



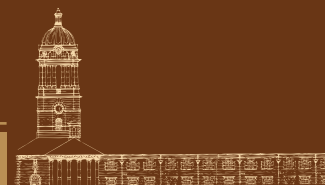
# CHAPTER 13

## EVENT-MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES



government  
communications

Department:  
Government Communication and Information System  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



### EVENT-MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

This guide provides general guidance to help anyone planning an event to organise and manage it safely. For the purposes of this guide, an event is defined as:

“Any planned open air/outside activity that involves organisation by an individual or a committee, to which members of the public will have access, either free of charge or for an entrance fee.”

#### 13.1. Introduction

These guidelines have been designed to provide information to departments to assist in arranging an event, regardless of size. However, some parts may not be relevant for smaller events. The guide gives general advice that should be used when arranging any type of event.

However, it must be remembered that events can be extremely diverse, ranging from a simple press conference to a large outdoor launch, and therefore these guidelines cannot be considered as exhaustive. It is likely that additional guidance will be required for specialist events and larger-scale activities. Should you require more information, it is advisable to seek advice from specialists in the field.

#### 13.2. Types of events

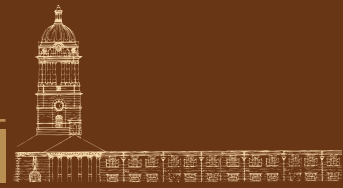
- Press conferences/media briefings.
- Launches.
- Gala dinners.
- Concerts.
- Stadium events.
- Public-holiday events.
- Outreach programmes.

***Not all of the following will be required for all events. Be selective when going through the list to see what would be applicable for your event.***

When risk issues are addressed in the community consultation and planning process, ensure you are also well positioned to include the positive benefits and opportunities. Issues that contribute to enjoyment and success are:

- entertainment and activities
- good information and communication
- positive media reporting





- good coordination
- safe and secure locations
- good health and welfare facilities
- transport arrangements
- sponsorship
- volunteers.

While managing risk is important, so too is making the event an experience of positive enjoyment and success for all stakeholders. This will make the greatest contribution towards managing risk.

### 13.3. General event-planning checklist

Here are some questions to consider when planning your event.

#### • Establishment of the project team

It is important to put together a project team. The team must comprise stakeholders' representatives who are involved in the event and need to focus, depending on the event, on all the relevant aspects such as communication and content; logistics; security; media, protocol; etc. Depending on whether the event will be held in a specific province and most likely in a specific municipality, you also need to involve officials from the province and municipality.

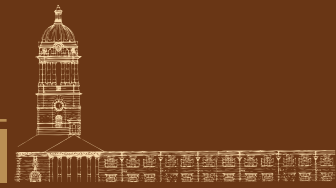
Protocol plays a very important part, especially if political principals are involved and if this is the case, the VIP Protection Unit needs to be contacted. A team should be put together to enhance full coordination of the event. Various roles should be given to members of the team. This will encourage and promote the participation of all people in the event or planned activity.

#### • Develop an event brief

The lead department must convene the first meeting that will develop the event brief. It is vital to develop an event brief that will serve as a concept document throughout the duration of the event. The event brief will outline the objectives of the event to ensure that everyone working on the project is on par on what needs to be achieved. For smaller events that don't have that much logistics, an event brief will not be necessary.

#### • Budget

- Will the event pay for itself, for example through ticketing or sponsorship, or will it be free?
- Is there funding available from local, state or commonwealth governments?
- Are there any other organisations that could provide funding?



- What sort of financial records will need to be kept?
- What are the accountability issues?

The detailed budget for the entire event should be finalised and confirmed after the event brief has been done. Budget items have to be costed realistically e.g. marketing (TV and radio, outdoor advertising); products (banners, posters, brochures); event logistics (venue, food, security, stage building, sound, lighting); other (security, protocol etc.).

### • **Procurement procedures**

Depending on the size and the needs of events, departments are allowed to outsource some services to outside suppliers. This process needs to be done according to the Public Finance Management Act, 1999 (Act 1 of 1999) Guidelines. It is advised that if departments are to outsource some services, they need to do so in time to allow for proper planning. The easiest way is to procure the services of an event-management company, which in turn will procure other services. Should this route be taken, there needs to be clear guidelines on the signing off of content, what the company is allowed and not allowed to do and what departmental officials will be responsible for.

