



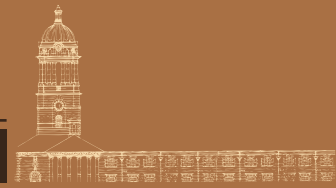
CHAPTER 10

DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION



**government
communications**

Department:
Government Communication and Information System
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION

“Development communication is the art and science of human communication applied to the speedy transformation of a country and the mass of its people from poverty to a dynamic state of economic growth that makes possible greater social equality and the larger fulfilment of the human potential.” – Nora Quebral; *Quoted in Development Communication – Rhetoric and Reality* by Pete Habermann and Guy de Fontagalland.

Access to information, open dialogue, openness and accountability and media freedom are all fundamental tenets of a thriving democracy. To achieve these, government should maintain continued interaction with all stakeholders and require that political principals take on the role of chief communicators within their portfolios.

This is particularly relevant within the context of developmental communication, which focuses on meeting the communication needs of the people in a manner that is accessible to them and which will result in a qualitative difference to their lives.

The development-communication approach is aimed at making public programmes and policies real, meaningful and sustainable. Information should be applied as part of community development efforts and should address information needs identified by communities, including various structures and groups within communities. Most importantly, the information should take into consideration the diversity of culture and language and different literacy levels. The intended outcome is to make a difference in the quality of life of individuals and communities.

10.1. Characteristics of a development-communication approach

It is responsive

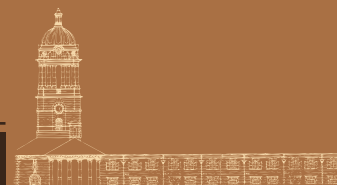
This means that communication between government and the community must be responsive to the needs of the community within the context of government’s mandated programme to improve the lives of all South Africans.

It relies on feedback

It is a two-way communication process that involves consultation with the recipients of information and provides them with answers to their queries. This process similarly gives government an opportunity to listen to the ideas and experiences of communities, especially about programmes and services aimed at improving their lives.

It must be creative and innovative

The message must clearly show how information can better the lives of recipients. The message must promote hope and trust among its recipients, as well as encourage them to be interested in its content and to become a part thereof.



It is about continuity and sustainability

It is not about government dumping communication material on communities and not making sure that they understand its content. Follow-up workshops can be arranged to emphasise the importance and necessity of the information. The community must therefore use it continually and in a sustained way to enrich their lives. It must be available continuously when there is a need.

10.2. Examples of the development-communication approach

10.2.1. Thusong service centres

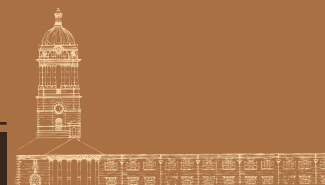
The Thusong Service Centre (formerly known as multipurpose community centres) programme of government was initiated in 1999 as one of the primary vehicles for the implementation of development communication and information, and to integrate government services into primarily rural communities. This was done to address historical, social and economic factors, which limited access to information, services and participation by citizens, as they had to travel long distances to access these services.

Thusong service centres are **one-stop, integrated community development centres** with community participation and services relevant to people's needs. They aim to empower the poor and disadvantaged through access to information, services and resources from government, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), parastatals, business, etc, enabling them to engage in government programmes for the improvement of their lives.

Government's vision for Thusong service centres is to provide every South African citizen with access to information and services within their place of residence and in each local municipality by 2014 with the purpose of improving the quality of their lives through integrated service delivery.

By the end of February 2010, 140 Thusong service centres were in operation, making a crucial contribution to the expansion of infrastructure for access to information and services that citizens can use. Typical services found at these centres include those from the departments of home affairs, labour, social development and health; the South African Social Security Agency; the GCIS; telecentres; the Post Office; libraries; agricultural extension offices; and municipal services. Community development workers, the South African Police Service, NGOs and community-based organisations also offer services through the centres.

Communities get services which they were unable to obtain in the past, and participate in activities that allow for two-way communication between the Government and the people. A Thusong service centre is also a base from where information products and services are sent to all parts of the district.



Similarly, Thusong service centres link communities to the Government's distribution network of publications and products about government programmes and activities. Community participation events, campaigns, exhibition and road shows at Thusong service centres provide communities with information they can use to improve their lives and develop the community.

Some specific benefits to communities include the following:

- local economic development
- integrated service delivery in line with the requirements of the Municipal System Act, 2000 (Act 32 of 2000)
- improvement in infrastructural development
- education and skills development, Adult Basic Education and Training and government programmes
- access to information and services closer to where people live
- access to technology: telecentres provide access to the *Batho Pele* Gateway and computer training
- platform for partnerships, which empower communities through, for example, sustainable projects that encourage ownership and self-employment, as well as employment of others.

