



16.1. Government Communication Policy Guidelines

GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATION POLICY GUIDELINES: Media, Marketing, Crisis & Local Government Policy Guidelines



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I. Introduction

The policy guidelines presented here are aimed at meeting the requirement of Recommendation I of the Review of the Government Communication and Information System conducted in 2008.

The guidelines provide direction to national, provincial and local structures regarding the basic requirements of communication within their institutions, and set basic standards for effective government communication. The guidelines address the critical areas identified by the review. They are not intended to be exhaustive, rather it is intended that the guidelines be updated as and when the need arises.

I.1. HISTORY AND BACKGROUND

Government's mandate requires that its communication should enhance access to information that enables the public to participate in the country's transformation and in bettering their own lives; that it should bring the realities of our emergent and thriving democracy to the attention of the international community; and promote the renaissance of Africa, including regional integration and implementation of people-centred development programmes.

While the means of achieving the mandate for government communication have evolved over the past 15 years, the core vision remains the same: to achieve integrated, coordinated and coherent communication between government and the South African public to enable citizens to participate in the country's transformation.

The GCIS, in its 10th year of existence (1998), deemed it necessary to engage in a review of the government-wide communication system to enhance effectiveness of the GCIS and government communication as a whole.

The review included a focus on the GCIS as a critical role player in the government communication system and assessed processes, structures and systems towards strategising, integrating and coordinating government communication to enhance overall cooperation, partnerships and effectiveness. The focus included the government-wide communication system, with particular reference to the national and provincial spheres of government, not neglecting the local sphere.

Various recommendations are made from the review to strengthen government communication in South Africa. These are explored in detail in the review report, which should be read in conjunction with this document.

A recommendation emanating from the GCIS's external reference team upon presentation of the results concerned the disjointedness of communication within government. It was thought that the time had come for the GCIS to clearly articulate to the rest of government and to the public what the role of communication is and what could be expected from this profession in the Public Service.

Addressing the first recommendation from the review, the GCIS developed overarching policy guidelines for media, marketing crisis and local government communication management in government. This document serves as the first attempt by the GCIS to provide guidelines towards standardising and professionalising communication across government. The guidelines focus on aspects of major importance in government communication – media, marketing, crisis and local government. These guidelines will be updated from time to time, working towards improving effective government communication.

Other recommendations of the report have led to, among other things:

- an induction programme of government communicators and ongoing training, including and especially a qualification for government communicators
- recognising the need to build better capacity at the GCIS to provide better quality advice and strategic direction
- professionalising government communication through developing a generic performance scorecard for heads of communication
- strategic planning of communication forums to focus on key communication priorities, profiling the forums as instruments to strengthen the government-wide communication system
- developing a systematic process for evidence of how all the forums implement their communication plans and the resultant impact.

Given the GCIS mandate (including the revised vision and mission), the organisation provides a variety of services and have various communication platforms available over and above its strategic leadership role within the communication system. These services outlined below, are aimed at aiding the implementation of the draft government communication policy guidelines within the government-wide communication system.

Services:

The GCIS's services include:

- Advertising and media placement
- Briefing the media
- Communication research
- Corporate Identity management
- Design and exhibitions
- Producing directories (database of contact information and profiles)
- Distributing government statements and documents
- Distribution services
- Event management
- Information enquiries
- Marketing strategies
- Media monitoring
- Photographic services
- Radio production
- Training services
- Video production
- Editing and translation services
- Website support
- Support in implementing local communication campaigns through provincial and district offices of the GCIS including advice on development communication.
- Local liaison service

Platforms:

The GCIS's platforms include:

- *Vuk'uzenzele*
- *Bua Magazine*
- Bua News
- Izimbizo
- *South Africa Yearbook*, including an interactive CD-Rom
- *Pocket Guide to South Africa*.
- Thusong Service Centres

2. Media Policy Guidelines

2.1 Terms of reference

This policy guidelines covers ALL communication to the news media, including news releases, media advisories, formal statements, interviews, press conferences and briefings, letters to the editor, opinion pieces ("op eds"), technical announcements and other information or material given to news media representatives.

News media representatives refer to a collective term that includes, but is not limited to, reporters, editors, writers and researchers for newspapers, magazines, scientific journals and trade publications; radio or television stations or networks and online news services; bloggers and any other electronic or print media related to news distribution that could serve as an information outlet.

The communication policy guidelines apply to public-speaking engagements and written articles where it might be expected that the publication or circulation of the comments will spread to the community at large. They apply equally to all government employees, across all departments and geographic locations.

It is the responsibility of the heads of communication (HoCs) in each department/province to ensure that the communication staff is informed and fully aware of these media policy guidelines.

2.2 Authorised media spokespeople

- 2.2.1 Only officials authorised by the minister; the Director-General (DG) and the HoC for the department may represent the department to the media and serve as an authorised point of contact with the media.
- 2.2.2 Any media communication representing an employee's personal opinion as a private citizen, not associated with the department/province, does not require any approval. These opinions must subscribe to the Public Service Act, 1994 and the Code of Conduct for Public Servants, and must not use information acquired while on duty to voice personal opinions.
- 2.2.3 The HoC or his/her designate can in consultation with the minister; deputy minister or DG identify a spokesperson for the department on a case-by-case basis. The HoC may at any time give or withdraw such authorisation for a designated staff member to initiate or respond to media contact.
- 2.2.4 All designated departmental spokespersons must have attended an approved media training session presented by the Office of the HoC, or the GCIS, or their designated agents, before they are permitted to represent the department/province as a media spokesperson. Exceptions to media training requirements must be approved by the Office of the HoC or the GCIS.
- 2.2.5 The Office of the HoC must hold an up-to-date list of all departmental staff who have received appropriate media training.
- 2.2.6 This policy does not restrict the right of elected staff-side representatives of recognised trade unions or staff associations to express their views through or to the media directly. Elected staff-side representatives of recognised trade unions or staff associates are fully entitled to make comments on behalf of their staff associations or trade unions. They are not permitted to comment on behalf of, or represent, the department.

2.3 Spokesperson's roles and responsibilities

- 2.3.1 The minister; deputy minister; the DG, the minister's designated official spokesperson and the HoC (if not the official ministerial spokesperson) are the delegated official spokespeople for the department on all matters that may have an impact on the image of the department.
- 2.3.2 The minister and deputy minister and his/her official spokesperson speak on any issue within their department, with a focus on departmental strategy, policy and performance.
- 2.3.3 Media enquiries relating to the department should first be raised with the department's HoC, before comment is provided to the media.
- 2.3.4 On technical or complex matters, subject-matter experts may be authorised by the minister and the HoC to provide clarity.

2.4 The role of the Office of the Head of Communication

- 2.4.1 The media interactions for which the Office of the HoC are responsible include but are not limited to:
 - 2.4.1.1 identifying authorised spokespeople within the department, and equipping them with the skills and information to present the thinking, decisions and actions of the department to the media
 - 2.4.1.2 coordinating, editing and distributing all official media releases and statements that reflect the standing of the department to the media
 - 2.4.1.3 responding to and coordinating the response to media enquiries
 - 2.4.1.4 scheduling and managing all official departmental news conferences and media events
 - 2.4.1.5 coordinating and implementing the communication response to a reputation crisis.

2.5 Response and liaison standards for media enquiries

- 2.5.1 The department should recognise the deadline constraints facing the media and must endeavour to provide open and equal access to all news media.
- 2.5.2 All media queries should preferably be acknowledged within two hours and no later than 24 hours for daily and weekly print and broadcast media. Submission times for the actual provision of content to address a media enquiry should be mutually agreed on with the reporter concerned, but with due regard for the guiding principles of transparency, accuracy and efficiency of the departmental response.
- 2.5.3 Designated departmental spokespeople should make their mobile phone numbers available to the media. They must further ensure that their mailboxes have sufficient memory for media messages on a day-to-day basis and that the content and tone of their voicemail message serve to build and sustain the professional image of their department and the Office of the HoC.

2.6 Media approaches to departmental employees

- 2.6.1 All requests received by a department's employee for a media interview must be referred to the Office of the HoC immediately.
- 2.6.2 Any media enquiry to a departmental employee who is not authorised to speak to the media or who is not authorised to speak on the subject of the media enquiry, should immediately be redirected to the Office of the HoC.

2.7 Televised or in-person speaking engagements by departmental employees

- 2.7.1 Any departmental employee who accepts a public speaking engagement representing the department will notify the office of the HoC. The HoC will provide guidance on the approach and whether the platform will be beneficial to the department.

2.8 Inappropriate media engagement

- 2.8.1 No spokesperson or employee will divulge to the media any findings or determinations in relation to departmental internal enquiries, reviews or investigations, irrespective as to whether such processes are ongoing or considered concluded, unless there is specific approval by the minister or the HoC.
- 2.8.2 This policy explicitly regards it as irresponsible of staff members to engage with the media in any activity or comment, which is designed to:
 - 2.8.2.1 bring the department or its stakeholders into disrepute
 - 2.8.2.2 undermine the integrity and reputation of the department, its leadership or its stakeholders
 - 2.8.2.3 present a personal viewpoint as a position which is held by the department
 - 2.8.2.4 disclose departmental information without proper authority
 - 2.8.2.5 comment on pending or current legal issues relating to the department.

