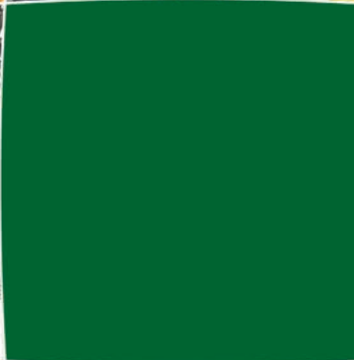# GOVERNMENT
COMMUNICATION POLICY

Approved by Cabinet : 22 August 2018

**government
communications**

Department:
Government Communication and Information System
**REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

NDP
2030

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACRONYMS

CDWs	Community Development Workers
CI	Corporate Identity
CoGTA	Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs
CSA	Communication Service Agency
DG	Director General
DPLG	Department of Provincial and Local Government
DPME	Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation
DPSA	Department of Public Service Administration
FOHAD	Forum for the Heads of Department
FOSAD	Forum of South African DGs
GCIS	Government Communication and Information System
HOC	Head of Communication
HoD	Head of Department
IMC	Inter-Ministerial Committee
IGCF	Intergovernmental Communicators 'Forum
Icasa	Independent Communications Authority of South Africa
ICD	Internal Communications Division
IEC	Independent Electoral Commission
IRFA	Intergovernmental Relations Framework Act
KPAs	Key Performance Areas
LCF	Local Communicators 'Forum
MLO	Media Liaison Officer
MMC	Members of Mayoral Committee
MPAT	Management Performance Assessment Tool
MTSF	Medium Term Strategic Framework
NatJOC	National Joint Operations Centre
NCSF	National Communication Strategy Framework
NDP	National Development Plan
NGCF	National Government Communicators Forum
NGO	Non Governmental Organisations
NIICF	Integrated Internal Communicators Forum
PAIA	Promotion of Access to Information Act
PGCF	Provincial Government Communicators's Forums
PICF	Provincial Internal Communicators Forum
PoA	Programme of Action
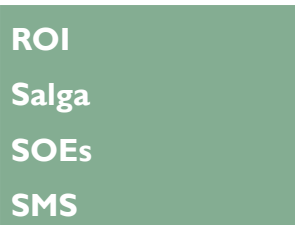
ROI	Return on Investment
Salga	South African Local Government Association
SOEs	State Owned Enterprises
SMS	Short Message Service

