

6. ENHANCING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNMENT-WIDE COMMUNICATION

In 2007/08, the GCIS initiated the *Government-Wide Communication System Review* as part of a 10-year evaluation of the system. The objective was to better understand communication challenges that still persisted and make recommendations on how best to address them.

Among the key issues identified in the report were:

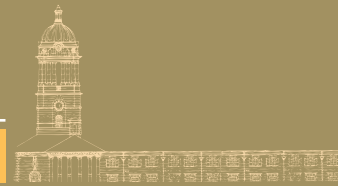
- the need for comprehensive government communication policy guidelines which, among other issues, emphasise the different aspects of communication, including outreach, stakeholder relationships and partnerships, media liaison, marketing, advertising and public relations.
- where necessary, regulations enforcing policy decisions should be crafted to cover, among other things, specific requirements on advertising; guidelines for stakeholder engagement; guidelines on community engagement and consultation; participation by departments in government-wide communication projects, including *izimbizo* and media briefings; and guidelines and standards for media engagement.
- the finding that communication is not prioritised across all government departments and spheres of government, and that budgets and resources are applied unevenly across departments.

The review also identified existing challenges that limit the effectiveness of government communication, which include:

- Political principals (ministers, members of the executive committees and/or heads of departments, DGs or chief executive officers) are not always aware of the requirements or impact of effective communication. This causes a gap in expectations and delivery.
- Communication is often seen as peripheral to departments. Capacity, budgets and skills in the communication components of most government departments are unevenly applied.
- There is no appropriate system of accountability in place to ensure that communication strategies are implemented and there is no standard assessment of the impact of communication.

Recommendations to address these challenges included that the GCIS should facilitate the development of a communication leadership programme to be included in the induction process of political principals and heads of departments – with participation in such a programme being compulsory.

The review also recommended that communication within the government-wide communication system be professionalised by introducing standard practices of communication through the institution of a performance-management tool, as well as by tailoring the qualification requirements for government communicators.



6.1. Performance Scorecard for government communicators

The review process showed a need for integration and further enhancement of the government-wide communication system. It also indicated that there were some difficulties in linking the HoCs expected deliverables to their scope of work. Given this, a generic scorecard has been developed to serve as a tool to assist DGs and HoCs in defining and determining departmental and provincial communication deliverables and standardising the performance requirements of HoCs.

The Generic Performance Scorecard has been developed to aid all HoCs based at national government departments and HoCs based in the offices of the respective premiers.

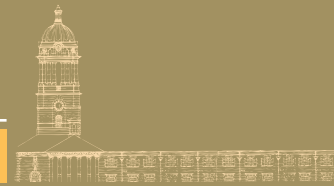
Due to its generic approach, it is necessary that each department or province adapts the Performance Scorecard to accommodate their particular context and circumstances – e.g. the communicators employed by the Department of International Relations and Cooperation need to liaise with foreign representatives of South Africa and to see to it that they have adequate information available as soon as possible. To enable this, resources need to be appropriately allocated with regard to the required information and budget, and other contributing factors need to be sought to allow effective measurement of task execution. This will then form a key result area or KRA, which refers to a broad area of performance, for which an incumbent will be held responsible. It must relate to the organisation's overall mission, as well as to why the specific job exists. A KRA is defined as a future state of achievement that helps an organisation to succeed and create value.

The following reports were consulted in the drawing up of the generic scorecard:

- *Cabinet memoranda – 1998 and 2000*
- *National Communication Strategic Framework (NCSF)*
- *Comtask Report*
- *Review of Government-Wide Communication*
- *international benchmark studies*
- *The GCIS Strategic Plan*
- *SMS Chapter on Performance Management and Development System.*

The GCIS undertook this task, as it understands that:

- communication is a strategic element of democracy
- it is key in a participatory democracy that government effectively communicates with its citizens in a transparent and coherent manner
- all government communicators “speak with one voice”.



Effective government communication requires excellent coordination and integration of messages, campaigns and programmes. It also requires the effective implementation of the Government's Communication Strategy.

Strategy and planning are key elements for effective, integrated and coordinated government communication. The capacity to communicate with one voice is promoted by such practices as the GCF and joint communication around programmes and campaigns undertaken collectively.

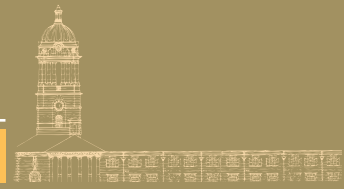
The GCIS has previously developed some tools (for example the *Government Communicators' Handbook*) to assist government communicators to understand their role as well as to introduce a "new approach to government communication that encourages integration, coordination and high levels of professionalism". However, the GCIS has recognised that greater integration and further enhancement in the delivery of its services can be realised through a process that monitors and measures performance. The identification of the need for a generic scorecard is seen to further enhance these types of initiatives by ensuring that a standard set of measurements, by which to hold HoCs equally accountable, is developed. The expected result of this is uniform accountability and better quality communication work from all HoCs. It will also address the perception of external stakeholders, as captured in the 10-Year Review document, that there is uneven performance across departments and spheres due to a lack of a uniform approach.

6.1.1. Context – GCIS and Senior Management System (SMS) Performance Management and Development System (PMDS)

The context within which the Generic Performance Scorecard for all HoCs was developed was that of the government-wide communication system vis-à-vis the SMS PMDS. The development of a generic scorecard for HoCs formed part of the existing SMS PMDS and was therefore not intended as a reinvention of the wheel.

The elements of the existing system of performance management include:

- signed performance agreements
- an agreed format
- 80:20 KRAs (measurable output) and core management criteria (CMC)
- linkage between organisational and individual performance management
- a standardised rating scale
- a performance management cycle
- moderation processes
- financial rewards
- personal development plans
- poor performance and dispute-resolution mechanisms.



