As the chief directorate moved over the year towards full strength, in particular at management level, it has been coming to grips with the growing demands for its services from government departments and the GCIS itself.

A more integrated style of work has given added value to the various functions the chief directorate performs: providing an information service to the Government and public; keeping the GCIS informed of the environment within which the Government is communicating; keeping abreast of developments relating to communication, information and media, and contributing to policy development within those fields.

Highlights of this activity include the rapid growth of the Government on-line web site; progress towards the establishment of a Media Development Agency (MDA), and the contribution made through research and monitoring to a range of government communication initiatives.

The chief directorate is in a strong position to meet the challenges of the coming year, including the following:
- Reflecting the rapid developments in Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in our policy development work, including that relating to the MDA
- Making the best use of ICTs to expand public access to government information and help make a reality of one-stop government information
- Maintaining progress towards the establishment of the MDA
- Enhancing GCIS contribution to strategising for government communication, through monitoring and research, including research to evaluate government communication products and services.

A. Directorate: Information Resource Management
Subdirectorate: Communication Centre

The centre monitors news and current affairs in all media, in order to keep the Government timeously informed of events that receive media coverage and the reported perceptions of these events. The Communication Centre renders its services and products seven days a week. Its main clients are the Presidency, Ministries, Premiers, national departments and, to a limited extent, local government.

Activities

During the year, the Government was continually informed of media reports that deserved urgent attention and reaction, in an effort to contribute to a more accountable and effective government. Amongst the events of national and international significance monitored were the June general elections, the President's inauguration, Y2K perceptions and the challenge of HIV/AIDS.

A number of ad hoc media monitoring reports were issued, on the following topics,
- Safety and Security issues
- HIV/AIDS
- Constitutional issues
- Macroeconomics
- Corruption in the Public Service
- Media briefings hosted by the GCIS
- Y2K perceptions
- Defence Equipment Procurement Package
- Media coverage of the President
- Media coverage of the Deputy President
- The debate on racism in the media
- Issues of interest to the South African Revenue Service

These reports were accompanied by newspaper clippings and summaries and/or transcriptions of electronic news inserts, which proved to be very popular with clients. The Communication Centre also reported on media coverage in preparation for the State of the Nation Address by the President as well as reactions to the speech afterwards. From April a weekly report monitored the media coverage of the preparations for the elections - the report was issued to clients in Home Affairs, National Intelligence Agency (NIA), Safety and Security, within the GCIS, the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) and Constitutional Affairs. The frequency of the report increased in May as the elections drew closer. The media monitoring service provided support to events around the inauguration of the new President.

- Two regular reports were issued throughout the year. The Daily News and Actuality Report is a summary of television and radio news and actuality programmes of the past 24 hours as well as news on the Internet. The Diary of Government Activity, reflecting the activities of the Government, provincial premiers and other events of importance, was also issued daily.
- An average of 90 requests per month was handled for video and audiotape recordings and/or transcripts of electronic media coverage of important events.
- Requests for copies of newspaper reports on specific subjects were also received. Long-term requests for electronic coverage received during 1999 included, among others, coverage of the June elections and the President's inauguration, farm attacks and bus accidents.
- The Press Clipping Service monitored six daily and four weekly newspapers for issues relating to the line function of various government departments and Ministries. The service processed an average of 900 articles daily from print and electronic sources. Some of the articles were copied and distributed to more than 200 clients. Most clients received up to four reports per day (i.e. Daily News and Actuality Report, which has two editions). In addition to this, copies of newspaper reports of importance to the President, the National Assembly and four provincial governments were faxed to the relevant offices on a daily basis.

New initiatives

■ An investigation into the possibility of extending the scope of monitoring both internationally and locally is under way.

■ Monitoring of on-line and other Internet-based news services is becoming an increasingly significant part of the work of the centre.

■ Newspaper clippings are sent electronically to the Presidency. The possibility of doing this more widely is being investigated.

■ A drive to send the monitoring reports mainly via e-mail has brought considerable cost savings to the Communication Centre.

Subdirectorate:
Electronic Information Centre

The Electronic Information Resources Centre provides Internet services to the Government. This includes hosting, designing, and updating of web sites as well as giving professional advice on the development and maintenance of web sites.

Activities

During 1999 the work of the centre was mainly concerned with:

■ Managing, developing and updating the Government web site, *Government On-Line.*

■ Giving advice and support to government departments, provinces and other government institutions regarding Internet publishing. This included one or more of the following services, at no cost to the clients:

   ■ Hosting a web site on the GCIS Internet server.

   ■ Developing and/or maintaining web sites.

   ■ Advice regarding web site development

■ Managing, developing and updating the GCIS web site.