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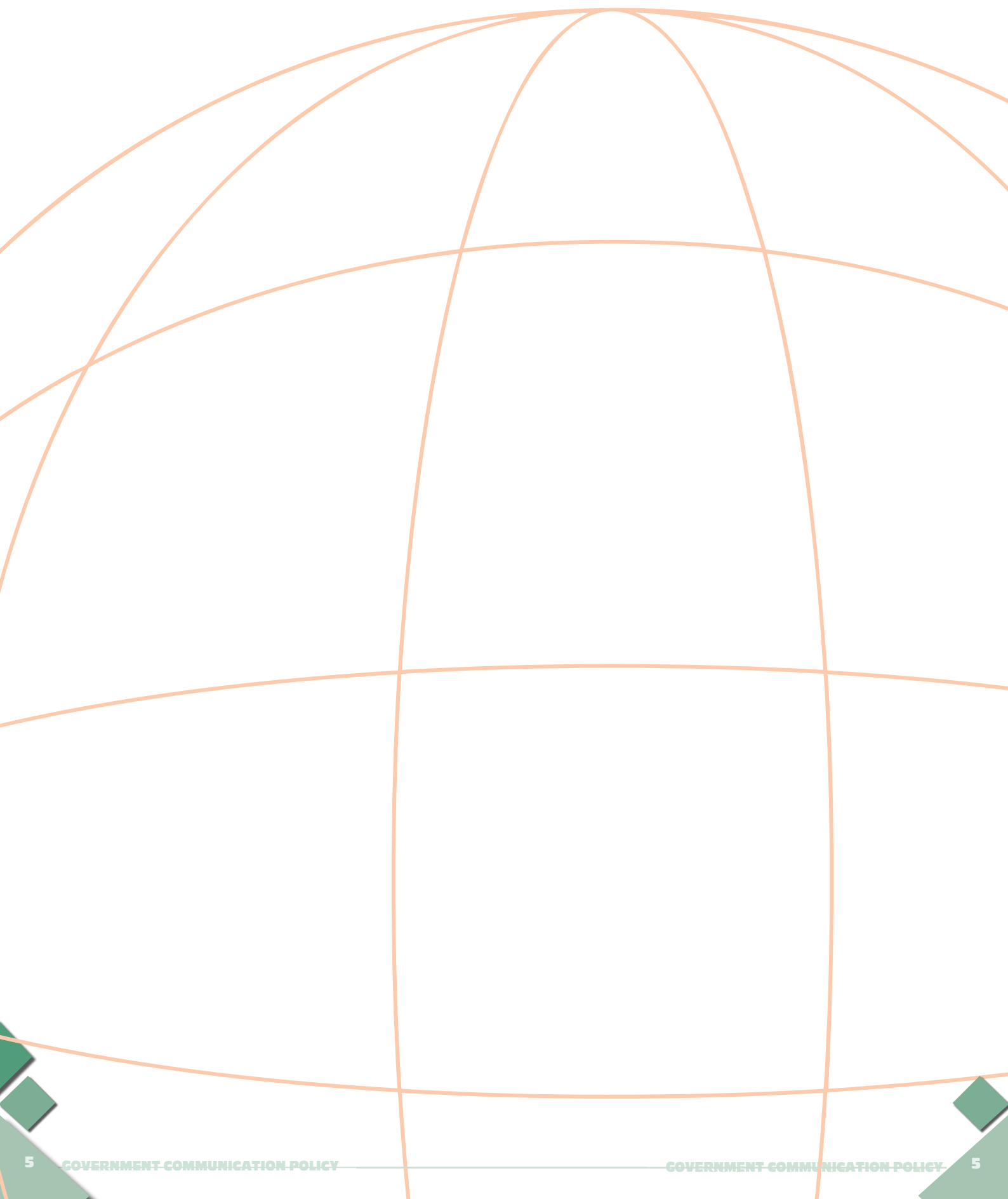
POLICY ON COMMUNICATION FOR SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS

1.1 INTRODUCTION

1.1.1 In 1994, South Africans elected a democratic government with a mandate to build a prosperous country where the basic needs of all its people would be catered for, human dignity restored and all South Africans could feel they belong. To do this, government adopted a developmental approach – to rule in partnership with all South African citizens.

1.1.2 The government immediately set out developing policies and programmes to redress the inequalities in the country, broaden access to services, build effective institutions and open up opportunities for all citizens to have access to jobs and employment. This required planning and coordination – but especially communication – regarding with whom government had to consult and to whom government had to listen, and furthermore involved considering the needs and interests of the public and receiving feedback as part of this developmental process.

1.1.3 Communication remains key to effective and efficient government even today (for implementation of policy, programmes, services and projects.)

Communication is a key strategic service – to ensure that information is widely accessible within the public space, to engage citizens in conversation around critical issues and to empower citizens to participate in not only shaping government policies but also in taking up opportunities that affect their lives.

1.1.4 Effective communication can also contribute positively
to government endeavours – leading to good governance, improved internal staff and external citizen/stakeholder morale, and contributing towards meeting government's aims and objectives. It further builds public trust and confidence in the integrity of government and can be used to challenge any negative perceptions that might exist in the public space.

1.1.5 The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act 108 of 1996) provides the framework for communication within the South African environment and regards freedom of expression and the public's right to information as fundamental rights.

1.1.6 Government communication is driven by democratic principles of openness and participation, and is guided by the basic principles of:
• transparency
• accountability
• consultation

1.1.7 The Government Communication and Information System (GCIS), as the custodian of government communications, has drafted this Communication Policy to strengthen government communications so as to deliver on its mandate. This is in line with a developmental communication approach adopted by government.