Described below are the key principles that underpin the SMS PMDS:

- Departments are expected to manage performance in a consultative, supportive and non-discriminatory manner.
- Performance management should be linked to the organisation's strategic goals.
- An organisation implementing performance management is entitled to satisfactory work performance from all managers.
- All existing SMS members are expected to enter into a performance agreement within the first month of the new financial year. A newly appointed SMS member must enter into a performance agreement within the first three months of appointment.
- Performance management will be developmental (recognising outstanding performance) and transparent while maintaining administrative justice.
- SMS members must play an active role in developing their performance agreements.
- Performance agreements should be directly linked to the organisation's strategic/operational plan, and provide information in respect of the progress made over the evaluation period and changes required in respect of delivery focus.
- New performance agreements should indicate how results could be improved in the forthcoming performance cycle.
- Performance outcomes should form the basis for staff development and developmental plans.
- Supervisors must provide constant feedback to employees to enable them to find ways of continuously improving their output.
- Corrective measures should be timeously undertaken should performance fall short of acceptable levels.

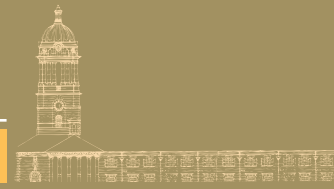
Performance management in the Public Service is guided by the Public Service Act of 1994, the Public Service Regulations, resolutions of the Public Service Coordinating Bargaining Council (PSCBC), Treasury Regulations and the *Batho Pele White Paper* and must be integrated with other systems and processes in the organisation.

The development of a generic scorecard for HoCs is therefore framed by these parameters and regulations.

6.1.2. Roles and responsibilities in relation to the Generic Performance Scorecard

Departments'/provinces' role:

- The Generic Performance Scorecard was developed as a tool for DGs to manage the performance of HoCs against a standard set of measurements as determined by the "experts".
- It forms part of the Performance Agreement to be signed by the DG and HoC and remains their functional responsibility.



HoCs' role:

- HoCs must help define their accountabilities.
- They must perform in line with the provisions of the scorecard.
- They must report on and provide required evidence of performance.

The GCIS' role:

- The GCIS' role remains that of providing strategic guidance and coordination between various departments, and ensuring that communication is coherent.
- In respect of the scorecard, the GCIS will provide a quality assurance or means of verification of performance role to DGs.

6.1.3. Content areas of the Generic Performance Scorecard

The key functional areas of a government communicator, as outlined in the *Government Communicators' Handbook*, the NCSF and the *10-Year Review*, are:

- communication strategy development
- implementation plan development and actual implementation
- campaign management
- media relations
- management and use of various communication channels
- development communication
- internal communication
- management of unplanned and urgent communication.

6.1.3.1. Key Result Area

A KRA refers to a broad area of performance, for which an incumbent will be held responsible. It must relate to the organisation's overall mission, as well as to why the specific job exists.

The first step in developing KRAs is to identify the key responsibilities of a position and then the common themes. These must then be refined into realisable statements. KRAs should be SMART, i.e:

S – simple, clear and understandable

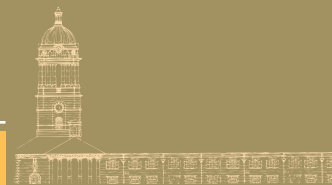
M – measurable in terms of quantity, quality, time or money

A – achievable and agreed on between the member and the supervisor

R – realistic, within the control of the member but still challenging

T – timely, assessable within the annual reporting cycle.

CHAPTER 4



Key result areas	Weighting
Government/departmental communication planning, strategy development and implementation	xx
Implementation and management of campaigns	xx
Effective management and use of appropriate communication channels	xx
Building and sustaining a positive reputation of the department/province	xx
Effective management of “unplanned” and urgent communication	xx
TOTAL	100%

6.1.3.2. Key Performance Indicator (KPI)

A KPI is one of the elements reflected in a performance scorecard and refers to tasks, projects or programmes to be undertaken by an employee for the performance year. KPIs are defined in respect of each KRA – and can be seen as measurable output thereof. Measures can be set in terms of time (by when), quantity (how much) and quality (improving rates of return, maximising investment and reducing cost). They must, as far as possible, be based on an end result and not effort. They must be within the control of the incumbent and must be objective and observable.

Quality requirements

Quality requirements provide detail around the standards or quality needed with regard to KPI delivery – i.e. what the KPI aims to achieve and against what standard performance it will be measured.

Weighting

The weighting refers to the score allocated to each KRA or KPI, which reflects its importance in relation to the other KRAs or KPIs on the individual scorecard. Total weightings must add up to 100%.

Target

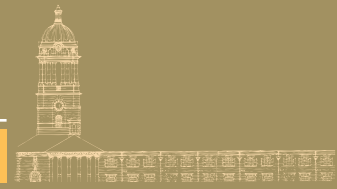
A target refers to the standard to which a KPI must be achieved (reflected in terms of measures such as time, quality and quantity).

Evidence

This refers to the proof that the incumbent provides in support of achieving a KPI.

Means of verification

This column refers to the required KRA’s sign-off or route of approval.



Enabling conditions

These represent the systems, support, resources, etc. that must be in place to ensure that performance against target is possible and meaningful. Enabling conditions could also be defined as additional resource requirements, in other words, the resources needed to achieve a particular activity/objective/output. These may be in the form of people, equipment or finances.

The following tips should be considered in determining key resource requirements:

- It is important to provide a motivation for any additional resource requirements.
- It is critical to identify who is responsible for acquiring additional resources and ensuring that the “enabling conditions” are in place. This needs to form part of that relevant individual’s performance scorecard.
- The additional resource requirements and enabling conditions should be developed collaboratively between the employee and supervisor.