2.9 Language requirements

- 2.9.1 All media releases and other written media interventions should be produced and distributed in English. If the media requests a copy of the issued communication in any other of the 11 official languages, the Office of the HoC will take responsibility for the professional translation of the communication and negotiate a mutually agreed deadline for this translation with the media house concerned.
- 2.9.2 All communication issued to the media should be presented in plain language, without detracting from the accuracy of the message, and should be presented in a way that is understood by the target audience.

2.10 Complaints about media coverage or behaviour

- 2.10.1 Any complaints from within a department regarding the performance of the media, for example the content and/or tone of media coverage, or the behaviour of a reporter in their dealings with the department, will be made to the Office of the HoC.
- 2.10.2 The Office of the HoC will be responsible for deciding what, if any, action will be taken in response to such a complaint.

2.11 Off-the-record comments

- 2.11.1 No employee of the department will speak to the media “off the record”. The only exception is the HoC or his/her nominee who, in certain circumstances, may be required to do so.

2.12 Media monitoring

- 2.12.1 The Office of the HoC may negotiate their own media monitoring contracts with external service-providers, from an approved list of agencies maintained by the GCIS.
- 2.12.2 The procurement and appointment of external service-providers will be done in accordance with government procurement processes.
- 2.12.3 The Office of the HoC in each department must monitor and evaluate the quantitative and qualitative performance of the earned media coverage achieved at least every six months, using the coverage and data received from the media-monitoring supplier.
- 2.12.4 The GCIS can supply departments with a template for assessing media measurement and performance, if required.

2.13 Appointment of external media relations support

- 2.13.1 Departments may – if required – negotiate with and appoint an external public relations/media relations company or other specialist communication support from the GCIS database of qualified and approved suppliers to assist the department with its reputation management functions.
- 2.13.2 The procurement and appointment of external service-providers will be in accordance with government procurement processes.
- 2.13.3 It is recommended that a representative from the GCIS forms part of the final selection panel for the appointment of any such service-providers.
- 2.13.4 GCIS must be informed of the preferred bidder for such Public Relations (PR) and media relations services prior to the appointment of such a service-provider.

2.14 Public disclosure and right to information

- 2.14.1 The Promotion of Access to Information Act, 2000 (Act 2 of 2000), provides for requests addressed to the department by members of the media to be directed to the Office of the HoC immediately for consideration.
- 2.14.2 If the department receives a Promotion of Access to Information Act, 2000 request from the media in writing, it should be time-stamped to record the date of receipt. When a verbal request is presented to the department by

the media, it should be documented in writing, and the requesting party will, whenever possible, be required by the Office of the HoC to sign the documentation, which will then be time-stamped.

- 2.14.3 If a representative of the media asks the department for information that is already a matter of public record, the department should make such information available to the media representative within a mutually agreed time frame. Withholding such information will only force the media representative to develop other sources.
- 2.14.4 Requests from non-media sources for information under the Access to Information Act, 2000 should be directed to the department's Chief Information Officer.
- 2.14.5 The Office of the HoC should be informed of all requests for information under the Access to Information Act 2000; as such information may find itself in the public domain and have implications for future media coverage relating to the department.

2.15 Electronic communication

- 2.15.1 All e-mail correspondence to the media, whether intended for publication or as a private note to the recipient, should be written in such a way that the correspondence would not bring the department into disrepute if published by the media.
- 2.15.2 The tone, content and standard of language (grammar; spelling, etc.) of electronic correspondence with members of the media should thus always be constructed from a perspective that the correspondence may find its way into the public domain.
- 2.15.3 Any weblog ("blog") or presence on a social media site (e.g. Facebook) that identifies the author as an employee of the department, and/or refers to activities and policies of the department, must be sent to the Office of the HoC for approval before it is published on the worldwide web.

2.16 Photographic and video coverage by media

- 2.16.1 Media photography or videography is expressly prohibited on departmental property without the prior approval of the HoC or his/her nominee.
- 2.16.2 If authorised by the Office of the HoC, media representatives may be allowed inside departmental facilities under supervision by a representative of the Office of the HoC for the purposes of photographic and/or video filming required for recording interviews, documentaries, news releases or other departmental approved applications.

2.17 Mandatory referral to Government Communications

- 2.17.1 GCIS must be notified of all potentially sensitive, contentious or controversial media enquiries with respect to a department's activities.

2.18 General media advice and counsel

- 2.18.1 The GCIS can provide advice on all aspects of media relations and assist departments with the preparation of strategic approaches to media relations.

2.19 Media engagement tools

2.19.1 Quarterly media schedules

- 2.19.1.1 Targeted media for a specific media intervention should be carefully selected based on the news value of the release for their profile of readers/viewers/listeners.
- 2.19.1.2 The Office of the HoC accordingly designs and implements proactive media relation activities according to a comprehensive media relations schedule.
- 2.19.1.3 The media schedule will, among other things, identify target media for the media engagement; the planned media intervention to be used, e.g. a media release, event or interview; and the qualitative and quantitative outcome of the media intervention.
- 2.19.1.4 A comprehensive database of media contacts is maintained by the GCIS, and any enquiries regarding prospective

media targets or current media contact details should be directed to Media Liaison at the GCIS.

- 2.19.1.5 The Office of the HoC should furnish the GCIS with a copy of the department's quarterly media schedule four times per year; at least 14 days ahead of the start of the implementation of the media engagement programme for the quarter.
- 2.19.1.6 It is recognised that day-to-day reactive media enquiries cannot necessarily be planned and will fall outside the scope of the planned quarterly media schedule. However; response to particular issues must also be shared with the GCIS for information and advice where necessary.

2.19.2 Media releases

- 2.19.2.1 All media statements will be approved in writing by the HoC, his/her nominee or, if appropriate, the DG or minister prior to the statement being issued to the media.
- 2.19.2.2 A signed copy of the approved media release/statement should be kept on file by the Office of the HoC.
- 2.19.2.3 A copy of all approved media releases issued by departments must be forwarded to newsfiles@gcis.gov.za at the GCIS when they are released, together with the media distribution list of the media release.
- 2.19.2.4 A copy of the media release will be posted on the department's website immediately after its release to targeted media.
- 2.19.2.5 All media releases issued by the department must be on department-branded stationery and conform to the approved government Corporate Identity standards and format for media releases. The GCIS is the authorised custodian of such Corporate Identity standards and format.
- 2.19.2.6 All media releases should include the name and contact details of an authorised departmental spokesperson, or a department communication specialist who can direct media enquiries to the authorised spokesperson.
- 2.19.2.7 The contact person identified on the media release must make himself/herself available to receive media enquiries following the distribution of the media release.
- 2.19.2.8 All requests to have a media release written and distributed to the media about a departmental event, programme or achievement, should be directed to the Office of the HoC.
- 2.19.2.9 The HoC or his/her nominee is empowered to make the final decision regarding the newsworthiness of a potential media release and whether it should be distributed to the media or not.
- 2.19.2.10 All media releases that refer to a campaign partner organisation will not be issued by the department until the approval of the content has been confirmed with the communication department or nominated approval party of the campaign partner.
- 2.19.2.11 The department issues joint press releases with non-commercial organisations only.
- 2.19.2.12 The Office of the HoC monitors media coverage of the media release.

2.19.3 Media conferences

- 2.19.3.1 All requests to arrange a media conference under the auspices of the department should be submitted to the Office of the HoC within a reasonable period and at least five working days in advance of the planned media conference – unless the media conference is in response to an unplanned and rapidly emerging issue or reputation crisis.
- 2.19.3.2 There are different kinds of media conferences ranging from (1) background, (2) off the record, (3) non attributable and (4) open press conferences. The office of the HoC will upon receiving a request for a media conference, decide and advice on an approach to be taken.
- 2.19.3.3 Media conferences should be authorised by the Minister, Deputy Minister or Director General and should be arranged through the office of the HoC.
- 2.19.3.4 Media conferences are only warranted in highly newsworthy circumstances and the HoC is empowered to determine whether the circumstances warrant a media conference or whether other media engagement channels will be more effective in communicating with the media.
- 2.19.3.5 Guidelines for the organisation and delivery of media conferences are presented under the Resource Section of these policy guidelines as **Appendix I**.
- 2.19.3.6 The HoC or a designated official from the Office of the HoC should chair any press conference or briefing. The HoC should advice the department and journalists about the nature of the conference or briefing including advantages and disadvantages.

2.19.4 Letters to the editor

- 2.19.4.1 Any letter to the editor of a print or online publication, identifying the writer as an employee of the department, must be sent to the Office of the HoC for approval before it is submitted to the intended media outlet. Only approved letters to the editor may be sent to the media by departmental employees.

2.19.5 Opinion pieces

- 2.19.5.1 Any opinion piece identifying the writer as an employee of the department must be sent to the Office of the HoC for approval **before** it is submitted to the intended media outlet. Only approved opinion pieces may be sent to the media.
- 2.19.5.2 These communication pieces may require further approval at departmental level, and sufficient advance planning and coordination time is required.