1.2 DEFINING DEVELOPMENTAL COMMUNICATION

1.2.1 Development communication refers to the use of communication to facilitate social and economic change. Nora Quebral defined development communication as:

"The art and science of human communication linked to a society's planned transformation from a state of poverty to one of dynamic socio-economic

growth that makes for greater equity and the target unfolding of individual potential." (Quebral, 2001)

1.2.2 Development communication is founded on the principle that citizens/the community should participate actively in communication activities that directly impact their lives. The approach is educational not instructional – in this instance it is government

that must interact and provide the public with socio-economic and developmental information so that they are able to make sound judgements about their lives/livelihoods. In these interactions, government must listen to citizens, answer their queries and give feedback about progress so as to encourage positive change within communities.

1.2.3   Development communication is not a top-down but rather a horizontal process and is used to help people make life choices. Messages are not manipulated, nor are they propaganda; they should rather be viewed by citizens as a genuine attempt to solicit responses from communities so that a development partnership can be forged.

1.2.4   Development communicators – by using a range of communication tools – must work to educate and create opportunities that will uplift the quality of life of the South African public – not only socially, but also economically and culturally.

1.3   DEVELOPMENTAL COMMUNICATORS APPROACH

1.3.1   The South African government has adopted a developmental approach to communication and the fundamental values of democracy, openness and participation apply. As communicators working within this development communication paradigm, you must:

i.   provide the public with timely, accurate and clear information about government policies, programmes, plans, services and initiatives in a non-partisan way, thus making it accountable to the public it serves;
ii.   make information widely accessible to all South Africans with diverse needs, including where possible and within available resources, in a language of their choice and in Braille;
iii. educate and transform society, build towards social cohesiveness and empower people to participate in shaping the policies of government;
iv.   enhance access to information to enable the public to participate in the country's transformation and in bettering their lives;
v.   promote a dialogue between citizens and government through debate and discussion, and provide feedback mechanisms allowing citizens to participate in shaping government policies, programmes and projects
vi.   promote the Renaissance of Africa, including the regional integration and implementation of people-centred development programmes;
vii. identify priorities and communicate these to communities as well as address the implementation of the National Development Plan (NDP) and Programme of Action (PoA);
viii. establish partnerships with a range of stakeholders, including the private sector, academia, research institutions and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), so as to broaden audience reach.

1.4   POLICY VERSUS STRATEGY

1.4.1   Policy is a set of rules that guide decision-making in any organisation and provide the blueprint for how an organisation will operate. A policy is developed to ensure that processes, procedures and deliverables are consistent across an organisation.

1.4.2   Strategy on the other hand determines the path and/or the actions that must be taken for the organisation to be able to reach its goals. A number of different strategies can be employed to achieve organisational goals.

1.4.3   This Communication Policy sets out the rules, processes and procedures on how communication will operate within government departments and across the three spheres – national, provincial and local. This Communication Policy will serve as the framework when developing a communication strategy for government. Government's communication strategy is drafted every five years and updated once a year.

1.5 POLICY AIM

1.5.1 To ensure that all communicators operate from a developmental communication paradigm.

1.5.2 To strengthen a government communication system that enables citizens and the international community to participate in and take up opportunities from government policies and programmes.

1.5.3 To ensure that communication at all spheres of government is:
i. well-integrated, coherent, coordinated and consistent;
ii. reliable, ethical, open, encourages participation, transformative, professional, credible, effectively managed, impactful and meets the needs of all citizens.

1.5.4 To build a citizen-centred and client-focused communication system.

1.5.5 To ensure that communication caters for all official languages, depending on the area.

1.5.6 To coordinate communication so that all government departments and agencies work collaboratively to provide clear and effective communication to citizens.

1.5.7 To prescribe communication policy, provide for the regulations, processes and procedures, and assign responsibilities within and across government spheres so as to ensure that communication objectives are achieved.