■ Collection of information and information resources for inclusion on the Government On-line and GCIS web sites.

■ Data input for the Government On-line web site.

The launch of *Government On-line*, on 28 January 1999, marked an important milestone in the development of the GCIS. *Government On-line* functions as a one-stop gateway where government information can be accessed from a single entry point. Development of the site included amongst other things, the following:

■ Approximately 370 government documents and 1 650 media releases/speeches from government role-players were added to *Government On-line* during 1999. At the end of 1999 the web site contained approximately 7 000 media releases/speeches from government role-players since 1994.

■ Improving the currency and comprehensiveness of the web site was a success. For example, the *Tender Bulletin* is now received electronically, which makes it possible to have it on the site already by 11:00 on Fridays. Documents and speeches are available on the site much quicker after release. This is mainly due to improved support from government departments in providing information to the GCIS, improved internal procedures as well as improved working relations with other GCIS sections.

■ The centre also began to identify and acquire government documents not yet on the government web site, and these are gradually being put on the site. The result will be that the government site will become a comprehensive source for government documents dating back to 1994.

■ An improved and more updated events section with links to important government and government-related links was developed and maintained. Pages were also developed for special events – including amongst, others things, the 1999 general elections, the presidential inauguration, President Thabo Mbeki's official visit to the United States of America (US) and the United Nations (UN) in relation to the US-SA '99 Business and Finance Forum, the Strategic Defence Procurement Package and the Anglo-Boer/South African War.

■ Inclusion of photographs of Ministers and Deputy Ministers.

■ Additional access methods to government contact information and biographical information on inaugural government role-players.

■ Live audio feeds of the presidential inaugural speech and the opening of Parliament.

■ The GCIS web server was moved to Cape Town during April 1999, where it is now functioning as part of the Openet structure.

■ User statistics were implemented from June 1999. This shows a general upward trend in the use of the site (the number of user sessions is understated due to the effects of the firewall and proxy server providing security for the site). The following table gives an indication of this.

User statistics for government site

	Hits	User sessions
June	116 121	1 100
July	183 803	1 004
August	112 163	1 141
September	125 076	1 273
October	141 459	1 452
November	164 707	1 583
December	201 491	1 127

Activities and development regarding the GCIS web site included:

■ Implementing the GCIS site on 28 January 1999.
■ Inclusion of GCIS vacancies simultaneously with advertisements in the media.
■ Inclusion of the Training and Development Database.
■ Inclusion of speeches made by the CEO and DCEO of the GCIS.
■ Development of a page for *BuaNews On-line*. This page is now being tested and will be going live during February 2000.
■ The inclusion of a search facility and a hit counter.
■ User statistics were implemented from June 1999, and show a general upwards trend in the use of the site. The following table gives an indication of this.

User statistics for GCIS site

	Hits	User sessions
July	8 526	762
August	13 264	790
September	12 320	782
October	Not available	
November	16 455	781
December	9 420	722

The support regarding web site development that was rendered to other government departments and institutions during 1999 is indicated in the following table:

National departments

Client	Hosting	Development	Updating
1. Department of Public Service and Administration	Yes	No	Yes (not an official web site)
2. Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology:	Yes	Search facility	Updated initially, but department took over the responsibility
3. Department of Foreign Affairs	Yes	Commenced with development. Site to be launched in 2000	Yes
4. Department of Labour	Hosted initially, but department took over responsibility	No	Updated initially, but department took over the responsibility
5. Department of Welfare	Yes	No	Yes
6. Department of Health	Yes	No	Yes
7. Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism	Yes	Yes	Yes
7.1. Sea Fisheries Institute	Yes	No	No
7.2. Marine and Coastal Management	Yes	No	No
8. Office of the Public Service Commission	Yes	No	Yes (not an official web site)
9. Department of Education	No	Advice	No

Provinces

Client	Hosting	Development	Updating
1.Eastern Cape Province	Yes	Partly	Yes
2.Northern Province	Will host information when site is developed	Provided advice and commenced with development. Site not yet launched	Will update after development
3.North-West Province	Hosting of speeches/ media releases	No	Speeches/media releases

Other government institutions

Client	Hosting	Development	Updating
1.Independent Complaints Directorate (ICD)	Yes	Yes	Yes
2.National Health Laboratory Services	Yes	Yes	Yes
3.State Library	Yes	No	Yes
4.Film and Publication Board	No	Yes	No
5.Secretariat for Safety and Security	Yes	No	Yes
6.Public Sector IT Policy Process	No	Advice	No

In addition to the above, the GCIS was approached by the following potential clients for support with web site development:

■ Project Management Services (PMS), State Expenditure, approached the GCIS for the development of the RDP site. A server for this site was provided to the GCIS by the PMS office. Development work will commence during January 2000.

