
 - iii. public relations (PR) (including events, exhibitions, and promotional items);
 - iv. distribution and direct marketing;
 - v. digital marketing;
 - vi. corporate identity; and
 - vii. sponsorship.

7.2. CONTENT, LANGUAGE, TONE, AND IMAGE OF MARKETING CAMPAIGNS

7.2.1. CONTENT

- 7.2.2.1. All campaign content must align with government policy, and its design and presentation must reflect positively and professionally on the department and government as a whole.
- 7.2.2.2. Information must be accurate and verifiable; no unsubstantiated claim or statement may be made;
- 7.2.2.3. All content must aim to educate and inform the public, enabling full participation in democracy, promoting behavioural change, and improving the quality of lives; and
- 7.2.2.4. All government messaging must be sensitive to the cultural diversity of the environment.

7.2.3. VISUAL AND AUDIO CONTENT

- 7.2.3.1. Images must reflect the diverse nature of South African society and be as representative as possible.
- 7.2.3.2. Images used in campaign advertising must be aligned with the government's "people-centred" approach. When images of politicians or Accounting Officers are included, a balance must be maintained between the message and the image.
- 7.2.3.3. Government institutions must comply with the relevant copyright laws of the Republic of South Africa when publishing visual and audio content.



- 7.2.3.4. All visual and audio content produced by either officials within the scope of their employment, or by service providers without a copyright-sharing agreement, remains the intellectual property of the government.
- 7.2.3.5. National, provincial, and local government entities are not required to pay royalties for using GCIS visual and audio content. However, the requesting department must bear the costs of making the content available, at rates determined by the GCIS; and
- 7.2.3.6. The use of children in marketing or photographic material without parental consent is strictly prohibited.

7.2.4. CORE MESSAGE DEVELOPMENT

- 7.2.4.1. Government's marketing campaigns should focus on messages that enable the public to participate in democracy and improve their lives.
- 7.2.4.2. Messages developed for specific government campaigns must be consistent with the overall core messages of the government.
- 7.2.4.3. All government institutions will develop specific programme messaging based on campaign objectives and target audiences. To justify a marketing campaign, the messaging must address one or more of the following objectives:
 - i. promote behaviours or attitudes that serve the public interest, such as those that enhance public health, safety, or quality of life;
 - ii. promote public awareness of, and compliance with, legislation;
 - iii. raise awareness of government services available to the public or target audience;
 - iv. encourage public use of government products and services;
 - v. promote public awareness of rights, responsibilities, duties, or entitlements;
 - vi. encourage public involvement in government decision-making;
 - vii. inform the public of new, existing, or revised government policies, programmes, initiatives, or events;
 - viii. promote public well-being, safety, and order in the event of a crisis or emergency;
 - ix. report on government performance in service delivery to facilitate accountability;
 - x. encourage community pride, spirit, tolerance, or assist in the achievement of widely endorsed public policy outcomes; and
 - xi. recruit staff, publish important statutory information, and promote business opportunities with the relevant department.

7.2.5. LANGUAGE REQUIREMENTS

- 7.2.5.1. All communication by government institutions must comply with the use of the Official Language Act (UOLA) of 2012.
- 7.2.5.2. Different audience segments have distinct communication needs. All marketing communication must consider the preferred official language of the target audience.
- 7.2.5.3. All official languages, including Braille and SASL, must be taken into account. Where applicable, communication should be provided in all official languages, as well as in Braille and audio formats, to ensure accessibility for all language groups and people with disabilities.
- 7.2.5.4. As a general rule, all media-based advertising campaigns should be presented in the language used by the specific media vehicle, such as TV or radio station, magazine, or newspaper; and



- 7.2.5.5. All marketing communication must be written in clear and plain language to facilitate understanding and enhance effective communication.

7.2.6. CORPORATE IDENTITY

- 7.2.6.1. GCIS is the authorised custodian of the government's national Corporate Identity and has delegated this authority to HoCs.
- 7.2.6.2. Government departments must be familiar with the National Corporate Identity and Branding Guidelines which regulate the use of the Coat of Arms and government branding. These guidelines limit the use of the Coat of Arms to protect it from commercial exploitation and abuse.
- 7.2.6.3. Provincial government and district/local municipalities must be familiar with the Corporate Identity guidelines governing the use of their logos and branding. The HoC within each provincial or local district municipality must draft these guidelines and ensure compliance.
- 7.2.6.4. Government's Corporate Identity must be clear and consistent to enable the public to easily recognise and identify it; and
- 7.2.6.5. GCIS is responsible for training and capacity building on Corporate Identity usage and protocol.

7.2.7. BRAND MANAGEMENT

- 7.2.7.1. Government, through the GCIS and Brand SA, must strengthen the international marketing of South Africa by coordinating campaigns, ensuring coherence of the national brand, and providing oversight and guidance to attract tourism and investment.

7.2.8. NON-PERMISSIBLE USE OF GOVERNMENT LOGOS AND BRANDING

- 7.2.8.1. The use of government stationery or business cards for any purpose other than official departmental business is prohibited.
- 7.2.8.2. The use of government stationery, business cards, trademarks, or official documents to advance private business interests or express political or personal views is strictly forbidden.
- 7.2.8.3. The use of the Coat of Arms on branding material must comply with the Corporate Identity guidelines. In certain cases, its use on apparel is strictly forbidden; and
- 7.2.8.4. The use of government information on private websites requires written permission from the Accounting Officer of the relevant department.





7.2.9. ADVERTISING AND MEDIA BULK-BUYING

- 7.2.9.1. The GCIS's advertising services include:
 - i. strategy development;
 - ii. research on industry trends;
 - iii. creative development and design; and
 - iv. media planning and placement.
- 7.2.9.2. Government institutions and entities that use the GCIS's advertising or bulk-buying services must first sign a service-level agreement with the GCIS. ; and
- 7.2.9.3. The advertising of government content in the national government newspaper is mandatory.