1.5.8 To advocate for communication as a strategic function that is allocated the required resources to be able to fulfil its aims and objectives.

1.5.9 To ensure efficient use of the existing government communications infrastructure.

1.5.10 To create an effective feedback mechanism between government and its citizenry.

1.6 USE OF OFFICIAL LANGUAGES IN COMMUNICATION

1.6.1 Section 6 of the Constitution guarantees equal status to the 11 official languages: Afrikaans, English, isiNdebele, isiXhosa, isiZulu, Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, SiSwati; Tshivenda and Xitsonga. There is also recognition of the need to provide for the communication needs of the hearing and visually impaired.

1.6.2 Government communicators must provide the public with access to information that is timely, accurate and accessible. As South Africa is a multicultural country with a rich linguistic diversity, use of language must be considered for all communication implementation activities.

1.6.3 The Use of Official Languages Act, 2012 (Act 12 of 2012) provides the framework when determining language use in communication activities. All departments must consider the usage, practicality, resources, regional circumstances and the balance of the needs and preferences of the public in deciding on the official language/s to use when communicating.

1.7   APPLICATION AND AUTHORITY

1.7.1   This Communication Policy applies to all three spheres of government (national, provincial and local), including government agencies and entities.

1.7.2   While the document aims to be inclusive of all spheres of government, this has not always been possible. In instances where the Communication Policy requires adaption to provincial and local conditions, these adaptations must be made to suit the immediate communication environment and be aligned to the official Communication Policy. Provincial principals will be given the powers to sign off on the adapted Communication Policy.

1.7.3   The policy is binding on all government communicators.

1.7.4   The Head of Communication (HoC) at each sphere of government must:
i.   ensure that communicators are aware of the policy;
ii.   provide oversight of implementation of the policy;
iii.   account to the political principals and accounting officers on progress with implementation
iv.   participate in the monitoring and evaluation activities in respect of the policy.

1.8   COMPLIANCE/NON-COMPLIANCE

1.8.1   Every communication official is required to act in accordance with this policy in his/her respective area of responsibility. HoCs operating at national, provincial or local level are responsible for bringing the content of this policy to the attention of officials while political principals and accounting officers must ensure that these officials abide by the policy.

1.8.2   Compliance will be subject to both an internal and external audit. This will be managed internally through a self-assessment tool and standard performance management systems of each government entity.
1.8.3   GCIS will be responsible for the annual monitoring of national/provincial and local government communication performance; and for a five-year review of impact and effectiveness of the Communication Policy.

1.8.4   GCIS will work with the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME) to develop communication performance standards that will form part of the Management Performance Assessment Tool (MPAT). GCIS will also moderate this self-assessment tool.

1.9   FUNDING COMMUNICATION
(THE COMMUNICATIONS BUDGET)

1.9.1   Adequate resources – 1% to 5% of the institutional budget – must be allocated to the communication function, based on the communication's strategic plan and the size of the institution. This budget must be ring-fenced.

1.9.2   In addition to other standard items, the communication's budget should include funding for:
i.   adequate staff to fulfil the strategic communications function
ii.   training
iii.   the internal communication function.

2.