2.19.6 Paid media coverage

- 2.19.6.1 Government departments should not pay the media for any form of editorial coverage. Our policy is to achieve reputation-enhancing, earned media coverage through the newsworthiness of our activities and announcements.
- 2.19.6.2 The Office of the HoC should apply its professional discretion to leverage editorial opportunities, where possible, in media that features on the department's advertising schedule.

2.19.7 Positioning papers

- 2.19.7.1 The Office of the HoC may, with the assistance of appointed and recognised specialists, prepare positioning papers on topical issues relating to the department. Such positioning papers serve as reference documents for media and other enquiries, and ensure consistent, integrated messaging to the media.
- 2.19.7.2 The Office of the HoC will circulate approved positioning papers to authorised spokespeople within the department within 24 hours of final approval processes.

3. Marketing Policy Guidelines

3.1 Government communicators' toolkit

These policy guidelines do not address the entire menu of promotional tools in a marketer's toolkit, such as sales and sales promotion, packaging, merchandising and word-of-mouth marketing.

The focus of these policy guidelines is on marketing tools that constitute the bulk of the government communicators' toolkit, namely:

- a) content, language, tone and images
- b) advertising and media bulk-buying
- c) public relations (including events, exhibitions and promotional items)
- d) distribution and direct marketing
- e) digital marketing
- f) Corporate Identity
- g) sponsorship.

3.2 Content, language, tone and image of marketing campaigns

3.2.1 Content

- 3.2.1.1 Departments must ensure that the content of marketing campaigns is consistent with government policy, and the design and presentation reflect positively and professionally on the department and government as a whole.
- 3.2.1.2 Information should be based on accurate and verifiable facts. No claim or statement should be made which cannot be substantiated.

3.2.2 Guidelines for visual and audio content

- 3.2.2.1 Images used in campaign advertising should serve to articulate the vision of a people-centred government, working towards the upliftment of all.
- 3.2.2.2 Images that reflect service in action, with a strong focus on people, should be used to articulate government's vision of both people-centredness and progress.
- 3.2.2.3 Departments should avoid the use of images of political and other principals in campaign advertising as such images are not consistent with the "people-centred" proposition that government wishes to convey in its marketing and communication.

3.2.3 Core message development

- 3.2.3.1 The focus of government's marketing campaigns should be on messages that enable the public to participate in democracy and improve their lives.
- 3.2.3.2 Every department will have some department-specific core messaging that will depend on the particular campaign objectives and audiences. This should address one or more of the following objectives to warrant the marketing campaign:
 - a) promote behaviour or attitudes that are generally regarded as being in the public interest, i.e. that will lead to improved public health and safety or quality of life
 - b) promote public awareness and compliance with legislation
 - c) raise awareness of government services available to the public or target audience
 - d) encourage public use of government products and services
 - e) promote public awareness of rights, responsibilities, duties or entitlements
 - f) encourage public involvement in government decision-making
 - g) inform the public of new, existing or revised government policies, programmes, initiatives or events
 - h) promote public well-being, safety and order in the event of a crisis or emergency
 - i) report on government performance in service delivery to facilitate accountability to the public
 - j) encourage community pride, spirit, tolerance or assist in the achievement of a widely supported public policy outcome
 - k) recruit staff, publish important statutory information and promote business opportunities with the department concerned.

3.2.4 Language requirements

- 3.2.4.1 The Languages Bill is aimed at promoting the equitable use of the 11 official languages to facilitate equitable access to government services, knowledge and information, as well as respect for language rights.

- 3.2.4.2 Communicators across government should become familiar with the provisions of the Languages Bill and ensure that there is a gradual progression towards implementation in their department.
- 3.2.4.3 All marketing communication should consider the preferred official language of the target audience.
- 3.2.4.4 Presentation in the 11 official languages as well as in Braille and audio formats should be considered where applicable so as to facilitate accessibility for all language groups and people with disabilities.
- 3.2.4.5 As a general rule, all media-based advertising campaigns should be presented in the language used by the specific media vehicle, e.g. the TV or radio station, magazine or newspaper.

3.2.5 Plain language¹

- 3.2.5.1 All marketing communication must be presented in plain, clear language to facilitate understanding and improve communication. This implies that communication documents should be presented in a manner that reflects the following:
 - a) economic use of words at a level that the audience can understand
 - b) tight sentence structure
 - c) a welcoming and direct tone
 - d) visually appealing design
 - e) an easy-to-read document.

3.2.6 Corporate Identity and branding

- 3.2.6.1 All spheres of government should note that the Coat of Arms National Corporate Identity Guidelines regulate the use of the Coat of Arms as branding for government. The guidelines limit the use of the Coat of Arms, to further protect it from commercial exploitation and abuse.
- 3.2.6.2 The GCIS is the authorised custodian of government's Corporate Identity and has delegated this authority to the office of the departmental HoC for departmental marketing activities.
- 3.2.6.3 The application of the government brand should be in line with the Corporate Identity Manual for Government, which was developed by the GCIS and is accessible online at the <http://www.gcis.gov.za> (included as **Appendix 2** of the policy guidelines).
- 3.2.6.4 All departments should comply with the instructions in the manual to ensure standardisation of communication to departmental stakeholders.
- 3.2.6.5 The inappropriate or unauthorised use of the department's corporate visual identity will be regarded as a breach of this policy.
- 3.2.6.6 Any piece of print or digital communication that is produced for the first time as a new design and that carries the department's logo and/or word mark must receive written approval from the Office of the HoC before it may be published or distributed in any format.

3.2.7 Non-permissible use of departmental logo and word mark

- 3.2.7.1 The use of department stationery or business cards other than for bona fide department business is prohibited.
- 3.2.7.2 The use of departmental stationery or business cards or other official department trademarks or documents to further an individual's private business interests or to express political or personal viewpoints is expressly forbidden.

3.3 Advertising and media bulk-buying

These advertising policy guidelines apply specifically to campaign advertising.

3.3.1 Campaign advertising

- 3.3.1.1 Campaign advertising by a government department should be aimed at educating or informing the public regarding the department's services, products, programmes or policies.
- 3.3.1.2 Departments should only undertake campaign advertising if there is a legitimate public benefit in doing so, or if specific information is required by the public, which is best communicated through advertising.
- 3.3.1.3 Departments must plan advertising campaigns proactively at the beginning of the annual government communication cycle when departmental communication strategies are due. Funding must then be allocated to advertising and confirmed with the GCIS. It is important to ensure that before considering advertising a campaign, it is warranted according to the checklist outlined in **Section 3.2.3.2** of these policy guidelines.

¹ A guide to plain language writing - Appendix 2

3.3.2 Non-campaign advertising

- 3.3.2.1 The design and layout of non-campaign advertising must adhere to the department's guidelines for layout style, size limits, type faces, type size, use of departmental branding, etc.
- 3.3.2.2 Non-campaign advertising should be short-term advertising that usually appears only once or twice in the media and is not tied to an ongoing or substantial budget or marketing campaign.
- 3.3.2.3 Non-campaign advertising is generally limited to tenders, statutory public notices, auction notices, recruitment advertising, invitations to make submissions and similar print advertising.

3.3.3 Advertising in emergency or crisis situations

- 3.3.3.1 Departments may decide that advertising is required to communicate information to the general public or specific target audiences in an emergency or crisis situation.
- 3.3.3.2 Proposals to advertise during a crisis or emergency should be directed to the Chief Director: Communication Service Agency (CSA) at GCIS any time such a contingency may arise.

3.3.4 Non-permissible advertising

- 3.3.4.1 Departments should avoid misuse of public funds for advertising campaigns. Public funds should not be used for departmental advertising where:
 - a) the method or medium of advertising is excessive or extravagant in relation to the objective being pursued
 - b) a reasonable person could interpret the message as promoting a political party, or communicating on behalf of a political party
 - c) the party in government is mentioned by name in the advertising campaign
 - d) party-political slogans or images are used in the advertising
 - e) references are made to political party websites, publications or other material
 - f) a political party or other grouping is being disparaged or held up to ridicule
 - g) members of the department are depicted in a manner that a reasonable person would regard as excessive or gratuitous
 - h) the advertising creates a perception that a campaign promotes an individual, like a minister
 - i) there is no clear line of accountability, appropriate audit procedures or GCIS-approved procurement process for the communication process.
- 3.3.4.2 Departments may not place advertising in a publication, or on a channel or station that does not have an industry recognised independently audited circulation or audience figure, without written approval from the GCIS.