7.2.10. CAMPAIGN ADVERTISING

- 7.2.10.1. Campaign advertising by a government institution must aim to educate or inform the public about the institution's services, products, programmes, or policies.
- 7.2.10.2. Government must undertake campaign advertising only where there is a clear public benefit or where the information is best conveyed through paid advertising.
- 7.2.10.3. Government must plan advertising campaigns proactively at the start of the annual communication cycle, when communication strategies are submitted.
- 7.2.10.4. If GCIS services are requested, the GCIS will prepare a cost estimate for the advertising campaign after consulting the client government institution and applying the Government Segmentation Model.
- 7.2.10.5. The agreed-upon budget for the advertising campaign must be transferred to the GCIS before the campaign's implementation; and
- 7.2.10.6. Government institutions must allocate 30% of their advertising spend to community and small commercial media entities, while ensuring that campaign objectives and target audiences are appropriately considered.

7.2.11. NON-CAMPAIGN ADVERTISING

- 7.2.11.1. Non-campaign advertising is generally limited to tenders, statutory public notices, auction notices, recruitment advertising, invitations to make submissions, and similar print advertising, and does not form part of ongoing marketing campaigns that require substantial budgets.

7.2.12. ADVERTISING IN EMERGENCY OR CRISIS SITUATIONS

- 7.2.12.1. Proposals for advertising during a crisis or emergency must comply with Supply Chain Management procurement processes, National Treasury Regulations, and Instruction Notes.

7.2.13. NON-PERMISSIBLE ADVERTISING

- 7.2.13.1. Government entities must refrain from misusing public funds for advertising campaigns. Public funds must not be used for advertising where:
 - i. adverts are placed in a medium that does not reach the intended target audience;



- ii. the method or medium of advertising is excessive or extravagant in relation to the objective being pursued;
- iii. the content mentions or appears to promote or communicate on behalf of a political party;
- iv. members of the department are depicted in ways that a reasonable person would regard as excessive or gratuitous;
- v. the advertising creates a perception that a campaign promotes an individual, such as a minister or a public official;
- vi. there is no clear line of accountability, no appropriate audit procedures, or no government-approved procurement processes; and
- vii. platforms, channels, stations, or publications do not comply with industry and government regulations.

7.2.14. AUTHORITY FOR MARKETING CAMPAIGNS

- 7.2.14.1. The HoC is responsible for approving and implementing departmental, provincial, or local marketing and advertising strategies.
- 7.2.14.2. The GCIS, as the custodian of media bulk-buying, will exercise its delegated authority for the procurement of media space and time and will advise departments, provinces, and local spheres on the appointment of suitable agencies from the GCIS database to commission advertising and PR services.
- 7.2.14.3. A copy of the approved campaign marketing strategy must be submitted to the GCIS at least ten (10) working days before the planned implementation of multimedia advertising campaigns exceeding R1 million, and at least five (5) working days for standard advertising campaigns.
- 7.2.14.4. A department must not commit to any costs or obligations related to a proposed campaign until the GCIS has provided written approval of the marketing strategy.
- 7.2.14.5. The GCIS does not prescribe a specific format for a marketing strategy; however, it must address the content areas outlined in the Government Communicators' Handbook; and
- 7.2.14.6. Final approval for media placement and campaign content rests with the GCIS, which will carefully consider all relevant aspects when assessing the suitability of departmental marketing campaigns for implementation.

7.2.15. PANEL OF ADVERTISERS/PR AGENCIES

- 7.2.15.1. Any department, province, or local municipality using GCIS services must accept that the GCIS panel of advertising and PR agencies will be engaged if outsourcing is required to complete the project or programmes.

7.2.16. GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING DURING AN ELECTION PERIOD

- 7.2.16.1. According to the Electoral Commission of South Africa (IEC), an election period is the time during which the IEC's Code of Conduct and the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa's regulations apply.
- 7.2.16.2. The election period starts once the election date is announced, party lists are submitted, and participating parties and candidates are confirmed. It ends when the election results are certified and officially announced.



- 7.2.16.3. During the election period, state-funded media must not be used to promote or show bias towards any political party.
- 7.2.16.4. State-financed media refers to any newspaper, book, periodical, pamphlet, poster, media release, or other printed material; any audio or video content; or any information in electronic format, such as websites or emails, that is produced and distributed to the public, financed by the government, and directly under its control. Examples of state-financed media include internal and external government newsletters and magazines.
- 7.2.16.5. These regulations apply only to communicators and other relevant public servants. Ministers, Deputy Premiers, MECs, all political representatives, contractual workers, and employees in role-specific government positions are governed by the Ministerial Handbook.
- 7.2.16.6. Departments may use public funds legitimately for information or education campaigns to explain government policies, programmes, or services, and to inform the public of their obligations, rights, and entitlements.
- 7.2.16.7. Marketing material produced and issued by a department during the election period must be prepared with careful consideration of the heightened scrutiny applied to the activities of government, its departments, and its employees.
- 7.2.16.8. The GCIS may provide advice and guidance to departments on pre-election marketing activities; and
- 7.2.16.9. Such advice and guidance do not constitute approval or clearance of material. In all cases, it is the responsibility of the department and its HoC to ensure compliance with relevant legislation and guidelines.

7.2.17. THIRD-PARTY MARKETING ENDORSEMENTS

- 7.2.17.1. In conducting campaign advertising, departments must avoid any appearance or public perception of endorsing or giving an unfair marketing advantage to any person, organisation, or entity outside of government.
- 7.2.17.2. Officials may not accept invitations to speak at public engagements that are convened for profit, where the organisation gains credibility from the official, or where it could be perceived that the official is endorsing the host organisation; and
- 7.2.17.3. Government institutions must not advertise or publicly endorse products or services they purchase or obtain from the private sector under contract.

7.3. PUBLIC RELATIONS

- 7.3.2. This paragraph addresses PR policy and tools that go beyond traditional media relations interventions.