CONTEXTUAL FRAMEWORK
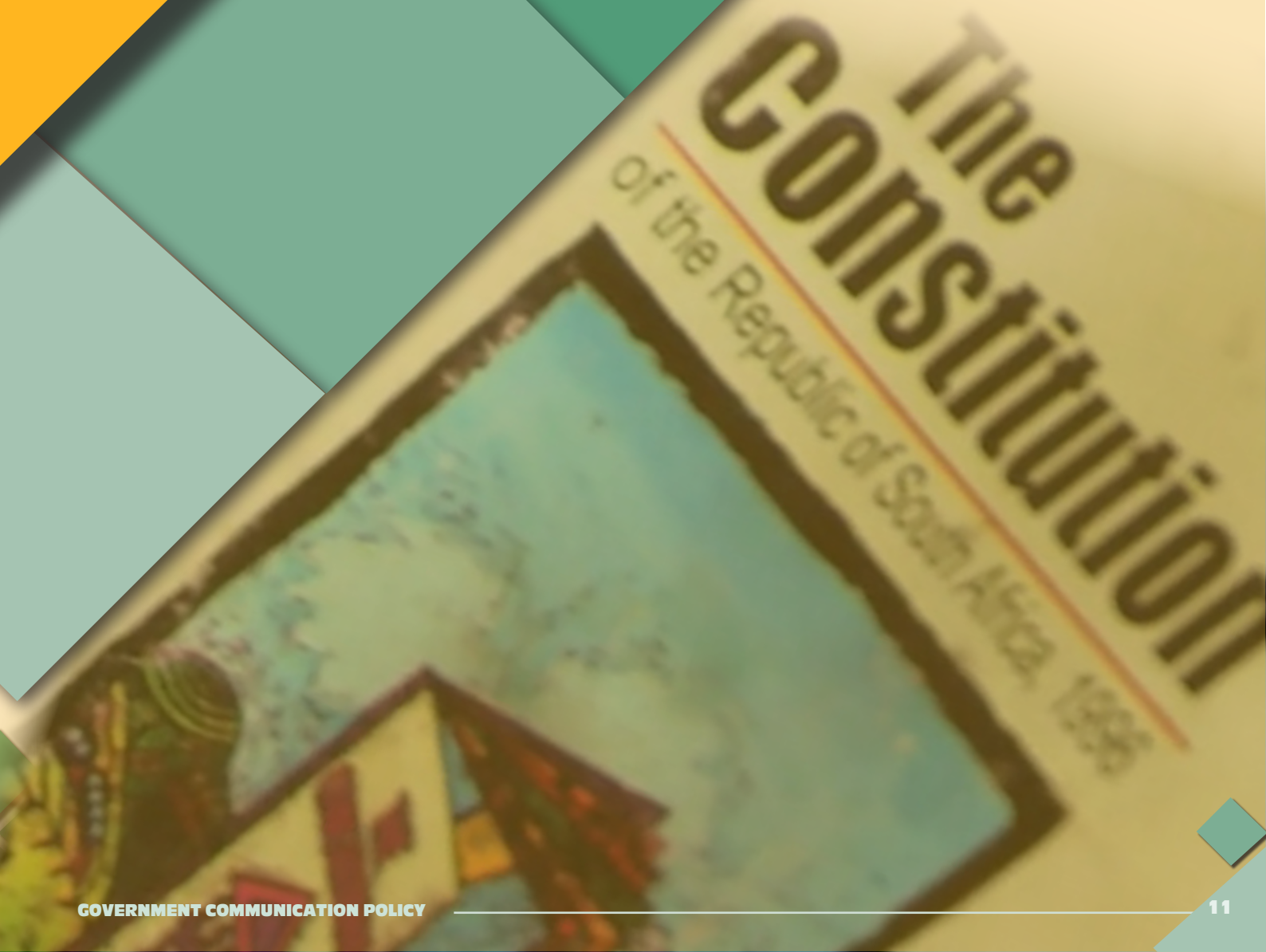
2.1 FRAMING DOCUMENTS

2.1.1 The Comtask Report

The Comtask Report of 1996 established a set of communication principles that included the requirement for freedom of and access to information as reflected in the Constitution. Cabinet approved the Comtask Report and its recommendations, namely that:

i. a Government Communication and Information System (GCIS) be established to coordinate all government communications – the Head of GCIS would be responsible for reporting to The Presidency;

ii. each ministry and the different spheres of government set up a professional communications unit to deliver the over-arching communication strategy;

iii. a centralised Communication Service Agency (CSA) be established to coordinate the bulk-buying of media, conduct research into media needs and trends, and assist in developing content;

iv. development communication be adopted as a framework to empower citizens and promote a two-way flow of information as a key principle;

v. there be direct and unmediated communication with all South Africans ;

vi. the ongoing development and coordination of training in government communication be established as a priority.