### • **Draft an action plan**

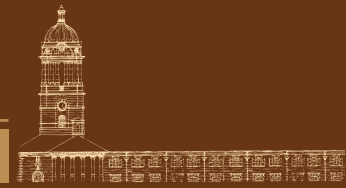
Once your team and other role players, its objectives and funding are in place, the final product of the strategising meeting will be a detailed action plan that will include all elements of the event, clear deadlines, persons responsible and dates of the follow-up status meetings.

### • **Confirming event venue**

The venue of any event is critical to its success. This needs to be done as soon as the event brief has been finalised. It is important to choose a venue that is suitable for the type of function and most importantly, that will accommodate the number of guests invited. The team needs to do a thorough site inspection to ensure that the venue is capacitated with everything needed for the function. Site inspections should be done before confirmation of venue. If the venue is going to be in a marquee, proper procedures need to be followed in terms of assembling a marquee for a government event.

The structure needs to be approved by the municipal office and other relevant bodies. If you have to mobilise crowds, you need to ensure that there are people close to your venue and that transport won't cost most of your budget to bus people to the event – unless this is adequately budgeted for. Refreshments for your guests are also important and depend on the type of function – look at, among other things, the background and culture of your guests and the type of function when deciding on your menu.





- **Confirmation and securing of speakers**

It is crucial to secure and confirm speakers as early as the date of the event is confirmed, to allow for proper planning and organising. Most prominent speakers (e.g. ministers, executive mayors, premiers, etc.) are normally secured in advance because of their busy schedules. You need to constantly check if they are still coming and if required, draft speaker notes; brief the security and other personnel; etc. Depending on the level of the speaker, you might have to talk to his/her personnel to ensure that you're not caught off guard in terms of, for example, providing a holding room; special dietary requirements; beverages, etc.

- **Marketing and advertising of the event**

Depending on the type of the event, a proper marketing strategy should be drafted and clear target audience and marketing tools and channels should be indicated. The marketing should be done before the event takes place.

- **Guest list**

A guest list must be compiled and approved by relevant officials. It should comprise all stakeholders involved in the event – e.g. the public, stakeholders, partners, sponsors, etc. You also need to indicate how each of these audiences will be invited e.g. the public via general mobilisation posters; sponsors through official invitations, etc.

- **Sending out invitations**

The guests need to be invited in advance to ensure maximum attendance of the event. The RSVP deadline must be clearly stated on the invitation as well as the date, venue, time and dress code of the function. Proper follow-ups must be made to the invitees to remind them to RSVP.

- **Protocol procedures**

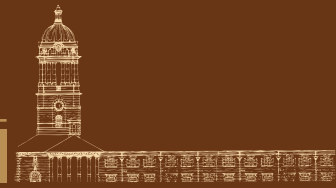
Depending on the calibre of the guest invited, it is important to follow specific protocol procedures, guided by the Department of International Relations and Cooperation. The department has a dedicated unit that deals with protocol for government events and is able to assist on request. Protocol will have an impact on your seating arrangements and programme. Protocol is an important part of all events, ranging from invited guests to the contents of all speeches, which should be approved on time, and recognising all key people invited.

- **Risk management/crisis management**

For every government event, it is important for the team to draft a risk management plan that would assist in organising the event much more efficiently. Should the event befall an unplanned and costly crisis, the plan can assist in planning ahead to regulate and solve the problem.

- **Payments of suppliers**

All suppliers must be paid accordingly; at least a certain percentage of the total quotation must be paid to the



service-providers. All invoices must be submitted on time. You need to check with suppliers regularly and ensure you are on the same page regarding their deliverables, what you expect, delivery times, set-up times, de-rigging times, etc.

### **Execution of event**

All team members need to ensure that everything is in place and that the programme runs accordingly. Each team member needs to have a responsibility in ensuring that the event is a success.

- **Contact officer**

Among the team, the leaders should ensure that all people know who the contract officer is for easy communication.

- **Business liaison/event branding**

Government events should reflect and promote government business values and goals at all times. This principle should be seen in the event itself as it unfolds. The event should be able to tell people what government stands for. It is very crucial to follow proper guidelines when using the Coat of Arms in any branding material.

- **Publicity/media**

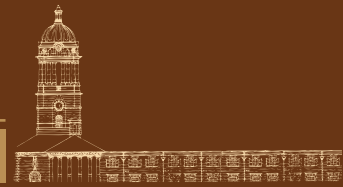
Depending on the type of event, of importance to event management is the publicity of the event. This will ensure that there is greater integration and understanding among the ordinary even before the events. A communication strategy and a media plan should be put together for the planned events.