7.3.1. EVENTS

- 7.3.1.1. The organiser of a newsworthy departmental event or function should submit notice of the event to the GCIS's Diary of Government Activity, which is managed by the GCIS's Internal Communication Unit.
- 7.3.1.2. If an event is postponed or cancelled, the organising authority is responsible for removing it from the calendar as soon as possible; and
- 7.3.1.3. The procurement of all suppliers for an event (e.g., catering, sound systems, décor, entertainment) must comply with government procurement policies.



7.3.2. EXHIBITIONS AND TRADE SHOWS

- 7.3.2.1. At the start of the annual communication cycle, departments must provide the GCIS with an indication of the trade shows and expos (domestic and international) they plan to participate in during the forthcoming 12 months; and
- 7.3.2.2. When multiple departments or provinces are represented at the same show or exhibition, there must be a unified presence that promotes common themes and messages of the South African government. Participating departments must designate a lead department to act as co-coordinator. This applies to both national and provincial levels.



7.3.3. SOUTH AFRICAN-BASED EXHIBITIONS AND TRADE SHOWS

- 7.3.3.1. Participation in a South African-based exhibition or trade show is at the discretion of the government entity.
- 7.3.3.2. If participation is approved, the HoC is responsible for ensuring that the stand design complies with departmental Corporate Identity and quality standards; and
- 7.3.3.3. All public events must comply with local municipal by-laws.

7.3.4. INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITIONS AND TRADE SHOWS

- 7.3.4.1. Departments wishing to officially participate in international trade shows or exhibitions should consult and/or coordinate with Brand SA at least six months before the opening date of the event; and
- 7.3.4.2. Responsibility for Corporate Identity, quality standards, and budgeting for all exhibition elements rests with the participating entity and not with Brand SA.

7.4. GIFTS, DONATIONS, AND SPONSORSHIPS: ARRANGEMENTS

- 7.4.1. All gifts, donations and sponsorship arrangements must be in line with the PFMA of 1999, the MFMA of 2003, National Treasury Regulations (21.1.1), Financial Disclosure Regulations, and internal departmental policies on gifts, donations, and sponsorships.
 - 7.4.1.1. Gift, donations and sponsorships are defined as follows:
 - i. Gift: An item given willingly to an official in the course and scope of their employment, other than by a family member, without payment or expectation of receiving anything in return.
 - ii. Donation: A contribution to the department in cash or in kind, provided without compensation or assistance; and
 - iii. Sponsorship: A form of marketing in which a private company covers all or part of the costs associated with a government project in exchange for recognition.



- 7.4.1.2. All donations and sponsorships must:
- i. directly relate to the department's outcomes;
 - ii. provide value for money;
 - iii. enhance the department's credibility and image; and
 - iv. deliver clear and measurable benefits for the marketing and communication campaign.

7.4.2. RECEIPT OF GIFTS, DONATIONS, AND SPONSORSHIPS

- 7.4.2.1. The Accounting Officer of the department must approve all gifts, donations, and sponsorships.
- 7.4.2.2. All cash gifts, donations, and sponsorships above R100 000 must be paid directly into the Revenue Fund. National Treasury will then make these funds available during the adjustment budget; and
- 7.4.2.3. Sign-off procedures for any sponsorship arrangements must be endorsed by directorate managers, comply with the applicable financial delegation, and adhere to the departmental policy on gifts, donations, and sponsorships.

7.4.3. GOVERNMENT AS A SPONSOR

- 7.4.3.1. The directorate closely associated with the event must develop requests for sponsorships or donations related to marketing communication projects. However, approval must comply with the department's financial delegation.
- 7.4.3.2. Sponsorships or donations may be in cash or in kind and must always be recorded in the department's donation register; and
- 7.4.3.3. Reporting must be conducted in accordance with relevant legislation and the requirements of the department.

7.4.4. PRIVATE SECTOR AND INTERNATIONAL DONOR-SPONSORED PROJECTS

- 7.4.3.4. Government will not enter into marketing communication sponsorship or donation arrangements with:
- i. organisations or institutions whose projects are likely to adversely affect the content or interpretation of the department's programmes or services, or create a conflict of interest; and
 - ii. service organisations that may use the funds to sponsor or make a grant to a third party.

7.4.4. DONATIONS/SPONSORSHIP ARRANGEMENTS

- 7.4.4.1. A donation is a contribution to the department, in cash or in kind, provided without compensation or assistance.
- i. Communication units of the relevant entities are required to process applications that specifically relate to their core business. All sponsorship or donation agreements, even those involving small amounts of money or non-monetary items, must be in writing, either as a letter or a formal contract.
 - ii. All sponsorship or donation agreements must be drafted or vetted by the



institution's legal services unit. This unit must ensure that the context of the agreement does not conflict with the core business of the entity or any existing agreements, and that it does not expose the government to any liability.

- iii. All signatories to the agreement must have the necessary authority. In the case of a government entity, the Accounting Officer should sign sponsorship agreements; and
- iv. For full guiding principles on sponsorships and donations, refer to Annexure A.

7.5. PUBLICATIONS

7.5.1. RESPONSIBILITY OF THE HOC

- 7.5.1.1. HoCs must ensure that official departmental publications comply with the requirements of the Official Publications Deposit and that the appropriate identification numbers, such as International Standard Book Number (ISBN), national departments' Annual Report Number, or provincial departments' Annual Report Number, are assigned to all official publications.

7.5.2. PUBLICATION STRATEGY

- 7.5.2.1. Departments must produce publications that educate, inform, and provide a legitimate public benefit.
- 7.5.2.2. All departmental marketing publications, such as brochures, newsletters, reports, magazines, and newspapers, must be based on the marketing strategy approved by the HoC.
- 7.5.2.3. All publications must be produced with due regard for the language preferences of the intended audience, including consideration for visually and hearing-impaired persons, as well as plain-language requirements.
- 7.5.2.4. The content of publications must comply with the requirements outlined in paragraph 7.2.1 of this policy; and
- 7.5.2.5. The HoC must ensure that the content and quality of written material, photographic images, or other graphic material in publications do not bring the government into disrepute. These publications must adhere to applicable copyright and privacy laws.

