

## 21. COORDINATION AND PLANNING STRUCTURES

### COMMUNICATION FORA

The functioning of the structures/fora is but one of the means in which government can achieve a greater integration and have government speaking in one voice guided by the national communication strategy as approved by Cabinet. Through these communication fora, government seeks to coordinate communication between ministries, levels and spheres of government.

#### 21.1 Coordination through the GCIS

The GCIS is the custodian of government communications and to this end has the mandate to lead and drive government communications aimed at profiling the work of government. The GCIS convenes a number of strategic communication platforms which assist to ensure coordination and coherence in government communications.

In order to meet the objectives of the government communication system, structures and processes have been created to achieve coordination of activity and coherence of content within an overarching strategic framework. This was to ensure that the government communication system as a whole is integrated, coordinated and coherent in order to work towards enhanced effectiveness.

As outlined above the government-wide communication system is coordinated through various coordinating structures and substructures which were established to ensure that the government communication system functioned in an integrated and coordinated manner.

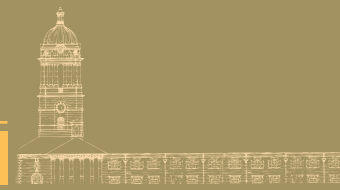
Furthermore, all these forums receive communication guidance from the GCIS, informed by the national communication strategy approved by Cabinet and further informed by the government PoA and feeds into subsidiary communication strategies of clusters, departments, provinces and local government.

Through these forums, the GCIS attempts to monitor implementation of the GCP and advises Cabinet and other government institutions on communication matters. These forums are then expected to report to the DGs monthly. Through the coordination and systems outlined, the government-wide communication system has increased coherence and consistency in messaging and content.

#### 21.2. Importance of forums

Government communication forums are strategic platforms for government communicators to plan and strategise together for communication. Through the use of forums, our communicators are able to speak in one voice on issues related to government communications.





They assist with integration of messages and programmes so that government can speak in one voice. A communication planning meeting is held to assist government to heighten communications by proactively planning and rapidly responding to issues in the environment. Government communicators in the form of Ministerial/MLOs attend the meetings so that they can be able to give proper responses to issues raised in the media.

### **21.3. Induction of communicators**

To integrate all communicators into the government communication system (all three spheres of government). The purpose of the induction is to integrate all communicators into the government communication system (all three spheres of government). The induction programme will assist government communicator across the three spheres to have a thorough knowledge of their work and how they fit in the government communication system.

### **21.4. Government Communicators' Forum**

The GCF is a platform for communicators to discuss strategic government communication issues within the national communication framework. Each department is expected to align priorities for communication with the national communication priorities and include an action plan on how communication will be implemented.

- The GCF meets three times a year – the agenda is based on key communication imperatives and communication plans around objectives that government set itself to attain.

#### **a. Attendance**

- Issues discussed at the GCF are part of important government policies and programmes and as such attendance of the GCF is restricted to HoCs, MLOs and directors of communication. For provinces, it is important to have the whole core team attending the GCF to ensure that they then go back and convene the Provincial Communicators' Forum followed by the District Communicators' Forum.

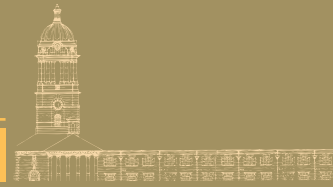
### **21.5 Communication planning meetings**

The communication planning meeting is a strategic platform for government communication. The meetings are recognition that it is much easier for communicators to meet and plan together in an effort to attain coherence of message within the communication system. Through this meeting, communicators are fully apprised of the issues within the communications environment, issues their principals are taking to Cabinet and the Cabinet decisions as they are announced through the Cabinet statement.

### **21.6. Internal Communicators' Forum**

The Internal GCF is a strategic communication platform with the objective of sharing communication case studies and to lead and drive government communications aimed at profiling the work of government. The forum further assists government as a strategic communication platform to ensure coordination and coherence in government communication.





### 21.7 Provincial HoCs meeting with the GCIS Exco

This is a strategic forum with the objective of ensuring alignment of provincial communication strategy, provincial communication priorities with the National Communication Strategy. The meeting is attended by GCIS Manco, South African Local Government Association, COGTA, provincial HoCs and GCIS provincial directors, scheduled to take place three times a year.

### 21.8. Induction of communicators

To guide government with ensuring that new communicators have a smooth transition into the government communication system and to ensure that their roles are clear and understood.

The worst thing that a government communicator can do is fail to provide constant and consistent advice on the fact that public scrutiny is far greater than ever before. In South Africa, government communications exist at varying levels of maturity – the importance of this profession does not mean the same thing to various departments and levels of government.

Government communications facilitates the work with the management of organisations as they engage with their internal and external stakeholders – and the community at large – and help them negotiate all the changes, be they positive or negative, that lead to or impede progress toward achieving “corporate satisfaction”.

A government communicator should clearly know and understand the following:

- Mandate of government communication (informing the public about government’s policies and programmes to implement its mandate, including opportunities available to better their lives).
- The effectiveness of government communication and the dissemination of government information can be enhanced through the application of appropriate scientific processes and methodologies.
  - A former CEO of GCIS (Netshitenzhe, 2003) argues that “In working out campaigns and programmes, there should be a deliberate effort to understand the communication environment, including target groups, appropriate media platforms, messages and forms of interaction. In this regard, communication research is a critical element of the trade: communication is an art form, but it should be based on science.”