3.3.5 Authority for marketing campaigns

- 3.3.5.1 The HoC or his/her designated nominee is responsible for the implementation of marketing and advertising strategies at departmental level.
- 3.3.5.2 All departmental marketing campaigns must be based on an approved marketing strategy. Officials on the level of at least HoC will be responsible for approving all marketing strategies for departmental campaigns.
- 3.3.5.3 For the commissioning of advertising and public relations services, the GCIS, as custodian of media bulk-buying, will use its delegation for the procurement of media space and time, and advise departments on the appointment of suitable agencies from the GCIS database.
- 3.3.5.4 A copy of the approved campaign marketing strategy must be submitted to the GCIS at least 10 working days prior to the planned implementation for multimedia advertising campaigns exceeding R1 million, and at least two working days for standard advertising campaigns.
- 3.3.5.5 A department must not commit itself to any costs or obligations in terms of the proposed campaign until it has received written approval of the marketing strategy from the GCIS.
- 3.3.5.6 The GCIS does not prescribe a format for a marketing strategy, but the minimum requirements are that it should cover the content areas outlined in **Appendix 3** of these policy guidelines.
- 3.3.5.7 The right of final approval for media placement and campaign content rests with the GCIS, which will take all aspects addressed in these policy guidelines into careful consideration when assessing the suitability of departmental marketing campaigns for implementation.
- 3.3.5.8 It is an unacceptable practice to split or vary a particular procurement need into smaller procurement bundles as part of the same advertising campaign in order to circumvent the monetary threshold requirements of this policy.

3.3.6 Limited bidding procedure: Panel of Advertising/PR Agencies

- 3.3.6.1 In instances where the value of the campaign exceeds R500 000, departments are required to consider making use of the GCIS Panel of Advertising/PR Agencies. The panel was established in 1998 after being endorsed by Cabinet,

and is ideally updated quarterly and reviewed annually, to fast-track procurement for campaigns that exceed a certain budget. The panel consists of a list of agencies, appointed after a pre-screening process.

- a) After approval of the task directive, a shortened bid period (14 days) is linked to the panel for campaigns that require a faster turnaround time. The evaluation process takes three to four weeks to finalise. The process to be followed in the selection and procurement of marketing service-providers is presented in more detail in

Appendix 4.

- 3.3.6.2 However, if it is a multimedia campaign, a full media strategy, plan and schedule is required (including projected reach and frequency) to provide the rationale for the media selections proposed.

3.3.7 Media bulk-buying

- 3.3.7.1 With the wealth of communication choices available to reach any given target market, it is essential that the media planner is involved in the campaign development process from the start. The overall team will consist of four principals, namely: departmental HoCs, GCIS, creative agency/creative source and the media planning and buying agency. Interaction between these four principals is critical to ensure that there are no scope creeps.
- 3.3.7.2 When buying space in the media for promoting departmental activities and programmes, it should be remembered that public funds are being dealt with and it should therefore be ensured that the money spent is justified by predetermined outcomes. Process steps to be followed when buying media space are described in **Appendix 5.**

3.3.8 Government advertising during an election period

- 3.3.8.1 According to the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC), an election period is the period during which the IEC's Code of Conduct and the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa's regulations apply.
- 3.3.8.2 This period is determined once the date for the election has been announced, party lists are submitted and participating parties and candidates confirmed. The period ends when election results are certified and announced.
- 3.3.8.3 According to the regulations, state-financed media will not be used during an election period for the purpose of promoting or prejudicing the interests of any political party.
 - a) State-financed media means any newspaper, book, periodical, pamphlet, poster, media release or other printed matter, statement, or any audio and video material, or any information in electronic format such as CD-Roms, Internet or e-mail, which is produced and disseminated to the public, and which is financed by, and directly under the control of government. Examples of state-financed media include internal and external government newsletters and magazines.
- 3.3.8.4 These regulations apply only to communicators and other relevant public servants. Ministers, deputy ministers, premiers, MECs and all political representatives, contractual workers and employees in role-playing posts in government are regulated by the *Ministerial Handbook*.

3.3.9 Permissible marketing activities during a closed or "quarantine" period

- 3.3.9.1 Publicity and advertising are legitimate forms of government and parliamentary spending; communication campaigns that inform people of their rights and obligations do not need to stop.
- 3.3.9.2 Departments may legitimately use public funds for information programmes or education campaigns to explain government policies, programmes or services and to inform members of the public of their obligations, rights and entitlements.
- 3.3.9.3 Marketing material produced and issued by a department during the election period must be drafted with a critical appreciation of the scrutiny given at such time to the activities of government, its departments and its employees.
- 3.3.9.4 In the run-up to an election, departments should particularly consider whether any of their communication campaigns or advertising could be perceived as promoting a specific political party, policy or candidate.
- 3.3.9.5 The GCIS can provide advice and counsel to departments on pre-election marketing activities.
 - a) Such advice and counsel will not constitute approval or clearance of material for compliance with legislation or guidelines: in all cases the obligation to comply with legislation will belong to the department and its HoC.

3.3.10 Third-party marketing endorsements

- 3.3.10.1 In conducting campaign advertising, departments must avoid the appearance or public perception of endorsing or providing an unfair marketing advantage to any person, organisation or entity outside of government.
- 3.3.10.2 Departments must not advertise or publicly endorse the products or services they purchase or obtain from the private sector under contract.

3.4 Public relations²

It is important to succinctly raise awareness of PR tools that extend beyond the traditional media relations interventions (which are comprehensively covered in this document in the Media Policy Guidelines section). Actual implementation of a particular tactic depends on campaign objectives, the characteristics of the target audience and the budget.

3.4.1 Events

- 3.4.1.1 The organiser of a newsworthy departmental event or function is encouraged to submit notice of such events to the GCIS's *Diary of Government Activity*, which is managed by the GCIS Communication Centre (shadib@gcis.gov.za).
- 3.4.1.2 Inclusion in the *Diary of Government Activity* helps promote and publicise the event and ensures that major events do not clash with other major events on the *Government Calendar*.
- 3.4.1.3 If an event is postponed or cancelled, it is the responsibility of the organising authority of the event to timeously remove it from the calendar.
- 3.4.1.4 The procurement of all suppliers for an event (e.g. catering, sound systems, décor, entertainment, etc.) should be in accordance with government procurement policies.

3.4.2 Exhibitions and trade shows

- 3.4.2.1 At the beginning of the annual communication cycle, departments must provide the GCIS with an indication of which trade shows and expos they intend to participate in during the 12 months ahead.
- 3.4.2.2 Where a number of departments 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 should identify a lead department as co-coordinator.
- 3.4.2.3 Exhibits and display material must comply with the department's corporate identity standards, and be of the highest possible standard in terms of format and presentation.
- 3.4.2.4 Agencies must ensure that any external service-providers used in the development or execution of shows and exhibitions are procured in accordance with government procurement policy, and from the GCIS' list of approved marketing-services suppliers.

3.4.3 South African-based exhibitions and trade shows

- 3.4.3.1 Departmental participation in a South African-based exhibition or trade show is at the discretion of the HoC.
- 3.4.3.2 Any department official wanting to officially participate in a South African-based industrial trade show or exhibition must direct such a request in writing to the Office of the HoC.
- 3.4.3.3 If the request is approved, the Office of the HoC is responsible for ensuring that the stand design and execution conform to departmental corporate identity and quality standards.
- 3.4.3.4 Budgeting for all exhibition elements at South African-based trade shows and exhibitions is the responsibility of the line component (applicant), and not the Office of the HoC.

3.4.4 International exhibitions and trade shows

- 3.4.4.1 The GCIS is responsible for evaluating and approving departmental participation in all international trade shows and exhibitions.
- 3.4.4.2 Departments wanting to officially participate in international trade shows or exhibitions must direct requests in writing to the Directorate: Marketing of the GCIS at least six months before the opening date of the trade show or exhibition.
- 3.4.4.3 If the request is approved, the Office of the HoC is responsible for ensuring that the stand design and execution conform to departmental Corporate Identity and quality standards.
- 3.4.4.4 Budgeting for all exhibition elements is the responsibility of the department (applicant), and not GCIS.

3.5 Sponsorship guidelines³

All sponsorship arrangements must:

- a) directly relate to the department's outcomes
- b) provide value for money
- c) enhance the department's credibility and image
- d) deliver clear and measurable benefits to the marketing communication campaign.

² Detailed description of PR - Appendix 7

³ Definition and key features on sponsorship guideline - Appendix 8

3.5.1 Government as a sponsor

- 3.5.1.1 If the department has no central sponsorship programme, nor funding set aside specifically for sponsorship, requests for sponsorship related to marketing communication projects should be forwarded to the business unit that most closely links with the event or project in question.
- 3.5.1.2 It is up to the business unit to develop a sponsorship proposal that funds any arrangements. Sponsorships can be in kind or in cash and should always be recorded in the Donations Register of the department.
- 3.5.1.3 Please note that sponsorships amounting to R100 000 or less should be approved by the Accounting Officer of the department, and any sponsorship above the amount of R100 000 should be approved by National Treasury. Sign-off procedures for any sponsorship arrangements can be endorsed by business unit managers in line with the applicable financial delegation accorded to them.

3.5.2 Private sector and international donor-sponsored projects

- 3.5.2.1 Government will not enter into marketing communication sponsorship arrangements with organisations or institutions whose projects are likely to adversely affect the content or interpretation of the department's programmes or services or raise conflict of interest.
- 3.5.2.2 Government will not enter into marketing communication sponsorship arrangements with political parties and with service organisations that may use the funds to sponsor or make a grant to a third party.
- 3.5.2.3 For the purposes of these guidelines, the following are not considered to be sponsorship activities, unless included as part of an overall sponsorship package, in which other direct sponsorship benefits are provided:
 - a) grants made as part of a funding programme
 - b) stand-alone advertising contracts
 - c) projects such as displays and exhibitions in which the department does not receive genuine and measurable value for money
 - d) scholarships
 - e) communication-related research projects.
- 3.5.2.4 Sponsorship for communication-related research projects could be considered in liaison with the GCIS Research Unit.