7.5.3. ONLINE PUBLICATIONS

- 7.5.3.1. Publications issued by a department, province, or local municipality must be made available electronically on the respective department's, provinces, or local municipality's website.

7.5.4. DISTRIBUTION

- 7.5.4.1. DISTRIBUTION (BULK; KNOCK-AND-DROP; COURIER SERVICES, ETC.)
 - i. Government institutions must prioritise the GCIS's distribution network as the first choice.
 - ii. Institutions that use the GCIS's distribution services must deposit funds into the GCIS suspense account at least 14 days before distribution begins. After



GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATION POLICY

receiving the funds, the GCIS will issue an order number confirming distribution details.

- iii. The selected distribution strategy should consider the following factors: the objective (informing versus mobilising); location of the audiences; audience profile or target market (urban-rural divide); distribution methodology (knock-and-drop/home distribution, bulk, distribution courier, hand-outs, etc.) versus available budget; language requirements; and gender and cultural considerations; and
- iv. Government institutions should use National Treasury transversal contracts for any courier services required within a department.

7.6. THIRD-PARTY ADVERTISING AND REFERENCES ON WEBSITES

- 7.6.1. Paid advertising on the websites of any government entity is subject to the approval by the National Treasury, the board, or the Accounting Officer; and
- 7.6.2. Organisations that sponsor government activities may only be acknowledged in text on relevant pages. Their logos may be added to the department's website only in exceptional circumstances, with approval from the HoC or designated official.



8. INTERNAL COMMUNICATION



8. INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

8.1. DEFINITIONS

- 8.1.1. Internal communication is the efficient exchange of information and communication both vertically and horizontally. This occurs between members within an organisation as well as among employees across national, provincial, and local spheres, using a variety of platforms.
- 8.1.2. An organisation with an effective internal communication strategy is likely to have professional, committed, and highly efficient employees who act as its key ambassadors and messengers; and
- 8.1.3. Internal communication is effective only if transformational government messages, service-delivery information, and work-related instructions are clearly developed and understood before being shared with the general public. Internal communication is a requirement for all government institutions.

8.2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 8.2.1. Internal communication aims to:
 - 8.2.1.1. keep all employees informed and mobilised to participate in the implementation of government's projects and programmes to achieve its goals;
 - 8.2.1.2. create a conducive working environment in which all employees are informed, understand a common vision, and are inspired to work towards the same organisational goals;
 - 8.2.1.3. establish a culture based on the values and principles of Batho Pele;
 - 8.2.1.4. introduce public servants to the values and mandate of government, enabling them to act as key ambassadors and messengers;
 - 8.2.1.5. encourage the sharing of knowledge and best practices in government internal communications to promote service excellence;
 - 8.2.1.6. enable all employees to articulate the department's vision, mission and mandate; and
 - 8.2.1.7. build a professional public service and a capable state.

8.3. PLANNING

- 8.3.1. Each entity must develop a five-year internal communication strategy, supported by annual plans; and
- 8.3.2. The internal communication strategy must be integrated into the entity's overall communication strategy, aligned with the NCSF, and support the government's mandate and priorities.

8.4. INTERNAL COMMUNICATION PLATFORMS

- 8.4.1. Communication can take many forms, both formal and informal. Formal communication follows established organisational channels, such as meetings called by recognised authorities or official written messages. Informal communication is usually spoken and based on social interactions.
- 8.4.2. The internal communication strategic plan must indicate the channels/platforms the entity will use to communicate specific campaigns and information. Platforms can include, but must not be limited to the following:
 - 8.4.2.1. Notice/bulletin boards
 - 8.4.2.2. Newsletters and magazines



- 8.4.2.3. Letters
 - 8.4.2.4. Videos/in-house TV
 - 8.4.2.5. Emails and intranet (see below)
 - 8.4.2.6. Presentations
 - 8.4.2.7. Team-building activities
 - 8.4.2.8. Group meetings
 - 8.4.2.9. Employee-attitude surveys
 - 8.4.2.10. Focus groups
 - 8.4.2.11. Face-to-face meeting with managers
 - 8.4.2.12. Social events
 - 8.4.2.13. Audio recordings
 - 8.4.2.14. General staff meetings.
- 8.4.3. Each entity must have an intranet that enables information to flow freely between political principals, managers, and employees. If capacity constraints prevent an entity from having its own intranet, email, and website, platforms must be used to achieve the same purpose.
- 8.4.4. This intranet must include government policies, programmes, and activities, and it must be updated weekly;
- 8.4.5. The internal communicator, or their designate, is responsible for intranet content and must ensure it is accurate, up to date, and easy to understand;
- 8.4.6. Staff will be given access rights may post blogs and comments, providing they adhere to the same “acceptable use” and “content” guidelines as outlined in Paragraph 5: Digital Communication Platforms of this policy.
- 8.4.7. WEBSITE (SEE PARAGRAPH 6: ONLINE COMMUNICATION PLATFORMS)
- 8.4.7.1. Each government institution must identify and contribute relevant content, such as campaign toolkits, to the GCIS-managed website for government communicators.

8.5. INTERNAL COMMUNICATION STRUCTURES

8.5.1. THE INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS DIVISION (ICD)

- 8.8.1.1. Each institution, national department, provincial department, and the local sphere of government must have an Internal Communication Division (ICD) responsible for facilitating the production, approval, and distribution of information within that institution. The ICD should be composed of representatives from the different business units.
- 8.8.1.2. An internal communicator must manage the ICD by:
 - i. ensuring two-way communication between employees and management on policy, programmes, and issues affecting the day-to-day implementation of the government’s PoA;
 - ii. ensuring all staff understand the mandate, vision, mission, values, and the strategic plan of the government and the relevant department;
 - iii. engaging politicians, senior management, and line managers to ensure that department policies and programmes are clearly communicated to staff;
 - iv. developing and implementing an internal communication strategic plan that forms part of the overall developmental strategy;



- v. identifying and understanding the communications needs of public servants in their respective department or government organisation;
- vi. in institutions with limited resources, allocating an employee to the internal communications function, who can draw on the support of other staff when necessary. Staff allocation must comply with government human resource policies and practices;
- vii. appointing the ICD manager or designated employee at a level appropriate to the department's size, complexity, and responsibilities. This person will report to the HoC and must have access to political principals through various forums;
- viii. ensuring that the ICD manager or assigned employee has a minimum of three years of relevant, communications-focused experience; and
- ix. allocating a minimum of 1% of the communications budget to the ICD to carry out the planned activities; and
- x. Ensuring the ICD manager or designated employee participates in the National Integrated Internal Communicators' Forum (NIICF).