10.2.2. Public participation

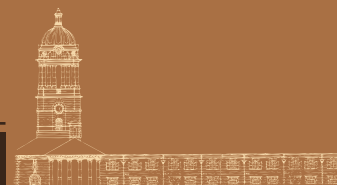
Since Cabinet's decision in October 2000 to introduce public participation (izimbizo) as a method of interactive governance and unmediated communication, the platform has enabled government to better understand people's needs and how these needs can best be met. In essence, the Public Participation Programme is a unique form of participatory democracy.

This interactive programme promotes people's direct access to and interaction with the President, ministers, premiers, MECs, mayors and local councillors. It is an important platform for mobilising all sectors of society to partner with government to speed up change and accelerate service delivery.

Public participation events therefore provide an opportunity for political leaders in all three spheres to intensify interactive communication around the Programme of Action (PoA) and other government activities.

10.2.1. Strategising for public participation communication

A public participation communication programme has to be based on a defined communication strategy. The strategy must clearly outline the objectives of undertaking public participation and must contain all the elements of the communication strategy as outlined in the generic framework for developing a government communication strategy. The communication strategy must also be accompanied by a phased action plan to facilitate monitoring of the implementation of the communication strategy.



10.2.2.2. Planning of public participation events

Effective planning is a critical aspect of any successful campaign. This embodies initial conceptualisation of how the Public Participation Programme will take place, using the communication strategy as a guide. At this stage, role players must be identified and the necessary steps and processes specified in a work breakdown structure and action plan. Based on the information received, the GCIS strategically deploys available political principals to events. The various departments also submit their programmes through the database developed and maintained by the GCIS.

A national task team was established with the overall responsibility of coordinating and overseeing the implementation of the Public Participation Programme. This team consists of members of the GCIS, The Presidency, the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, other national departments and provincial heads of communication.

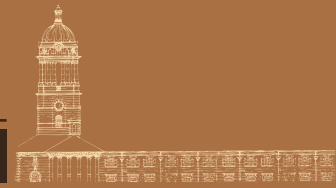
The national task team's responsibilities include:

- Programme consolidation with officials responsible for provinces and the officials responsible for national departments.
- Marketing and distribution.
- Media liaison with two media liaison officials. One is responsible for mobilising media at national level and should liaise with the other official mobilising media at local level (community media).
- Overseeing the provincial public participation coordinating team.
- Capturing programmes/events onto the database (but this does not take away departments' and provinces' responsibility to factor their programmes onto the database).
- Developing a public participation poster that will be sent to provinces to translate according to their own language needs and mass production and distribution.
- Developing radio and television advertisements.
- Media monitoring and analysis.

The provincial coordinating task team's responsibilities include:

- setting up the provincial public participation task team
- drafting public participation programmes and factoring them into the database and/or submitting them to the GCIS
- liaising with the offices of the ministers regarding the deployment of political principals (ministers/deputy ministers)
- submitting post-public participation reports to the National Task Team (GCIS).

The budget is another crucial aspect of a public participation programme's implementation. Sometimes, budget commitments will be shared between the national department and the province. When this is the case, it must be



made clear which aspects of the budget are the responsibilities of the province and which of the national Government. At times, this is left hanging and often results in unnecessary debts and unhealthy relations.

Media liaison is critical to popularise public participation to relate to people the commitment government has in uniting with the people to achieve change.

A media liaison manager must be identified. Too many people managing media liaison activities often result in confusion and negative coverage of the public participation event. The media liaison manager and team will then be responsible for developing and implementing an effective media liaison strategy and plan that should entail, among other things:

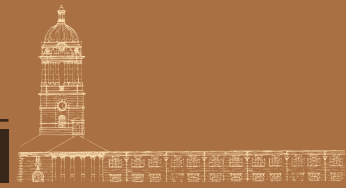
- media briefings
- interviews
- media to be targeted
- opinion pieces
- key messages about public participation
- contents of the media kit.

It is crucial that the media should be informed in time what public participation is about – and this does not, at initial stages, have to cover details of the programme.

During some public participation programmes, it may be necessary to organise transport for the media to move from one venue to the next so that at all times they have access to the activities of the principal. Another essential element of media liaison during public participation programmes is to provide the facilities necessary for the media to do their work effectively. This may be an Internet café where the media can file their stories. A briefing room could also be handy when the need arises to give further briefings to the media.