There have been two reviews of Comtask – in 2008 and 2014. While there is recognition that many advances have been made, the principles and approach that was adopted remain the same.

2.1.2 The Constitution

i. The Constitution is the supreme law of the Republic of South Africa and all the obligations that it sets out need to be adhered to. The Constitution envisages a united, democratic, non-racial, non-sexist and prosperous nation that is anchored on the respect for human rights and non-discrimination. All citizens are considered equal before the law, can freely associate and have the right to human dignity.

ii. In addition, the Bill of Rights incorporates the following clauses:

a. Freedom of expression, which includes the following: freedom of the press and other media; freedom to receive and impart information and ideas; and freedom of artistic creativity and academic freedom. This freedom is not absolute, though, and does not apply in instances where people are propagating war, violence or hatred based on race, gender, ethnicity or religion.

b. Access to information that is held by the state or another person and is required for the exercise and protection of any right.

2.1.3 National Development Plan

i. Government adopted the NDP as a long-term plan to reduce unemployment, poverty and inequality in South Africa by 2030. The successful achievement of the plan requires that citizens become active participants in development, that the capacity of the state is built and that leadership and partnerships are promoted.

ii. The NDP identified a growing distance between citizens and government that needs to be reduced if South Africa is to achieve its developmental goals. Government therefore needs to actively communicate and share information with citizens.

2.1.4 Medium Term Strategic Framework

i. The Medium Term Strategic Framework (MTSF) contains a comprehensive plan for a five-year period and is approved by Cabinet. This framework focuses on government priorities, sets targets for these and considers deadline dates and budgets. The MTSF is the principal guide for the planning and allocation of resources across all spheres of government.

ii. The MTSF has 14 priority outcomes that cover those focus areas as presented in the NDP. These are: quality basic education; improving health outcomes; reducing crime; creating jobs; developing the skills and infrastructure required by the economy; rural development; sustainable human settlements; effective and efficient local government and public service; the environment; international relations; social development; and social cohesion and nation-building.

iii. By law, all national and provincial departments as well as municipalities have to produce five-year strategic and annual performance plans and report against these. The MSTF is the mechanism through which all five-year strategic and annual performance plans of the three spheres of government are aligned to the NDP.

2.1.5 National Communication Strategy Framework

i. The National Communication Strategy Framework (NCSF) is informed by the MTSF and therefore ultimately by the the NDP. The NCSF outlines a communications vision and approach for government. The NCSF outlines communication tactics for the period that include: consideration of the role of GCIS; how to strengthen intergovernmental communication; strengthening communication at provincial and local level; and building partnerships. A communication plan to support these tactics is advanced.

2.1.6 Cabinet Memos

Cab Memo: 8 of 1997

i. Outlines the establishment of the GCIS following the Comtask Report. GCIS is to operate as the nerve centre of strategy, policy development, planning, research and administration of the government-wide communication system

ii. Establishes the function of the HoCs and makes them responsible for leading communication across the ministry and departmen at a chief director level. The HoC is to participate in regular meetings with the director-general (DG) of the GCIS to coordinate communications throughout government.

Cab Memo: 8 of 1998

i. Emphasises the need to have relevant communications structures and establishes communication coordinating forums, (e.g. HoC meetings, clusters).

ii. Emphasises the importance of having communication strategies informed by the NCSF.

iii. Indicates that the level of the HoC will depend on the skills in the market. The HoC must attend strategic meetings of government.

Cab Memo: 16 of 2000

i. Concentrates on progress since 1998 and is critical of some departments that do not have the correct structures in place.

ii. Emphasises that communication should be recognised as a strategic function and communication strategies be submitted to GCIS.

iii. Endorses izimbizo as public participation delivery points.

iv. Emphasises key performance areas (KPAs) for HoCs.

2.1.7 The Intergovernmental Relations Framework Act (IRFA), 2005 (Act 13 of 2005)

IRFA of 2005 formalises the relationship between the three spheres of government. The key role of the Act is to enhance intergovernmental coordination and cooperation between national, provincial and local government as well as all organs of state in support of the principle of corporate governance, as set out in Chapter 3 of the Constitution. This coordination will facilitate implementation of policy and legislation, enable the government to work coherently, enhance the effective provision of services, the monitoring of policy and legislation, and realisation of national priorities.