8.8.2. INTEGRATED INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS FORUMS

8.8.2.1. National Integrated Internal Communications Forum

- i. The GCIS convenes the National Internal Information and Communication Forum (NIICF) quarterly to provide guidelines for communication; assist with joint planning; share information and best practices; and monitor the implementation of government-wide internal communication plans. Departmental strategic and annual communication plans and campaigns may also be shared at this meeting. The GCIS may convene special information-sharing sessions as needed.
- ii. All internal communicators from national departments and their entities, parastatals, and SOEs must attend this forum; and
- iii. Biannual meetings will be held and must include a representative from the Provincial Internal Communicators' Forum (PICF).

8.8.2.2. Provincial/Local Internal Communicators' Forum

- i. Each province must establish a Provincial Internal Communication Forum (PICF), which should meet quarterly. The GCIS will convene this forum with the following aims: to provide guidelines for communication; assist with joint planning; share information and best practices; and monitor the implementation of government-wide internal communication plans. Departmental strategic and annual communication plans and campaigns may also be shared at these meetings.
- ii. Internal communicators in the Office of the Premier, provincial departments, and district and local municipalities must attend this forum; and
- iii. Each province must send a representative to participate in a biannual PICF.

8.8.2.3. GCIS Internal Communication: Roles and Responsibilities

- i. Provide direction, authority, and strategic leadership to government internal communications forums;
- ii. Lead and manage government internal communication campaigns across a wide



GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATION POLICY

- range of communication platforms;
- iii. Gather informational material from internal communicators and ensure its distribution throughout the public sector.

8.6. ACCEPTABLE USE

- 8.6.1. The DG or municipal manager is the designated official responsible for authorising and overseeing the distribution of internal communication material. They may formally delegate this authority to other employees in writing, specifying the powers or responsibilities being delegated.
- 8.6.2. The databases of internal communicators and employees must not be shared with external service providers for promoting their commercial or business interests; and
- 8.6.3. Public servants or other persons must not use internal communications to promote their own commercial or business interests.

8.7. MONITORING

- 8.7.1. The GCIS will monitor departments to ensure that they:
 - 8.7.1.1. share information;
 - 8.7.1.2. participate in internal communicators' forums;
 - 8.7.1.3. create platforms for implementation and share best practices; and
 - 8.7.1.4. develop a strategic plan and implement activities.



9. RESEARCH

9.1. COMMUNICATION RESEARCH

Content research and environmental scanning must be conducted to inform communications campaigns. Research, monitoring, and evaluation are essential components of communication because they are used to:

- 9.1.1. measure or assess public awareness of issues arising in the public arena that require a response;
- 9.1.2. monitor and evaluate government communication activities and their impact;
- 9.1.3. provide insights to inform and improve future communication strategies, campaigns, initiatives, and activities; and
- 9.1.4. assess public information needs related to government projects and programmes.

9.2. PUBLIC OPINION RESEARCH

- 9.2.1. Public opinion research must be conducted to help the government understand its stakeholders and identify the public's needs, expectations, and priorities.

Further research must be conducted to:

- 9.2.1.1. measure the effectiveness of information and communication campaigns;
- 9.2.1.2. evaluate the success of marketing campaigns;
- 9.2.1.3. assess the public's response to proposals or expected changes;
- 9.2.1.4. assess perceptions regarding the effectiveness of policies and programmes that have been introduced; and
- 9.2.1.5. determine preferred platforms for informing the public.

9.3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF DEPARTMENTS

- 9.3.1. National, provincial, and local government departments, as well as government entities, should ensure that they are aware of public information requirements.
- 9.3.2. The GCIS must coordinate cross-cutting research initiatives that assess the effectiveness of marketing and communication campaigns when multiple government departments and agencies are involved; and
- 9.3.3. The GCIS must plan, coordinate, and conduct its own annual public opinion research to evaluate the impact and effectiveness of activities supporting the National Communication Plan.

9.4. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

9.4.1. COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES AND CAMPAIGNS

- 9.4.1.1. Monitoring and evaluation measures the impact and effectiveness of communication within departmental, provincial, local, or campaign contexts.
- 9.4.1.2. Communication activities and campaigns must have SMART, measurable targets. The department, province, or local authority responsible for managing these activities must assess communication plans annually; and
- 9.4.1.3. Monitoring and evaluation reports must be made available to relevant managers, and corrective action should be taken to ensure improved communication.



9.5. COMPLIANCE WITH THE COMMUNICATION POLICY

- 9.4.1. The Accounting Officer, or their designated representative, must monitor and evaluate the level of compliance with the GCP within their department.
- 9.4.2. Government departments must use the G-CET to ensure seamless reporting on government communication activities.
- 9.4.3. While the GCIS coordinates the implementation of the G-CET at the national level, the Office of the Premier oversees its implementation at the provincial level, and the Office of the District Mayor manages its implementation at the local level.
- 9.4.4. Quarterly G-CET monitoring and evaluation of communication performance must be submitted to the GCIS, which is responsible for overseeing the government communication function.
- 9.4.5. In consultation with relevant stakeholders in the communication industry, such as academics, experts, and organisations, the GCIS should conduct a formal review every five years to evaluate the impact and effectiveness of the policy and make any necessary adjustments.; and
- 9.4.6. Non-compliance with the GCP constitutes misconduct, and this will be reported in accordance with the MTSF.