3.5.3 Sponsorship guiding principles

- 3.5.3.1 Communication units of the applicable departments are required to process applications that relate specifically to their core business. If it is determined that another business unit would be more appropriate to deal with a specific sponsorship proposal, the proposal should be forwarded to that unit for processing.
- 3.5.3.2 All sponsorship agreements (even those that involve a small amount of money or non-monetary items) are required to be in writing, either as a letter or a formal contract.
- 3.5.3.3 The official developing a sponsorship agreement should check the context of the agreement to ensure that it does not conflict with the core business of the department or with any existing agreements, and that it does not expose government to any type of liability.
- 3.5.3.4 The signatories for both parties must have the authority to sign such an agreement. It is advisable in the case of a government department/institute, that the head of such an organisation be the signatory of sponsorship agreements.
- 3.5.3.5 All sponsorship agreements must clarify the roles, rights and responsibilities of both parties and protect the department and government from unwanted liabilities.
- 3.5.3.6 All agreements must include a clause that affords departments the right to terminate the arrangement when it is felt that the sponsors' activities are incompatible with that of the department.
- 3.5.3.7 Any marketing communication sponsorship deal undertaken by a department must not compromise the department's reputation, public image, integrity or its ability to fulfil its functions.
- 3.5.3.8 While departments do not provide sponsors with commercial endorsements, sponsors may gain credibility from association with the department. Departments have to be extremely careful in such circumstances as they may lose credibility by associating with businesses that have a poor reputation or are in conflict with government's vision, programmes and commitments.
- 3.5.3.9 Protecting government's and the department's reputation must be expressed as a term or terms in the sponsorship agreement. All departmental sponsorship agreements should have certain standard criteria, which are outlined later in the policy.
- 3.5.3.10 Terms and conditions for sponsorship should be precise and should address the following:
 - a) identify all parties to the sponsorship (including any third parties)
 - b) specify the exact nature and value of the sponsorship
 - c) specify the payment terms, including how and when the payment will be made and to whom
 - d) specify the length of the sponsorship agreement, options or conditions for renewal, the period of time for any

- option and the formula to be used to calculate any increase in price
 - e) describe what the money is to be used for as set out in the budget
 - f) specify in detail both parties' rights and benefits
 - g) set out any special conditions that apply
 - h) set out financial accountability requirements, including the terms of payment; an appropriate, fair and equitable valuation of all contra items; and conditions on the use of funds received or provided
 - i) specify what should happen to any surplus funds
 - j) specify warranties and details concerning liability, including limits to liability and who is responsible for public liability and insurance
 - k) stipulate that the department is under no obligation to continue the relationship beyond the contract period
 - l) set out procedures for communicating with and reporting on suppliers
 - m) specify who owns any intellectual property which might arise
 - n) specify relations with any employees of the organisation seeking sponsorship opportunities
 - o) consider methods to secure payment against the other party's failure to deliver
 - p) indemnify the department and government to risk.
- 3.5.3.11 When co-branding activities, government's Corporate Identity must be adhered to with respect to all creative material developed in the promotion of the sponsored activity.
- 3.5.3.12 The sponsorship agreement should indicate where and how the sponsor's Corporate Identity will be used in relation to the department's Corporate Identity. It is important to note that any co-branding activities must be approved by GCIS's CSA.
- 3.5.3.13 Officials responsible for developing sponsorship agreements are responsible for ensuring that the guidelines for the use of the Coat of Arms are met (these are also available on <http://www.gcis.gov.za>).
- 3.5.3.14 Sponsorship agreements must include the department's right to review all promotional material and activities, including specific uses prior to release.

3.6 Direct marketing and distribution

3.6.1 Bulk distribution

- 3.6.1.1 Departments should seek to leverage the GCIS's distribution network as the first choice for bulk distribution and must not enter into publication distribution agreements with external service-providers without written approval from the GCIS.
- 3.6.1.2 If your marketing strategy includes the distribution of material to your target audiences, consider the following:
- a) ensure that the material is tailored to the needs of your target audience
 - b) your method of distribution must take into account the location of your audiences (urban-rural divide), language, gender and cultural issues
 - c) where appropriate, the material must be distributed electronically
 - d) since distribution can be a time-consuming, costly and labour-intensive activity, you may want to use the services of the GCIS distribution agency.

3.7 Publications

3.7.1 Responsibility of heads of communication

HoCs are responsible for ensuring 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 Reports Number (RP) or provincial departments' Annual Report Number (PR) are allocated to all official publications.

3.7.2 Publication strategy

- 3.7.2.1 All departmental marketing publications – brochures, newsletters, reports, magazines, newspapers and the like – must be based on the marketing strategy approved by the HoC.
- 3.7.2.2 Departments should only produce publications if there is a legitimate public benefit in doing so, or if the public requires specific information which is best communicated through a publication.
- 3.7.2.3 The procurement and appointment of external service-providers used in the production of such publications will be in accordance with government procurement processes, and will be made from the database of GCIS-approved service-providers.
- 3.7.2.4 All publications must conform to departmental Corporate Identity standards.

- 3.7.2.5 All publications must be printed with due regard for the language preferences of the intended audience, and according to plain language requirements as reflected in **Appendix 2**.
- 3.7.2.6 The content of publications must conform to the content requirements outlined in Section 3.3.6 of these policy guidelines.
- 3.7.2.7 The size and style of typefaces and other design elements used in the publications must serve to promote effective readability – refer to **Appendix 8** for design cues to aid readability of publications.
- 3.7.2.8 It is the responsibility of the Office of the HoC to ensure that publications produced by the department do not bring the department into disrepute by virtue of their content, whether it is the quality of the written content or the quality of any photographic images or other graphic material.
- 3.7.2.9 It is the responsibility of the Office of the HoC to ensure that publications produced by the department respect the relevant copyright and privacy requirements.

3.7.3 Publication on the Internet

- 3.7.3.1 Publications issued by the department should be made available on the department's Internet site in PDF format unless the HoC determines not to publish on the website because of the:
 - a) high publication costs relative to the benefit of electronic accessibility
 - b) high publication complexity
 - c) low suitability for web delivery.

3.8 Digital marketing⁴

- 3.8.1 The introduction or increased use of digital media does not constitute a complete departure from the traditional communication objectives of government communication campaigns, nor does it indicate a shift in government communication target markets. Instead, the use of digital media should be seen as contributing to government's ability to achieve its traditional objectives more effectively, while adapting to a rapidly changing communication environment.

3.9 Departmental websites

- 3.9.1 Departmental websites should:
 - a) establish a Corporate Identity and create visibility for the department
 - b) provide an efficient method of delivering current, factual and official information to the public
 - c) market the department to external and internal stakeholders
 - d) publish information about the department to support strategic goals and meet legislative requirements.
- 3.9.2 Public information is to be published on the departmental website except where the HoC determines not to publish on the website because of the:
 - a) high publication costs relative to the benefit of electronic accessibility
 - b) high publication complexity
 - c) low suitability for web delivery.
- 3.9.3 The departmental HoC is responsible for website content and must ensure that:
 - a) information on the department's policies, programmes, services and initiatives is regularly updated, accurate and easy to understand
 - b) there is a mechanism on the department's website for receiving and acknowledging public feedback
 - c) the services and information resources provided through the website are comparable in quality and functionality to those delivered by other communication channels
 - d) people appearing in photographs published on the website have given permission for the use of their images
 - e) privacy rights and copyright ownership are respected.
- 3.9.4 All PDF documents must show the size of the pdf e.g. 700kb, and must open in a new window to ensure the site remains open when the PDF is closed.

⁴ Detailed information on digital marketing – Appendix 9

3.10 Third-party advertising and references on websites

- 3.10.1 Paid advertising is not allowed on any department's website.
- 3.10.2 Organisations sponsoring departmental activities may only be acknowledged in text on relevant pages.
- 3.10.3 Organisations sponsoring departmental activities may have their logos added to the department website if approved by the HoC, or designate. Only in exceptional circumstances will approval be granted.

3.11 Social media protocols

- 3.11.1 Any weblog ("blog") or presence on a social media site e.g. Facebook that identifies the author as an employee of the department, and/or refers to activities and policies of the department, must be sent to the office of the HoC for approval before it is published on the Internet.

4. Crisis Policy Guidelines

4.1 Background

- 4.1.1 For the purposes of these policy guidelines, a crisis is defined as any emergency or controversy in the department that results or could result in extensive media coverage and public scrutiny, and that could negatively affect the public perception or reputation of the department or the country in general.
- 4.1.2 The way that the Government communicates in a crisis has a lasting impact on its reputation. How well a particular department gets its message across to the public depends to a great extent on what is reported in the news. This is especially true in crises, when people rely primarily on the information they receive from newspapers, television and radio to form their opinions.
- 4.1.3 These crisis communication policy guidelines seek to provide:
 - a) a succinct overview of the key actions and processes to follow in the event of a crisis
 - b) the criteria for when an incident should be referred to GCIS for crisis management leadership and guidance
 - c) crisis communication policy guidelines that should be implemented by departments
 - d) a comprehensive set of crisis communication resources that can be used at the discretion of department communicators to build, manage and maintain an effective issue and crisis management capability.
- 4.1.4 These policy guidelines are focused on crisis communication, and complement, rather than compete with or replace, other disaster and crisis management protocols within government.