■ Extensive liaison with the Government Printing Works (GPW) with regard to the electronic publication of the *Government Gazette* on the Government web site took place. Several tests were done to determine scanning quality. Discussions have also been held with the Department of Communications to help expedite the availability of the *Government Gazette* in an electronic format. Electronic availability of the *Government Gazette* will probably become a reality early in 2000

■ The Film and Publication Board, Department of Public Service and Administration, Office of the Public Service Commission and Eastern Cape Province approached the GCIS for redevelopment of their sites.

Challenges

■ Although the number of web clients has grown, a large number of government departments and parastatals do not have web sites. The challenge is to ensure that all government institutions have good Internet connections to promote dissemination of government information.

■ As the number of clients increases and the need to provide various web services to web clients grows, capacity will become crucial. The challenge will be to arrive at a situation where routine activities are taken up by web clients themselves, thereby freeing the GCIS web team to focus on critical web issues.

■ Internal arrangements to set up a Government Webmasters Forum which started in 1999 will need to be fast-tracked during the coming year to ensure better coordination of web activities within the Government.

■ Discussion around expanding the GCIS web site to include a variety of services currently not covered, needs to be taken forward during the forthcoming year. This way the GCIS site can become a marketing tool for GCIS services and products.

■ As the Government Information Centres (GICs) are established across the country, the GCIS web site can play a crucial role in ensuring that they have access to the information needed by the GICs and the communities they serve.

Subdirectorate: Information Centre

The Information Centre has the following main functions:

■ Rendering an enquiry service to internal as well as

external clients. Frequently Asked Questions are compiled from these queries and this assists GCIS to identify community information needs.

■ Managing and administering the organisation's library to provide an information service to GCIS personnel. This includes identifying and acquiring information/documents relevant to the GCIS Information Centre, and cataloguing, classifying and indexing information sources/documents for retrieval purposes.

■ Production and distribution of value-added products like the South African Government Directory, Directory of Contacts, etc. These information resources provide useful contact information about government role-players.

Activities

■ About 9 000 enquiries were received during the year.
■ The following directories were updated and distributed to clients:
  ■ Directory of Government Contacts
  ■ SA Government Directory
  ■ Media Directory
  ■ Guide to South African Government Departments
  ■ Profile of South African Government Role-players Directory of Contacts.
■ The library subscribes to 16 daily and weekly newspaper titles and 44 journals which are distributed to internal clients. A stocktaking was conducted to identify gaps within the collection, and a thesaurus was compiled and implemented. Books bought were mostly on communication, socio-political aspects, management and public relations. The purchase was done partly on the selection/input made by clients and partly on library staff's selection.

B. Directorate: Policy

The directorate was established with the appointment of a director in July 1999, and the filling of seven of its eight posts by January 2000. This has considerably enhanced its capacity to fulfil its mandate of policy development and monitoring, within the fields of media, communica-

tion and information policy in particular, and government policy in general.

Activities

1. Establishing a Media Development Agency (MDA)

The Cabinet, following a Comtask recommendation, has charged the GCIS with the responsibility of setting up an independent agency that will enhance media development and diversity in South Africa. The aim is to address the imbalance that still persists regarding the ownership and control of media enterprises, and access to the media by as full a range of interests and opinion as possible.

It is envisaged that the agency will pursue these objectives through support for media enterprises that address the information needs of hitherto marginalised sections of society, and engage on an ongoing basis with key stakeholders around issues of media development and diversity.

The process towards establishing an MDA involves extensive research and wide consultation concerning amongst other things its mandate, legal status, sources of funding and criteria for support. Key stakeholders include current media funders, regulators including the independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA), South African Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (Satra), the Human Rights Commission, Competitions Commission, Universal Service Agency, National Community Media Forum, media houses which form part of Print Media SA, SA National Editors Forum, National Association of Broadcasters and media trade unions.

Steps along the path towards the establishment of the MDA include the following:

■ Formulation of a Discussion Document, through wide consultation within and outside the Government, which identifies the key issues that need to be addressed in order to lay the basis for the establishment of an MDA.
■ Achievement of consensus within the Government,

through an Interdepartmental Committee, around the broad principles underlying the MDA.
■ Establishment of significant lines of communication with key stakeholders within the media and communications industry, including regulators.
■ Formation of an Interim Media Funders Forum (IMFF) to achieve coherence in media funding until the MDA is established.
■ Completion of a comprehensive database of ownership and control within the mass media in South Africa.
■ Completion of a study of all legislation that may have an impact on the MDA.

2. Monitoring government policy

The directorate helps keep the GCIS informed of the development and implementation of government policy from a communications perspective. It works closely with the Policy Coordination and Advisory Services (PCAS) in the Office of the Presidency.