9.4.7. FUNDING OF COMMUNICATION RESEARCH

- 9.4.7.1. Research is an integral part of any communication activity. Therefore, all communication budgets must include provision for research.
- 9.4.7.2. Research must be conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of any communication campaign. This should be reflected in the media plan approved by the department. An affordable option is available through the existing GCIS Quantitative Tracker Research.

10. BIBLIOGRAPHY





10. BIBLIOGRAPHY

10.1. POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

- I. Batho Pele Core Values .1997. Available from: <https://www.dpsa.gov.za/dpsa2g/documents/acts®ulations/frameworks/white-papers/transform.pdf> [Accessed on 13 Oct 2022]
- II. Code of Conduct for the Public Service .2002. Available from: https://www.dpsa.gov.za/dpsa2g/documents/acts®ulations/regulations1999/PSRegulations_1_07_2002.pdf [Accessed on 13 Oct 2022]
- III. Communications 2000: A vision for government communications in South Africa, Report of the Task Group on Government Communication .1996. Available from: https://www.gcis.gov.za/sites/default/files/docs/resourcecentre/reports/comtask/com_rep.pdf [Accessed on 13 Oct 2022]
- IV. Government Wide Communication System Report (Comtask Report).2014. Directorate: Research and Knowledge Management. https://www.gcis.gov.za/sites/default/files/docs/resourcecentre/reports/GCIS_Annual_Report_2014.pdf [Accessed on 13 Oct 2022]
- V. GCIS Editorial Style Guide March .2013. Available from: http://www.gcis.gov.za/sites/default/files/editorial_styleguide_2011.pdf. [Accessed on 13 Oct 2022]
- VI. GCIS: Corporate Identity and Branding Guidelines. 2005. Available from: https://www.gcis.gov.za/sites/default/files/docs/resourcecentre/guidelines/corpid/corpid_full.pdf [Accessed on 13 Oct 2022]
- VII. GCIS Government Communicators' Handbook .2017. Available from: https://www.gcis.gov.za/sites/default/files/docs/resourcecentre/guidelines/handbook/Complete_doc_reduced.pdf Accessed on 13 Oct 2022
- VIII. MTSF 2014 – 2019. Available from: https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/gcis_document/201409/mtsf2014-2019.pdf [Accessed on 29 Sept 2016].
- IX. Minimum Information Security Standards (MISS) Available from: [https://www.sita.co.za/sites/default/files/documents/MISS/Minimum%20Information%20Security%20Standards%20\(MISS\).pdf](https://www.sita.co.za/sites/default/files/documents/MISS/Minimum%20Information%20Security%20Standards%20(MISS).pdf) [Accessed on 13 Oct 2022]
- X. Managing Electronic Records in Governmental Bodies: Policies, principles and requirements. 2004. Available from: <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.za/node/1225> [Accessed on 14 Oct 2022]
- XI. National Development Plan 2030, Our Future – Make It Work. 2012. National Planning Commission, The Presidency. Available from: https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/gcis_document/201409/ndp-2030-our-future-make-it-workr.pdf [Accessed on 13 Oct 2022]
- XII. Records Management Policy Manual.2006: Available from http://www.national.archives.gov.za/rms/v1_2_records_management_policy_manual.pdf [Accessed on 14 Oct 2022]



10.2. LAWS AND REGULATIONS

- I. Copyright Act, 1978 (Act 98 of 1978) Available from: https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/gcis_document/201504/act-98-1978.pdf [Accessed on 13 Oct 2022]
- II. Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act 108 of 1996) Available from: <https://housingfinanceafrica.org/app/uploads/Constitution-of-the-Republic-of-South-Africa-Act-108-of-1996.pdf> [Accessed on 13 Oct 2022]
- III. Electronic Communications and Transactions Act, 2002 (Act 25 of 2002) Available from : https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/gcis_document/201409/a25-02.pdf [Accessed on 17 Oct 2022]
- IV. Intergovernmental Relations Framework Act, 2005 (Act 13 of 2005) Available from: www.gov.za/documents/intergovernmental-relations-framework-act [Accessed on 17 Oct 2022]
- V. Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (Act 32 of 2000) Available from: <https://www.gov.za/documents/local-government-municipal-systems-act> [Accessed on 17 Oct 2022]
- VI. Use of Official Languages Act, 2012 (Act 12 of 2012) Available from: <https://www.gov.za/documents/use-official-languages-act> [Accessed on 17 Oct 2022]
- VII. Municipal Structures Act, 1998 (Act 117 of 1998) Available from: <https://www.gov.za/documents/local-government-municipal-structures-act> [Accessed on 17 Oct 2022]
- VIII. Municipal Finance Management Act, 2003 (Act 56 of 2003) Available from: <https://www.gov.za/documents/local-government-municipal-finance-management-act-0> [Accessed on 17 Oct 2022]
- IX. UK National Risk Register. 2020. Available from: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/952959/6.6920_CO_CCS_s_National_Risk_Register_2020_11-1-21-FINAL.pdf [Accessed on 16 August 2022]
- X. Promotion of Access to Information Act 2000 (Act 2 of 2000) Available from: https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/gcis_document/201409/a2-000.pdf [Accessed on 17 Oct 2022]
- XI. Protection of Personal Information Act, 2013 (Act 4 of 2013) Available from: <https://www.gov.za/documents/protection-personal-information-act> [Accessed on 17 Oct 2022]
- XII. Public Finance Management Act, 1999 (Act 1 of 1999) Available from: www.treasury.gov.za/legislation/pfma/act.pdf [Accessed on 17 Oct 2022]
- XIII. Public Service Act, 1994 (Act 103 of 1994) <https://www.dpsa.gov.za/dpsa2g/documents/acts®ulations/psact1994/publicserviceact.pdf> Available from: [Accessed on 17 Oct 2022]
- XIV. South Africa. 1993. Electoral Act, 1993 (Act No. 202 of 1993). Pretoria: Government Printer.
- XV. South Africa. 2002. Media Development and Diversity Agency Act, 2002 (Act No. 14 of 2002). Pretoria: Government Printer.