To reinforce the message, publicity material has to be developed, availed and widely distributed. Such material must relate to government's programmes, reflecting on successes and challenges of service delivery. To achieve maximum impact, common publicity material is used, including posters, pamphlets and leaflets. Media statements, interviews and publicity material can be complemented by any promotional material.

Departments and provinces can produce other material of their own, as long as the central message of government is integrated.



10.2.2.3. Conducting research for public participation programmes

Preliminary research: Research must be conducted on the area where the Public Participation Programme is scheduled to happen. This could either be a province, a particular community or village. In terms of quantitative data, some of the service-delivery indicators that could be used include statistics of:

- electricity grid connections
- houses completed or under construction
- people gaining access to water and healthcare
- number of telephone lines installed
- matriculation results
- educator: learner ratio.

To show a trend in terms of service delivery, it is advisable for statistics to reflect delivery from 1994 up to the most recent and verified reports. This can in turn be used for publicity material for public participation programmes. In terms of qualitative data, consideration must be given to developmental issues in the specified area, languages spoken, natural resources and the communication milieu.

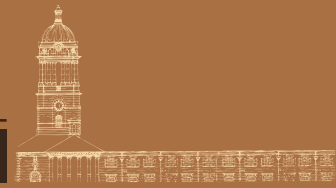
Secondary research: In assisting the project team to make informed decisions on the development of the programme, it is necessary for information to be gathered from various service-delivery departments on successes and challenges that face their programmes in the given area.

- Information received from departments has to be verified by independent research, which may involve field visits or contacting people involved in the programmes, etc.
- In processing the research, consideration must be given to both the output and impact of service delivery.
- Research briefings must be written on each service-delivery programme, whether it is building a school or constructing a clinic. All research briefings must be in a format that is easily readable and succinct. It should ideally contain sections on the background, success, status and challenges of the programme.
- It is important to keep the briefing notes clear and precise so that they can then be used by the ministerial liaison officer and included in the press packs.

Assessment and follow-up research

This is crucial for an effective public participation programme, which will ultimately be measured by its follow-up in terms of action taken:

- The researcher needs to identify and brief scribes for each event. Scribes must be fluent in both English and the language spoken in the area where the event takes place.
- Ideally, scribes should come from the communication sections in provinces, because they are more aware of the communication environment in which they will be documenting issues raised.
- A user-friendly form needs to be compiled by the researcher for each scribe to complete when documenting issues raised by the people.



- All scribe notes need to be collected and collated into a follow-up report comprising all issues raised. Ideally, this should be in the form of a database, or in a tabular form, which captures all the fields of the scribe's form.
- A fortnight after the public participation activity, it may be necessary to visit the province to obtain reportback, as well as discuss the development of a consolidated report.
- The consolidated report, which will also include time frames of action required by responsible departments and bodies, should be presented to the relevant principal.
- The report must be communicated to the relevant responsible departments or bodies via the proper protocol channels to ensure that action is taken and communicated to the affected province or area. Together with other documentation and plans, all research material and notes must be filed and used during the assessment and closure of the project for that particular public participation event.

10.2.2.4. During public participation events

During the event, the task team must take care of several critical issues.

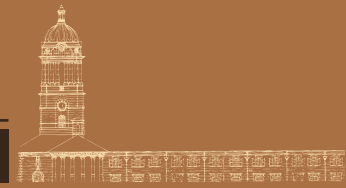
Recording proceedings

The task team has to allocate people who will be in charge of recording and documenting the issues raised by people, and the responses given by government officials. The task team must therefore ensure that there is an operational public address (PA) system and roving microphones. Given the mobile nature of these sessions, it would be advisable to outsource the PA system from venue to venue. The GCIS' broadcast production unit may be requested to record those events that have a development-communication element. These requests need to be made within a reasonable time frame as the GCIS provides its services pending the availability of resources at the time.

Monitoring the programme

The task team should allocate members to all the venues where the public participation activities will be taking place to ensure that things are efficiently organised. Any problems should be reported immediately to the project leader for alternative arrangements, if necessary. Adherence to the time allocated to the programme is crucial. It is critical to advise people beforehand about the actual venues to avoid situations where people wait for the principal in venues that are not part of the itinerary.

However, the provincial project leader should be dynamic and flexible to deal with unforeseen circumstances. The heads of protocol and security should be briefed continuously to inform them when the programme has to take a slight or drastic change. If public participation is happening over a few days, the task team should meet at the end of each day's programme to assess the proceedings and plan for the next day.



Post-public participation tasks

The task team does not disband immediately after the last item on the programme of the public participation event. There are issues to be dealt with after the public participation programme, e.g. ensuring that issues raised are sent to the responsible departments.