4.2 Crisis communication policy guidelines on potential tier one issues

- 4.2.1 Crises relating to the following transversal issues are classified as potential tier one issues and should be immediately referred to the Chief Director: Government and Media Liaison at the GCIS for leadership of the issue's response. These are:
 - a) 2010 controversies
 - b) acts of terror committed in South Africa
 - c) international acts of terror impacting on South Africa and/or its citizens
 - d) major natural disasters
 - e) controversies relating to the decisions and actions of Cabinet or Cabinet ministers
 - f) issues affecting national security
 - g) incidents impacting on the safety and well-being of communities in South Africa e.g. xenophobia
 - h) crises related to the communication of controversial issues or the unintended consequence of government communication or actions.
- 4.2.2 For tier one issues, the GCIS will either:
 - a) take the lead in managing the communication aspects of the issue
 - b) establish a command centre led by the GCIS and the lead department, which will manage communication collectively
 - c) assign communication leadership to a specific department in the case of a cluster response, with the GCIS participating in a support role
 - d) delegate the issue back to the referring department for communication management, and provide advice and counsel.

4.3 Crisis prevention

- 4.3.1 The Office of the HoC will monitor international, national and regional print media on a daily basis and maintain regular contact with the DG and minister, advising the department's leadership on emerging issues that may lead to reputation crises.
- 4.3.2 The department's designated media monitoring agency will monitor local, regional and national news coverage of the department, advising the Office of the HoC on issues and/or trends that might lead to reputation crises.

4.4 Crisis reaction

- 4.4.1 The Office of the HoC should be notified immediately of an emerging or breaking crisis within or affecting the department.
- 4.4.2 The HoC should inform the authority and line functionaries about the crises immediately after the information has been verified.
- 4.4.3 If a crisis should break into the public domain, the Office of the HoC must gather and verify information about the

- crisis, assess the severity of the crisis, and whether it should be escalated to the GCIS for leadership (tier one issues) or managed at departmental level.
- 4.4.4 If managed at departmental level, the Office of the HoC should assess whether it is able to implement a simple strategy to address and manage the issue departmentally, or whether the issue should be escalated to the departmental Crisis Management Team (CMT).
- 4.4.5 Given the urgency of rapid communication, the HoC or his/her designee has the authority to begin taking action immediately with departmental guidance, until a broader decision can be made about how the department should proceed.
- 4.4.6 The DG or his/her designee must assemble at the designated Command Centre as per the Crisis Management Plan and chair a CMT and – if required – include other specialist internal and external resources e.g. legal, PR, emergency services, technical experts, etc.
- 4.4.7 Following input from the CMT, the Office of the HoC is responsible for developing the strategy and tactics on how information is to be released, who should speak for the department on the issue, and which audiences are to be communicated with.
- 4.4.8 The Office of the HoC should establish the logistical details of releasing information, and distribute verified information as quickly as possible to an agreed list of internal and external audiences.
- 4.4.9 The Office of the HoC must use multiple mediums to reach as many people as possible with accurate and timely information. This is especially important in the first hours and days of an emergency or a crisis.
- 4.4.10 The communication goal of the Office of the HoC is to be open, accountable and accessible to all audiences, although mindful of confidentiality and legal and privacy considerations.
- 4.4.11 The guiding principle of the Office of the HoC is to communicate facts as quickly as possible, updating information regularly as circumstances change.
- 4.4.12 Final approval of the communication recommendations by the Office of the HoC rests with the DG/minister or his/her designated nominee.
- 4.4.13 The Office of the HoC must implement the communication strategy immediately upon approval by the DG/minister or his/her designated nominee.

4.5 Crisis spokespeople

- 4.5.1 No one is authorised to speak to the news media in a crisis without clearance from the minister; the DG or the HoC or their designated nominees.
- 4.5.2 The HoC or his/her nominee is responsible for identifying departmental managers or staff with the knowledge and/or technical expertise to provide specialist input to media responses or to speak as official representatives of the department.
- 4.5.3 Designated spokespeople should make themselves available to respond to media enquiries in a prompt and professional manner; using all possible communication tools, including the crisis command centre.

4.6 Working with the media

- 4.6.1 All media enquiries to the department relating to the issue should be directed to the Office of the HoC.
- 4.6.2 The Office of the HoC should work to supply verifiable details to the news media as rapidly as possible, using appropriate media communication channels.
- 4.6.3 All media enquiries should ideally receive an initial response from the department within 30 minutes after all facts have been established.
- 4.6.4 In the event of a breaking crisis, a media holding statement should be released no later than six hours after the first media enquiry.
- 4.6.5 After releasing information, the Office of the HoC and its external media monitoring agency should monitor the news coverage and respond appropriately where necessary.

4.7 Recording media enquiries

- 4.7.1 A dedicated media response set-up should be available to take all media enquiries and ensure that they are properly responded to.
- 4.7.2 To ensure that the department responds to all media enquiries professionally and promptly, the office of the HoC should maintain a log to record all calls and interview requests from members of the media during a crisis situation.
- 4.7.3 A sample of a media log is included in **Appendix 10**.

4.8 Communication approval processes

- 4.8.1 Crisp decision-making is required during a crisis to enable rapid and accurate communication to various internal and external stakeholders.
- 4.8.2 To expedite the communication process in a crisis situation, final approval for all crisis communication at departmental level rests with the HoC or his/her designee. Where required, the HoC can verify facts with the relevant departmental line functionaries.

4.9 Employee communication

- 4.9.1 The Office of the HoC should be especially mindful of the need to address departmental employees as a priority audience.
- 4.9.2 Whenever practical, the Office of the HoC, working with Human Resources, should attempt to inform departmental employees of the issues relating to the crisis, using established internal communication channels, before or simultaneously with the details being released to external audiences.

4.10 Integrity of communication

- 4.10.1 The Office of the HoC should adopt an attitude that all communication to all stakeholders may find its way into the public domain. The content and tone of any communication issued by the Office of the HoC to a specific audience – even if not meant for public consumption – should not embarrass the department or bring the department into disrepute, should it be leaked into the public domain.

4.11 Informing other government stakeholders

- 4.11.1 The Office of the HoC should identify relevant government stakeholders and coordinate appropriate crisis communication to such stakeholders who are likely to be affected by, or have a strong interest in the issue.
- 4.11.2 Whenever practical and relevant, the Office of the HoC should attempt to:
 - a) inform such government stakeholders of impending media calls that the Office of the HoC may be aware of
 - b) supply such government stakeholders with copies of media communication when it is distributed to the news media
 - c) notify them of any planned departmental media briefings.

4.12 Stakeholder communication response times

- 4.12.1 The goal of the Office of the HoC is to ensure that the department gives a credible public response within one hour of a media enquiry involving health, safety or the environment, or any media enquiry or potential issue that may lead to a story that damages the department's reputation.
- 4.12.2 Such an initial response may take the form of a brief holding statement (refer to guidelines in **Appendix 11**) that confirms that the department is aware of/investigating the alleged incident, establishes the commitment of the department to responsible issue management and communication, and establishes the authorised source of media information within the department for ongoing liaison.

4.13 Identification of relevant stakeholders

- 4.13.1 The Office of the HoC should build and maintain a comprehensive list of internal and external stakeholders for the department, with contact details, which form part of the Crisis Communication Plan. A sample list of stakeholders is included in **Appendix 12**.
- 4.13.2 The Office of the HoC should maintain a media contact list for the department, in both hard copy and digital format for use in a crisis situation.
- 4.13.3 The stakeholder and media contact lists should be updated monthly by the Office of the HoC.

4.14 Next of kin and victim communication

- 4.14.1 It is the responsibility of the South African Police Service (SAPS) to notify next of kin in the event of a crisis-related fatality. The department and its communication team should make every effort to ensure that it does not release

the identities of any dead or injured persons until such time as it has been confirmed that the next of kin have been informed by the relevant authorities.

4.14.2 Personal information that cannot be released to the media includes:

- a) a patient's medical history
- b) home address or telephone number of any member of the department
- c) the identity of any department member involved in a serious incident, such as a shooting, vehicle accident, etc. until the SAPS investigating officer in charge has approved the release of this information.

4.15 Interdepartmental and multi-agency communication

- 4.15.1 The department should recognise that extraordinary and rapid efforts may be required in times of crisis or emergency. Several government departments and agencies at national, provincial or local level may be involved in responding to an emergency or crisis. Cooperation with others, such as industry or community leaders and non-governmental organisations, may also be required.
- 4.15.2 Where it is unclear which government department or agency should take the lead in cross-jurisdictional crisis communication, the GCIS will take the lead role.
- 4.15.3 The department or agency having primary jurisdiction as determined by the GCIS should be responsible for releasing or coordinating the release of information to the media and other stakeholders.
- 4.15.4 No member of the department must release information from another department or agency without first obtaining permission from such department or agency, and only the Office of the HoC can conduct any such release.