10.3. GENERAL

- i. Baatjies, R., Steytler, N. 2006. Local Government Project, University of the Western Cape, Community Law Centre; District Intergovernmental Forums: A Preliminary Assessment of Institutional Compliance with the Intergovernmental Relations Framework Act. Available from: http://www.gov.za/sites/www.gov.za/files/implementation%20of%20intergovernmental%20relations%20framework_1.pdf. [Accessed on 17 August 2015]
- ii. Chan, J.C., Vanguard (n/d) The Role of Social Media in Crisis Preparedness, Response and Recovery. Available from: www.oecd.org/governance/risk/. [Accessed on 2 September 2015]
- iii. Department of Public Service Administration (DPSA). 2003. The Machinery of Government: Structure and Functions of Government. Available from: <http://www.dpsa.gov.za/dpsa2g/documents/lkm/mog.pdf>. [Accessed on 21 August 2015]
- iv. Department of Provincial and Local Government (DPLG) Working Together for Development: Understanding Intergovernmental Relations. Available from: https://juta.co.za/media/filestore/2013/10/IGR_Guide1.pdf [Accessed on 24 August 2015]
- v. Bajracharya, S. 2018. Development Communication theory. Available from: <https://www.businessstopia.net/mass-communication/development-communication-theory>. [Accessed on 7 September 2016]
- vi. Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa. 2006. Internal Communications Programme. Available from: <https://eisa.org.za/> [Accessed on 17 August 2015].
- vii. eThekweni Municipality, Communications Unit Communications Policy (As adopted by Council on 29/04/2009). Available from: <https://silo.tips/download/communications-policy-6> [Accessed on 17 August 2015].
- viii. Government of Canada (n/d); Communications Policy of the Government of Canada. Available from: <http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/pol/doc-eng.aspx?id=12316>. [Accessed on 17 July 2015].
- ix. GCIS. 2000. Development Communication: An Approach to a Democratic Public Information System. Available from: www.thusong.gov.za/documents/artic_pres/dev_comm.htm
- x. GCIS. Government Communicators' Handbook. Available from: <http://www.gcis.gov.za/government-communicators-handbook-2014-2017>. [Accessed on 12 July 2015]
- xi. Gupta, D.M. 2015. Theoretical Approaches in Development Communications. Available from: <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/development-communication-theoretical-perspective-deepak-m-gupta> [Accessed on 6 September 2016]
- xii. Kabir, E. Development Communication: Theories, Means and Methods. Available from: https://www.academia.edu/8054246/Development_Communication_Theories_Means_and_Methods. [Accessed on 7 September 2016]
- xiii. Meehan, E.J. 1985. Policy: Constructing a definition. *Policy Sciences*, 18(4) p.291-311.
- xiv. Naspers Group (n/d) Communication Policy. Available from: <https://www.naspers.com/NaspersPortal/>



media/Naspers/Pdf/policies/communication-policy.pdf. [Accessed on 17 August 2015]

- xv. Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University. 2001. Communication Policy. Available from: http://www.nelsonmandelabay.gov.za/datarepository/documents/KzyTV_Communication%20Policy.pdf. [Accessed on 17 August 2015]
- xvi. North West Provincial Government Local Government and Human Settlements Media and Communications: Policy on Communications. 2015. Available from: <http://www.nwpg.gov.za/HumanSettlements/site/documents/policies/Communication%20Policy.pdf>. [Accessed on 17 August 2015]
- xvii. Olivier, N. Intergovernmental Relations in South Africa: Conflict Resolution Within the Executive and Legislative Branches of Government. Available from: www.forumfed.org/libdocs/IGRBook1/IGR-za-Olivier.pdf. [Accessed on 24 August 2015]
- xviii. Servaes, J. 2007. Communication for Development and Social Change. Available from: https://devcomm003.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/2008_jan-servaes_communication-for-development.pdf [Accessed on 17 August 2016].
- xix. University of California; Office of the President. Electronic Communications Policy. Available from: <http://policy.ucop.edu/doc/7000470/ElectronicCommunications>. [Accessed on 18 July 2015]
- xx. Tatenda Chityori. 2014. What is development communication? Available from: <http://www.slideshare.net/TatendaChityori/9-development-communication>; http://www.slideshare.net/jeflynrastrollo/development-communication?next_slideshow=1. [Accessed on 7 September 2016]



COMMUNICATION PROTOCOLS AND PRINCIPLES FOR THE EXECUTIVE



government
communications

Department:
Government Communication and Information System
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA





1. PURPOSE

1.1. These protocols and principles have been drafted to:

- 1.1.1. Provide guidelines for integrated strategic communications to the executive;
- 1.1.2. Support effective and coordinated communications that promote public awareness;
- 1.1.3. Make provision for transparent and respectful communication between members of the executive;
- 1.1.4. Address issues relating to the promotion of good conduct, integration, participation, co-operation and co-ordination between ministers;
- 1.1.5. Outline key communication considerations for addressing government initiatives and projects, transversal programmes and operational or technical disruptions.

1.2. The main objectives of the protocols and principles are to:

- 1.2.1. Establish and promote effective working protocols to govern and guide the way the executive communicates and engages with stakeholders;
- 1.2.2. Present a professional, coordinated and consistent approach that is citizen oriented.



1.3. Government communication is guided by Section 41.1.c of the Constitution of the obliges all spheres of government and organs of the state to provide effective, transparent, accountable and coherent government for the whole country.

1.4. The Protocols will henceforth be guided by the following communication principles:

- 1.4.1. Accountability and good governance;
- 1.4.2. Collegiality;
- 1.4.3. Collaboration and consultation;
- 1.4.4. Professionalism;
- 1.4.5. Etiquette;
- 1.4.6. Openness and transparency;
- 1.4.7. Respect.