10.2.2.5. Evaluation of the Public Participation Programme

The task team needs to evaluate the Public Participation Programme and critique where necessary for future improvements. The evaluation should be the first step towards writing a report about the programme.

Public participation report

The task team has to produce a report about the Public Participation Programme, which is submitted to management. The report should contain recommendations about how issues raised will be taken forward.

Follow-up

The task team should also set up a process through which issues that were raised during the public participation activity will be followed up. This may entail consulting relevant government structures that may not have been at the public participation activity but are the competent structures to respond to issues raised. Formal contacts need to be made with those structures through the political head or appropriate official.

10.3. Guidelines for effective scribing during a public participation programmes

A crucial determinant of the success of a public participation programme is effective follow-up and resolution of issues and concerns raised during an event, as it will ultimately be measured by its follow-up in terms of action taken. Outlined below are some guidelines, which serve as pointers for effective capturing of issues and concerns.

- There should be a central person to coordinate and brief scribes.
- Scribes must be fluent in both English and the prevalent language spoken in the area where the public participation activity is held.
- The response and action committed to by the relevant political principals must also be accurately captured. This is crucial in terms of accountability.
- The coordinator needs to collect all scribes' notes and collate them into a follow-up report of all issues raised.
- A fortnight after the public participation activity, it may be necessary to visit the province to obtain their report back as well as to discuss the development of a consolidated report.

This will ensure that action is taken and communicated to the affected province or area. The Head of Communication in the province needs to ensure that feedback from provincial departments, national departments and all other responsible entities is communicated to the affected communities. Together with other documentation and plans,



all research material and notes must be filed and used during the assessment and closure of the project for that particular public participation event.

10.4. The GCIS' regional distribution network

The GCIS has established more than 4 000 distribution points across the country. These points may be utilised by departments for the distribution of their communication products and dissemination of messages. Each of the nine GCIS provincial offices has an information resource centre (IRC) where material can be sent for distribution.

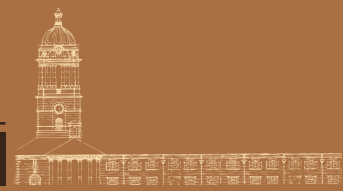
The GCIS also has two additional IRCs, one at head office in Pretoria and one at the Parliamentary Office in Cape Town.

How can I make use of GCIS' distribution network?

To properly manage distribution support, several key principles have been put in place.

The process outlined below is tailored specifically for a partnership with the GCIS regional offices and district offices. The complete development of a distribution strategy for a campaign, which includes marketing and media buying, is handled by the Directorate: Marketing of the GCIS. Usually, such a strategy would have formed part of an overall communication strategy development process, which would in such cases be directed to the GCIS Project Desk.

- If material has to be distributed through the regional and district networks of the GCIS, the client department needs to have a manageable size of resource material (few thousand and not millions as such large volumes require procurement processes).
- A rule of thumb is about 10 000 per province as print runs of 90 000 to 100 000 are manageable. The GCIS regional offices and partners do not have the capacity to handle bulk distribution.
- The client department needs to approach the Directorate: Provincial Coordination in the GCIS with the request and indicate the development-communication content of the material and the programme it is intended to support.
- A language profile for each province will be provided to guide the client on the quantities and languages to be sent to each specific province.
- The database of all disability groups/organisations around the country assists clients to also reach disability groups and to cater for their needs. It assesses the quantities of, for example, Braille material, which can be managed.
- Contact details of organisations that cater for these special needs are also available on request, so that clients can outsource their services to these.



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- Only once a clear agreement has been reached between the client department and the Directorate: Provincial Coordination, will a detailed brief be sent to each GCIS provincial director with the details of the quantities to expect, delivery dates and who the primary target groups are.
- Once this brief has been agreed to, the client will distribute material at their own cost to regional offices, based on an address list provided by the Directorate: Provincial Coordination.
- Material must reach GCIS provincial offices during the very first or last week of a month. During the first week of a month, all district-based communication officers meet at provincial offices for their monthly staff meeting. The information secretaries in the IRCs will divide your material into district-based distribution groups. Upon leaving for their regions, GCIS' communication officers will take the material with them and start the distribution process using the following principles:
 - The GCIS does not handle short-notice distribution – this is where the material is dated and has to be distributed within a limited timeline. The GCIS only handles educational and information products that have a longer shelf life and where your need is to extend the reach and access of your products, especially to rural communities.
 - Clients will be provided with a distribution profile indicating where the material was distributed and to which primary groups.
- Any resource material sent directly to the GCIS provincial offices, without the written approval of the Directorate: Provincial Coordination will not be distributed.