The Act also presents mechanisms and procedures to facilitate settlement of intergovernmental disputes, should they arise.

3.

GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATION: ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES AND STRUCTURES

3.1 INTRODUCTION

3.1.1 Communications planning must be integrated into strategic departmental planning at management level. This means that when institutions are holding their planning meetings, communicators must be included.

3.1.2 Communication is a professional function and should not be subject to the volatility that is a feature of the political environment. Instead, communication (and the communicator's role) should be seen as permanent, consistent and stable.

3.1.3 Communication units must be established at national and provincial government, as well as at district and metro councils. These should comprise at minimum an HoC and at least three additional communicators who will be responsible for the media relations and community liaison functions.

3.1.4 At least one communicator must be employed to manage the communication function at local municipal level.

3.1.5 Communicators must participate in:
i. all strategic decision-making bodies at the political/administrative interface and in those communication structures that have been set up internally to realise the communication objectives of government;
ii. those structures that integrate and coordinate government communication activities across the three spheres in support of government's service delivery objectives.

3.1.6 Costed communication plans must be signed off by the appropriate authorities within a government institution.

3.2 POLITICAL PRINCIPALS: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

3.2.1 Includes the President, Ministers, Premiers, Mayors and councillors who as key government communicators must:
i. take responsibility for government communication;
ii. account to the public on government policy, aims and objectives; and report back on deliverables;
iii. interact with the public to solicit views and input into government activities;
iv. appoint the media liaison officer (MLO);
v. not contradict each other in public
vi. attend training to familiarise themselves with how to deal with the meda. A refresher course must be done at least once a year.

3.2.2 The Minister responsible for government communications provides political direction to government communicators.

3.2.3 The role of the Miniser extends to transversal communication programmes of government.

3.2.4 Cabinet/ Council must decide on the necessary sanction against political principals who fail to adhere to the Policy.

3.3 ACCOUNTING OFFICERS: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

3.3.1 Includes DGs, heads of department (HoDs) and municipal managers.

3.3.2 The accounting officers are government messengers and their performance agreements must include communication deliverables. The accounting officer must:

i. appoint the HoC who will be responsible for ensuring that all other communication functions are adequately staffed;
ii. ensure that there is an adequate budget for communication activities;
iii. advocate for communication to be recognised as a strategic function;

iv. ensure communication strategies are approved and implemented;
v. ensure that the HoC has the adequate skills and knowledge for the post;
vi. provide oversight to the HoC function;
vii. assist with the delivery of information to specific forums and the general public when called upon to do so.

3.4 GOVERNMENT (CABINET)/MAYORAL COUNCILS: SPOKESPERSONS' ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

3.4.1 The political principal and accounting officer at all government spheres must appoint a spokesperson who will be responsible for articulating, promoting and defending the decisions of the national/provincial Cabinet and the mayoral council.

3.4.2 These government/council spokespersons must:
i. convey the decisions of the highest decision-making authority of the Executive at a particular sphere, be this the national/provincial cabinets or mayoral council; this can be done with the support of the GCIS and its services.

ii. chair the post-Cabinet/council media briefings and liaise with all relevant parties to ensure that issues that might have arisen in the environment are clearly articulated;
iii. consult with cluster coordinators/ward councillors and inform Cabinet/council of current issues in the environment that require intervention;
iv. lead the communication of an inter-ministerial committee (IMC) established by Cabinet and transversal or crisis communication campaigns;
v. provide advice and make recommendations on communications to the political principals and accounting officers.