2. PRINCIPLES OF EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

2.1. The members of the executive should align their communication to the following principles:

- 2.1.1. Provide the public with relevant, timely and accurate about its policies and programmes;
- 2.1.2. Use key messages to communicate in one voice and in alignment with the President's voice;
- 2.1.3. Communicate with the required level of professionalism;
- 2.1.4. Be truthful;
- 2.1.5. Honour the value and reputation of government and public institutions in all communication activities, to build public trust and confidence;
- 2.1.6. Exercise collegiality and collaborate with other members of the executive to serve the public interest;
- 2.1.7. Refrain from contradicting each other in public to avoid a negatively impact on the image and reputation of government;
- 2.1.8. Collaborate on transversal programmes coordinated by the GCIS to ensure integrated planning and coherent government communication of messaging, such as Izimbizo;



- 2.1.9. Ensure an interactive and coherent government communication system aligned to government programmes;
- 2.1.10. Use the media schedule to ensure that the executive including deputies can reach all segments on platforms of their choice.
- 2.1.11. Attend media training to ensure professionalism in government communication.

3. SCOPE OF THE PROTOCOLS AND PRINCIPLES

3.1. These protocols and principles apply to all communication including:

- 3.1.1. Media releases and statements;
- 3.1.2. Content used on digital media;
- 3.1.3. All communication material prepared for public engagement;
- 3.1.4. Any publication or work prepared for the public domain, by consultants or contractors when working on behalf of government; and
- 3.1.5. Internal communications to staff.

4. APPLICATION OF THE PROTOCOLS AND PRINCIPLES

- 4.1. The protocols and principles apply to all members of the executive and their staff members.



5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE EXECUTIVE IN GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS

- 5.1. The 2018 Cabinet approved Government Communication Policy states that as key government communicators, members of the executive (including the President, Deputy President, ministers, premiers, mayors and councillors) must:
 - 5.1.1. Take charge of government communication by ensuring that his/her department has a costed communication strategy for the term of government and costed annual communication plans thereof;
 - 5.1.2. Account to the public on government policy, aims and objectives, and report back on deliverables;
 - 5.1.3. Interact with the public to solicit views and input into government activities;
- 5.2. Avail himself/herself for cluster media briefings of government;



- 5.3. Undertakes in proactive departmental media engagement initiatives of his/her department;
- 5.4. Ensure he/she is capacitated to lead communication as a key messenger of his/her department by attending communication capacity building and media training initiatives organised by GCIS or the Head of Communications or attend the National School of Government/GCIS Communication Master Class;
- 5.5. Lead departmental public participation programmes and stakeholder engagement initiatives of his/her departments;
- 5.6. The minister responsible for government communication will coordinate and chair media briefings that deal with crises affecting government;
- 5.7. During a crisis on cross cutting issues in the environment at any given time, the Minister responsible for government communication (GCIS) will convene and chair the Rapid Response meetings;
- 5.8. In such crisis, the Minister in the Presidency, supported by the Deputy Minister in the Presidency responsible for government communication and the Director General of GCIS will coordinate the convening of respective ministers and communication on behalf of government;
- 5.9. On cross-cutting critical issues in the environment that require urgent response, the Director General responsible for government communication will coordinate and chair Rapid Response meetings of Directors General of respective departments, Heads of Communication and subject experts that are affected by issues in the environment;
- 5.10. During a disaster, the Minister of Cooperate Governance and Traditional Affairs (Cogta) as empowered by the National Disaster Management Act 57 of 2002 in consultation with respective Cabinet member/s responsible for applicable disasters, will issue guidelines and co-lead meetings related such disaster;
- 5.11. The Government Communication and Information System (GCIS) with the National Disaster Management Centre will co-ordinate communication on government response efforts in an event of a disaster being declared;
- 5.12. In responding to any disaster, the executive may establish a communication command centre led by the GCIS to coordinate messages and the broader communications around the declared the disasters with Cogta and all government communicators across the three spheres;
- 5.13. The Deputy Ministers are responsible for communication in line with their delegated roles by the respective Minister;





5.14. Ministers must ensure that their staff members always behave at the highest standard and:

5.14.1. Facilitate communication of Ministerial priorities to departments.

5.14.2. Support and assist Ministers to meet their portfolio responsibilities.

5.14.3. Work with the Heads of communications to ensure publicity of the activities of the executive.



6. PROTOCOLS

6.1. Members of the executive must treat each other with respect and courtesy;

6.2. Must operate in a non-partisan way to give effect to the policies and decisions of the government of the day, regardless of its political complexion, and provide advice that is impartial, responsive, accurate and comprehensive;

6.3. Members of the executive must amplify the President's message on international agreements;

6.4. Members of the executive are not allowed to comment on matters that have not been finalized by Cabinet;

6.5. Members of the executive are discouraged from making commitments on issues of another ministry or department;

6.6. Only the President has the authority to issue communication to sign agreements between states;

6.7. Members of the executive must consult each other on matters that jointly affect their portfolios. They must present the programmes to the responsible cluster for a collective action in the spirit of the intergovernmental relations;

6.8. Provincial government activities initiated at national level must observe the principles of cooperative government.;

6.9. Any joint communications must be reviewed and approved by both senior officials of their respective ministries or departments prior to release or publication of the joint communication;

6.10. Cluster briefings or joint media briefings on issues and priorities of mutual interest must be held;



- 6.11. Social media activity by a member of the executive must not bring either the executive or the government into disrepute;
- 6.12. Avoid contradicting each other in public to prevent a negative impact on the reputation of government;
- 6.13. Communication by the executive must be mindful and respectful of issues that are currently before the courts; and
- 6.14. Members of the executive must at all times separate government and party communications;

7. DISPUTE RESOLUTION

- 7.1. The principle of collegiality must at all times be upheld will be escalated to the President.
- 7.2. For National Cabinet the President/ Provincial the Premier and Local Government the Speaker of the Council will deal will disputes escalated to his office.



8. ENFORCEMENT

- 8.1. The President/Premier/Speaker must make decisions on the appropriate sanction for members of the executive who fail to adhere to this Policy.

9. REVIEW OF PROTOCOLS

- 9.1. The protocols will be reviewed by the Government Communication and Information System and approved by Cabinet.