4.16 Media monitoring

- 4.16.1 The Office of the HoC should activate and intensify daily media monitoring services during a crisis so as to be aware of how the department is being portrayed in early and ongoing media coverage.
- 4.16.2 The Office of the HoC must accordingly maintain or adjust the communication response as needed to limit rumours, correct errors and maintain confidence in the department.
- 4.16.3 Summaries of relevant media coverage should be provided to the department's senior leadership and CMT at least twice a day during a crisis situation.

4.17 Evaluation and follow-up

- 4.17.1 When the crisis is past, the Office of the HoC must supply the CMT, the DG, the minister and GCIS with a summary of news coverage relating to the crisis.
- 4.17.2 Members of the CMT should review this report and evaluate the department's performance "under fire". The team must note:
 - a) overall success or failure of the crisis communication effort
 - b) problems to be avoided in the future
 - c) appropriate follow-up measures.
- 4.17.3 Attention also should be focused on identifying and implementing measures to improve the action plan used during the crisis.

4.18 Updating of stakeholder lists

- 4.18.1 The Office of the HoC should update the stakeholder contact details in its media list and crisis communication plan at least twice a year.

5. Local Government Communication Policy Guidelines

5.1 The aim of these policy guidelines is to assist municipalities in delivering well co-ordinated, effectively managed and responsive communication to meet the needs of the public.

5.2 Objectives of policy guidelines

- a) provide the public with timely, accurate, clear and complete information about its policies, programmes, services and initiatives
- b) ensure that its communication caters for all official languages, depending on the area
- c) continuously ensure that the municipality is visible and accessible to the public
- d) ensure that its communication messages reach the widest possible audience with diverse needs
- e) identify important and crucial issues to communities and address the implementation of the municipal Programme of Action as contained in the Integrated Development Plan
- f) ensure that it consults with the public, listen to and take into account people's interests and concerns when establishing priorities, developing policies and planning programmes and services
- g) continuously ensure that the information service is managed in a people-centred and client-focused manner
- h) continue to build public trust and confidence in the integrity of the municipality and government as a whole
- i) ensure that communication is integrated and coordinated across the three spheres of government.

5.3 Communication functions of municipalities should:

- a) develop policies that are in line with their communication requirements
- b) ensure that provincial and district communication policies are informed by these communication policy guidelines
- c) ensure that once provincial and district communication policies are concluded, these policies go through the relevant structures for final approval before implementation.

5.4 The role of local government communication in public participation

- 5.4.1 Local government communication plays a major role in public participation. It acts as scientific support, provides technical advice to campaigns, assists to broaden community participation and with the sustainability of public participation processes and programmes, strengthens the impact of public participation and provides informed environmental analyses (research).
- 5.4.2 The role of communication in public participation is:
 - a) preparing the community for public engagements and allowing for input before and after the engagements have taken place
 - b) popularising public participation programmes
 - c) interacting with and engaging all role players for the success of public participation programmes.
- 5.4.3 Role players should include the following:
 - a) community members: they are the beneficiaries of the public participation process
 - b) administration: the municipality must avail resources, implement capacity-building programmes and integrate all municipal processes, programmes and activities into the public participation cycle
 - c) elected public representatives: these include the speaker (custodian of the process), mayor (in executing his/her responsibility), members of the Mayoral Committee (MMC) and the chairpersons of portfolio committees
 - d) ward committees: they have an advisory role and represent the interests of their wards
 - e) community development workers (CDWs): they fulfil their responsibility as community field workers
 - f) external players:
 - i) other provincial and national government departments
 - ii) representatives from provincial and national structures (there should be integrated programmes)
 - iii) the provincial legislature and the National Council of Provinces
 - iv) CDW coordinator at district level
 - v) members of the district council.

5.5 Capacity-building at the local sphere of government

- 5.5.1 All municipalities should budget for the training and development of communicators. Municipalities are encouraged to use Sector Education and Training Authority levies and Municipal Infrastructure Grant allocations for this training.

5.6 Induction programme for municipal communicators and political principals⁵

- 5.6.1 Municipalities must have an induction programme in place for municipal communicators and political principals. Orientation is necessary, since municipalities are complex institutions with various stakeholders and components.
- 5.6.2 Municipal communicators must have a thorough orientation in terms of the workplace, including an introduction to all political principals, heads of units and leaders of institutions associated with the municipality. The interrelatedness and collective character of the municipality in terms of service delivery will not be properly understood without such orientation, which could lead to skewed communication services.

5.7 Development of a municipal communication strategy⁶

- 5.7.1 The provincial communication core team should assist provincial departments, districts and local municipalities in drafting the strategy and presenting it to all relevant structures for discussion and approval.
- 5.7.2 All communicators in the province should participate in the development of a provincial communication strategy.

5.8 Institutional communication arrangements

- 5.8.1 Since communication is a strategic function and should be consciously planned, dedicated institutions for this function are required at municipal level.
- 5.8.2 The following must be established:
- a communication unit must be located in the Office of the Mayor; but with administrative accountability to the Municipal Manager. This means the function will be politically accountable to the Mayor and administratively to the Municipal Manager
 - the communication unit should ideally comprise officials to handle the following functions: internal communication; external communication, including the imbizo programmes; media and stakeholder liaison; media production; and marketing and branding
 - municipal communicators should sit on the Executive Committee of municipalities, to be able to appreciate policy and be in a better position to articulate it, but also to present current affairs and advise on the communication implications of deliberations
 - it is recommended that municipalities establish an internal communication forum to coordinate communication activities within the municipality
 - it is also recommended that frequent communication strategising meetings be held, headed by the Mayor or Speaker, to provide communication guidance
 - it is recommended that municipalities establish municipal communication forums to develop their own municipal communication capacity
 - municipal communication officers should be represented on the district and provincial government communication forums (GCFs)
 - guidelines for the development of communication strategies at municipal level should be completed by August each year
 - at institutional level, oversight and leadership of political principals is a prerequisite to ensure adequate reporting and accountability within the municipality
 - the rank of the communication officer should reflect the strategic importance of communication
 - communication officers should participate in various strategic committees in the municipality, e.g. the Mayoral Committee, so that they can appreciate the work of such committees and have direct information
 - the roles and key performance areas of the communication officer must be clearly defined.

⁵ Detailed information on induction programme for municipal communicators and political principals – Appendix 13

⁶ Detailed information on development of a municipal communication strategy – Appendix 14

5.9 Provincial and local government communication forums

5.9.1 Provincial Communication Forum (PCF)⁷

5.9.1.1 The forum is commonly referred to as the Intergovernmental Communication Forum or IGCF provincially.

5.9.1.2 Roles and functions of the Provincial Communication Forum

- a) The PCF is a strategic meeting of government communicators in a particular province.
- b) The Office of the Premier coordinates this forum with assistance from the Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, South African Local Government Association (Salga) and the GCIS.
- c) The HoCs within departments, parastatals and districts attend the PCF.
- d) The PCF is a platform that should be used to share information and iron out communication problems in the province.
- e) The PCF should assist with capacity-building and profiling case studies (it helps communicators to share lessons learned and best practices).
- f) The PCF also assists with strategising for communication.
- g) The provincial communications core teams should be represented in the PCF.

5.10 District Communication Forum (DCF)⁸

5.10.1 Roles and functions of the District Communication Forum

- a) The DCF is a strategic meeting of government communicators in a particular district.
- b) District municipalities (DMs) should coordinate the DCF with assistance from the Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, Salga and the GCIS.
- c) The DCF should be attended by the HoCs of local municipalities, parastatals and any other government-related structures in the district.
- d) The DCF should be used to share information and iron out communication problems on a district level.
- e) The DCF's communication head should participate in provincial meetings and work with provinces in organising meetings with the South African National Editors' Forum.
- f) The DCF should assist local municipalities with capacity, and with communication strategies.
- g) The DCF should coordinate and organise a calendar of events for the district and ensure that these activities are streamlined across the district to avoid duplication and a waste of resources.
- h) As the aims of DCFs are coordination and information sharing, the agenda should include:
 - i) assessing the communication environment, the public mood and the media agenda
 - ii) providing feedback from the GCF, the PCF, and other forums, e.g. the premier's/mayor's forums
 - iii) performing district and local communication strategy reviews, i.e. asking "how far are we?"
 - iv) compiling the communication programme, including input from all three spheres (usually guided by theme months and the communication cycle of each sphere)
 - v) having special discussions on izimbizo, Cabinet/premier outreach programmes and mayoral/council meetings with the people
 - vi) distributing communication and information resource material
 - vii) assessing the status of the Thusong Service Centre Programme (formerly multipurpose community centres) and the promotion plan in the district
 - viii) providing capacity-building assistance to members of the forum
 - ix) monitoring the implementation of the imbizo approach on an ongoing basis in the municipal communication cycle through "Mayor and Ward Councillors Meet the People" initiatives
 - xi) ensuring effective monitoring systems of such forums through the relevant provincial intergovernmental relations (IGR) premier's/mayor's forums.