Through these strategies and plans, the organisation will be able to market itself. The publicity should take into cognisance the needs of people with all forms of disabilities and those without. The messages should be distributed to all target audiences as segmented.

- **Sponsorships**

Should sponsorship be required, a detailed sponsorship document needs to be drafted that will guide sponsors and the sponsored on the benefits of the sponsorship. A proposed sponsorship list should be compiled with companies that might benefit from your event. These companies should be approached formally to get an indication of their interest. The letters should be followed up with a meeting to discuss details. Once agreed, the sponsorship should be formalised by a letters from the company as well as an acknowledgement from the department. It is advisable to draft a detailed checklist for each sponsor to ensure all areas are covered. Remember to always check the sponsors' corporate identity when using logos on event material.





- **Information and signage**

- Information in alternative formats: Information about an event should also be provided in alternate formats to include people with disabilities. The information should be placed at all key access points for easy access.
- Signage: All signage should be clear with good colour contrast. To assist people with colour blindness and low vision, colours of red and green should not be incorporated together into signage. Lower-case lettering should be used rather than capital letters and a black-on-white background provides the best contrast. The international symbols for access and deafness should identify accessible toilets and hearing loops.

### **13.4. Key questions**

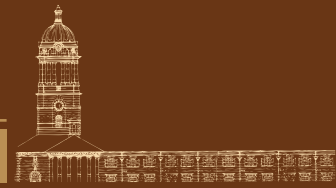
#### **Initial planning**

- What are the overall aims e.g. safety, fund-raising, entertainment, management?
- Will a specific message be delivered through the event?
- What will the event include and not include?
- Should there be a number of events?
- Will an event coordinator be required?
- Does the plan fit well with activities that normally take place in that part of the town or community?
- Is there a way of spreading the risk and work?
- What is the lead time for organising the event?
- Which state and local government agencies need to be advised about the proposed event?
- In which area will the event be held? What are the positives and negatives of this area/venue?
- Is this an annual event or once-off? If it is yearly, what are the lessons learnt from the previous year's event, and how do we improve this year's event? *(This should be guided by the exit report from the previous year.)*

#### **Logistics**

- When can the venue be accessed?
- Who is the caretaker for the venue?
- Will there be a contract for specific venue hire?
- What sort of equipment is needed for a successful event?
- Is there enough lighting?
- How will everyone get there?
- What transport should be arranged?
- What if it rains?
- What are the crowd-control issues?
- Will security be required? Who can provide security?
- Are there likely to be any noise issues associated with the event?

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- What can be done to ensure there is minimal impact on the community and area immediately adjacent to the event?
- Are there likely to be concerns with drug and alcohol abuse?
- Are there any emergency procedures to consider?
- When will police, fire or ambulance services need to be involved?
- What are the health and safety issues and who is likely to be affected by any procedures addressing occupational and health matters?
- Who will look after the management of traffic?
- Will the rate of traffic flow require an application for road closures?
- Who takes away the waste that will be generated at this event?
- Who can supply food at the event?
- How will drinking water be supplied at the event?
- Are there any licences associated with selling or giving away food and/or drinks at the event?
- Is the venue able to host a certain number of people without any stampedes or the building falling down? Are there emergency exit points in case of fire?

### Staffing

- What will staff do? What won't staff do?
- How will everyone know what their role is?
- Will support workers/professionals be required in the team?
- Are there other steps that need to be taken to ensure appropriate levels of child protection?
- How will volunteers provide assistance for the event?

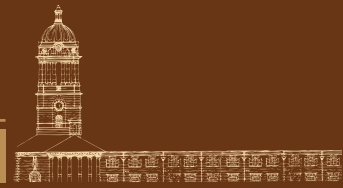
### Insurance

- What are the potential legal liabilities arising out of staging an event?
- What information is required about insurance for public events?
- What are the risks with volunteers?
- What insurance is needed for hired equipment?
- If the structure/venue of the event crushes down, are the guests' belongings and all the equipment within the venue insured?

### Publicity

- Will the event benefit from publicity?
- Will publicity be free or paid for?
- What sort of messages need to be promoted?





### **Risk assessment**

Please remember that organisers of events have a legal responsibility to ensure the health, safety and welfare of any employees, volunteer helpers or contractors involved in arranging the event, and to the public and participants attending. This must be ensured by carrying out detailed risk assessments. All hazards associated with the event must be identified, the level of risk assessed and appropriate action taken to reduce these risks to an acceptable level.

### **Remember**

Careful planning and organisation will help ensure your event is successful and, above all, **SAFE**.