As part of this work the directorate was involved in the collation of information from government departments in preparation for the President's State of the Nation Address to Parliament in February.

Developments around the Open Democracy Bill (now Promotion of Access to Information Act) and the Administrative Justice Bill were monitored for their implications for the work of the GCIS.

3. Participation in and monitoring of policy processes which impact on the media, communications and information environment

The directorate participates in and monitors policy initiatives that have a bearing on the media, communications and information environment. During the past year this has included participation in the following processes:

■ e-commerce Policy process, led by the Department of Communications.
■ Public Sector IT Policy process, led by the Department

of Public Service Administration.
- The SA IT Industrial Strategy Project, led by the Department of Trade and Industry.

Developments within the broadcast and telecommunications industry have also been monitored.

Key challenges
- Complete research for the MDA, including a comparative analysis of support mechanisms around the world and a financial model for the MDA(including sources of funding, and criteria for offering support).
- Achieve consensus amongst all stakeholders and public support on the establishment of the MDA.
- Submit legislation to Parliament on the establishment of the MDA.
- Establish a system for monitoring developments within the media, communications and information environment, nationally and globally.
- Continued participation in the policy process that affects the media, communications and information environment.
- Working with other government departments to promote coherence in the Government's policies concerning media, communications and information.

C. Directorate: Research

The directorate's activities are mainly in support of the determination of the information and communication needs of the Government and the public.

Both quantitative and qualitative research was conducted. In the case of studies that were not extensive, quantitative research was conducted by personnel of the directorate. Qualitative and extensive quantitative studies were contracted out.

Activities
The main research activities included determination of information and development needs among the population country-wide, the conducting of communication/climate and staff/skills audits, readership studies, taking part in multi-purpose surveys, the evaluation of products/services/events/courses, the compilation of demographic analyses, rendering of professional research advice, the establishment of a questionnaire database and the forming of partnerships with the private sector and other government role-players in the conducting of extensive research.

Highlights of 1999 include the following (client in brackets, where not GCIS):

1. Assessing the communication environment for government communication initiatives and campaigns
- Including relevant questions in syndicated surveys on Y2K (Provincial & Local Government); HIV/AIDS (Health); government performance (published by HSRC)
- Pre-testing advertisements (for radio and television) re the process of registration before the 1999 elections
- Determining public perceptions of the Department of Defence (still in progress) (Department of Defence)
- Determination of perceptions regarding the payment of witness fees (Department of Justice)
- Following a request to the GCIS by the Inter-Ministerial Committee on HIV/AIDS to assist in the development of a renewed communication campaign, the directorate, as part of an extensive research process, compiled a report on available communication-related research; included relevant questions in a syndicated survey and started working on two qualitative research projects
- Assessing the communication environment for the State of the Nation Address.

2. Determining information and communication needs (outside the GCIS)
- Conducting an extensive, qualitative survey country-wide to identify the need for government information amongst the South African population
- Assistance with a survey conducted internationally to determine international perceptions of South Africa to serve as input in planning for the international marketing campaign
- An audit regarding the competencies and training needs of government communicators at national, provincial and local government level was conducted on request of the Chief Director: National Training Board.

3. Research contributing to GCIS internal processes
- An evaluation of GCIS Open Days organised by the Directorate: Project Management
- A skills/competency audit amongst the GCIS staff
- Evaluation of the GCIS *Bosberaad*
- Evaluation of the Government Communicators Consultative Conference III
- Evaluation of a course in Project Management
- Evaluating a conference in the Western Cape on Multi-purpose Community Centres (MPCCs)
- Documentary research on MPCCs.

4. Communication and/or climate audits
Internal communication audits and/or climate audits were conducted on behalf of the following clients:
- GCIS
- Office of the Premier, Northern Province.

Challenges
- To develop and implement appropriate instruments and processes to assess and evaluate on an ongoing basis the impact of the work of the GCIS
- To establish a vehicle for the efficient and cost-effective bulk-buying of research for the Government instead of the current piecemeal purchasing
- To expand involvement and establishment of research partnerships
- To further develop the ability of the directorate to provide a professional and efficient research service.

information you can use

communication service agency communication service agency communication service agency

corporate services

c o r p o r a t e   s e r v i c e s

government & media liaison

policy & research policy & research policy & research

GCIS reception is a hive of activity.

c o r p o r a t e   s e r v i c e s

n a t i o n a l   t r a i n i n g   b o a r d

p r o v i n c i a l   &   l o c a l   l i a i s o n

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GCIS photocopy services.

The GCIS produces video material on behalf of various government departments.

Logistics form an integral part of the Directorate: Financial Management.