5.11 Local Communication Forum (LCF)⁹

5.11.1 On a local level, municipalities should establish their own communication forums or put in place any other appropriate mechanisms to manage communication processes with communication partners operational at the level of the municipality.

⁷ Detailed information on provincial communication forums – Appendix 15

⁸ Detailed information on district communication forum – Appendix 16

⁹ Detailed information on local communication forum – Appendix 17

5.11.2 Roles and functions of the Local Communication Forum

- a) The LCF is a strategic meeting of government communicators in a particular municipality.
- b) The LCF should be attended by the HoCs of local municipalities, parastatals and any other government-related structures in the district.
- c) The LCFs should be used to share information and iron out communication problems on a district level.
- d) The LCFs should assist each other with strategising for communication.
- e) The LCFs should coordinate and organise a calendar of events with the districts and ensure that these activities are streamlined across the district to avoid duplication and a waste of resources.
- f) As the aim of the LCF is coordination and information sharing, the agenda should include:
 - i) assessing the communication environment, the public mood and the media agenda
 - ii) providing feedback from the GCF, PCF, DCF and other forums, e.g. the premier's/mayor's forums
 - iii) performing district and local communication strategy reviews, i.e. asking "how far are we?"
 - iv) compiling the communication programme, including input from all three spheres (usually guided by theme months and the communication cycle of each sphere)
 - v) having special discussions on izimbizo, Cabinet/premier outreach programmes and mayoral/council meetings with the people
 - vi) distributing communication and information resource material
 - vii) monitoring the implementation of the imbizo approach on an ongoing basis in the municipal communication cycle through "Mayor and Ward Councillors Meet the People" initiatives
 - ix) ensuring effective monitoring systems of such forums through the relevant provincial IGR Premier's/Mayor's Forum.

5.11.3 Structures at municipal level which may form a forum include:

- a) local municipal communicators
- b) communicators from departments with local offices
- c) communicators from hospitals and police stations
- d) CDWs and health workers
- e) other community structures of importance.

6. References and Acknowledgements

These guidelines have been formulated with reference to the following documents:

MEDIA

- City of London Police Media Relations Policy
- Whole of Government Communications Policy – Tasmania
- Heriot-Watt University Media Relations Policy
- Government of Alberta Communications Policy
- Communications Policy of the Government of Canada
- Mediasmart – Dennis Stauffer
- *How to Talk to the Media* – Judith Byrne
- *Press Here* – Annie Gurton
- *Handling Difficult Questions* – *SA Journal of Public Relations*. November 1995

MARKETING

- *Proposed Guidelines for Advertising Campaigns for National Government Departments of the Republic of South Africa* – GCIS, 2008
- http://www.alp.org.au/download/guidelines_on_campaign_advertising.pdf June 2008
- www.premcab.sa.gov.au/pdf/circulars/pc009_master_media.pdf
- <http://www.cabinetmanual.cabinetoffice.govt.nz/appendix-b> Appendix B: Guidelines for Government Advertising
- <http://www.advertising.nswp.commerce.nsw.gov.au/Advertising/Government+Advertising+Guidelines/Government+Advertising+Guidelines.htm#Campaign%20Advertising>
- <http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/cth/bill/gafaab2000640/>
- <http://www.finance.gov.au/Advertising/non-campaign-advertising.html>:
- http://wopared.parl.net/senate/committeefapa_ctel/completed_inquiries/2004-07/govtadvertising/report/e05.htm
- http://www.communications.tas.gov.au/home/communications_policy/4._policy_requirements/4.1_informing_tasmanians/communication_methods/4.1.7_advertising
- *Elections 2009 – Guidelines on Government Communication during an Election Period*
- Curtin University Brand and Corporate Visual Identity Guidelines
- Australian Government – Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet: *How to Write a Brief for a Creative Advertising Agency*
- Boston University Broadcast E-Mail Policy and Procedure, 2006
- Government of Canada Advertising Guidelines
- *The Client Brief: A Best Practice Guide to Briefing Communications Agencies* – Association of Quebec Advertising Agencies
- *Commonwealth of Australia Advertising Guidelines*
- US Plain Language Act of 2008
- University of California Electronic Communications Policy
- Whitsundayshire Council – Advertising Policy 2007
- *Guidelines for Victorian Government Advertising and Communications*
- *New Zealand Cabinet Guidelines for Government Advertising – 1989*
- *New South Wales Creative Agency Briefing template*
- *New South Wales Government Advertising Guidelines*
- *Government of Canada – Procedures for Participating in Fairs and Exhibitions*
- *The Clarity Kit – Developing a Strategy for Clear Language in Municipal Communications*
- *Government of West Australia – Campaign Advertising Approval Process*
- *GCIS Content Strategy – August 2008*
- Kotler, Philip. *Marketing Management: Analysis, Planning, Implementation and Control*. 8th ed. Prentice-Hall, 1994
- *Marketing Communications: An Integrated Approach*. PR Smith and Jonathan Taylor. 2004. Kogan Page
- *Value Added Public Relations: The Secret Weapon of Integrated Marketing*. Thomas L Harris. 1998. NTC Business Books
- *Effective Public Relations*. Scott M Cutlip, Allen H. Center and Glen M Broom. 1994. Prentice Hall
- *E-PR: Public Relations on the Internet*. Matt Haig. 2000. Kogan Page
- *Kellogg on Integrated Marketing*. Edited by Dawn Lacobucci and Bobby Calder. 2003. John Wiley & Sons

CRISIS

- *Crisis Communication Best Practice* – Peter M. Sandman. *Journal of Applied Communication Research*. Vol. 34, No. 3, August 2006
- *Communicating in a Crisis: Risk Communication Guidelines for Public Officials*. 2002. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
- *Crisis and Emergency Risk Communication*. 2002. US Centre for Disease Control and Prevention
- University of Louisville – Crisis Policies and Procedures.
- *Resilience to Risk* – Sean Cleary and Thierry Malleret. 2006. Human & Rousseau.
- *Crisis Management – Planning for the inevitable*. Steven Fink. 2002. iUniverse Inc.
- *Harvard Business Review on Crisis Management*. 2000. Harvard Business School Press
- *Crisis Management – Master the Skills to Prevent Disasters*. 2004. Harvard Business School Press
- *The Crisis Counsellor – A Step-by-Step Guide to Managing a Business Crisis*. Jeffrey Caponigro. 2000. Contemporary Books
- *Effective Crisis Management – Worldwide Principles and Practice*. Mike Seymour and Simon Moore. 2000. Cassell
- *Crisis Control – Preventing and Managing Corporate Crises*. Ross Campbell. 1999. Penguin/Viking
- *The Importance of Communication in Excellent Crisis Management* – Francis J Marra, Senior Lecturer; School of Marketing; Curtin University of Technology

LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES

Comprehensive set of guidelines outlined in the documents *Guidelines for Municipal Communication* developed in 2007 by SALGA, the then Department of Provincial and Local Government (now Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs) and GCIS.

7. Document Acceptance and Release Notice

This is the first edition of the Media, Marketing and Crisis Communication Policy Guidelines. The policy guidelines are a managed document. Changes will only be issued as a complete replacement document. Recipients should remove superseded versions from circulation.

These policy guidelines will be reviewed at least every year and be amended should legislation or a change in policy require this.

Review date: August 2009

8. Breach of Policy Guidelines

These policy guidelines need to be read in association with other requirements that govern the expenditure of public funds. All campaigns are subject to the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA), 1999 (Act 1 of 1999), and the Advertising Standards Authority of South Africa (ASA) Code of Advertising Practice and other relevant legislation.

The GCIS will only exempt a department from compliance with these guidelines on the basis of a national emergency, extreme urgency or other extraordinary reason the CEO of GCIS considers appropriate.

Breaches of this policy may be deemed breaches of the relevant provisions of the Code of Conduct and the obligations of departmental employees, and will be referred to the relevant authority in the department.

9. Supporting Policy

Other guidelines available from the GCIS to support this policy include:

- *Editorial Style Guide for Government Departments and Communicators, 2009*
- *Government Communicators' Handbook, 2009*
- *Best Practice Guidelines for the Procurement of Marketing, Advertising and Public Relations (PR) Services and Products, 2008*
- Manual of GCIS in terms of the Promotion of Access to Information Act, 2000 (Act 2 of 2000)
- *Elections 2009 – Guidelines on Government Communication during an Election Period*
- *Marketing, Advertising and Communication (MAC) Sector Charter on Black Economic Empowerment as published in the Government Gazette on 29 August 2008*
- *Republic of South Africa National Coat of Arms Corporate Identity and Branding Guidelines*
- *Republic of South Africa Corporate Image Guidelines.*

These supporting guidelines are published on the GCIS website <http://www.gcis.gov.za>

10. Other Relevant Government Guidelines

In addition to the above, the policy guidelines should be used in conjunction with the National Treasury Regulations, including but not limited to:

- procurement guidelines
- regulations in terms of the PFMA, 1999.

These supporting guidelines are published on the National Treasury website, <http://www.treasury.gov.za>