3.5 GOVERNMENT (CABINET)/COUNCIL SPOKESPERSON SUPPORT TEAM

3.5.1 Cabinet/council spokespersons should be supported by a professional and dedicated team of professionals to:
i. advise on what should be included in the Cabinet/council statement;
ii. assist in the drawing up of the Cabinet/council statement;
iii. summarise key documents for consideration by Cabinet/council;

iv. identify for communication issues arising in the environment that will require deliberation by Cabinet/council;

3.5.2 Allocation of professional staff to this function will be dependent on the size of the government institution and the available resources.

3.6 THE HOC: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

3.6.1 THE HOC: STRUCTURES AND AUTHORITY

i. The HoC is the most senior communication official in a department, province or local municipality. He/she straddles the communication function across the political and administrative entities and is accountable/responsible for the overall communications function.
ii. The HoC reports to the DG or the most senior

government official at national, provincial or district level (e.g. HoD, municipal manager).
iii. The MLO reports to the HoC.
iv. The HoC must be included in the executive structures, be that at national, provincial or local level. Inclusion in the executive structures would enable the HoC to better articulate government policy, ensure that policy and programmes are communicated effectively, to present current affairs and to advise on the communication

implications of deliberations. Examples of these structures include:
  a. nationally: Forum of South African DGs (FOSAD), cluster committees, DG clusters
  b. provincially: Cabinet
  c. district/metro/local level: mayoral committee, council, mayoral executive committee
v. The HoC must take the lead in integrated communication structures to ensure proper coordination and integration of communication policies and programmes throughout government.

3.6.2 THE HOC: FUNCTIONS AND ROLES

The HoC needs to, among other things:
i. deliver an integrated communication strategy and plan in line with the NCSF and according to the deadlines as outlined in the Government Communicators' Handbook;
ii. oversee the implementation of the integrated communication strategy and plan;
iii. work with the MLO or, in instances where provincial departments have no MLO, the personal assistant to the MEC to develop and implement strategies that will enhance the reputation of the political principals and the institution;
iv. provide advice and make recommendations on communications to the political principals and accounting officers;
v. manage the coordination and implementation of the communication response to unplanned and urgent communication, including a crisis;

vi. provide overall management of the communications team to support the implementation of effective communications, including but not limited to media engagement, all communication platforms, campaigns, marketing and PR functions, as well as research and analysis to measure the impact of communications;
vii. ensure that the institution is informed and fully aware of the Communication Policy and that communicators are aware of their roles and responsibilities;
viii. oversee the ongoing training and capacity-building of communicators, including their induction;
ix. participate actively in all strategic meetings of the organisation;
x. act as the custodian of all content emanating from the institution and where the GCIS is called upon to assist, present the content that is to be used for communication;
xi. sign a performance agreement that reflects the communication responsibilities as outlined in the GCIS Generic Performance Scorecard for HoCs;
xii. manage and measure the performance of all communicators – especially the delivery of communication strategic plans and the fulfilment of media objectives;
xiii. oversee the assessment of annual communication strategic plans and make adjustments where necessary;
xiv. monitor communication deliverables and report on progress and impact.

3.7 THE MLO: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

3.7.1 The MLO reports to the Ministry and needs to, among other things:
i. enhance the public image of the political principal and manage media liaison for the office;
ii. strengthen relationships with the media leading to increased profiling of the political principal;
iii. contribute to the development of an integrated communication strategy and plan, particularly through developing the political principal's media engagement strategy and plan;
iv. collaborate with the HoC to ensure that all communication objectives are achieved, the Communication Policy is implemented and all communication protocols are observed;
v. provide communication advice and support to the minister/premier/MECs and mayors, and act as the minister/premier/MEC or mayoral spokesperson;
vi. oversee the development of communications material including press releases, social media and website copy as well as briefing notes in support of the politician's outreach activities;
vii. monitor print, broadcast and online media reports so as to be able to respond effectively to issues within the communication environment.

3.8 COMMUNICATION STRUCTURES: THE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF GCIS

3.8.1 GCIS is the custodian of government's communication and must ensure that all spheres, agencies and entities adhere to the principles, policies and standards established for an effective communication system. The roles of GCIS are:

i. advocate within and across government for communication to be recognised as a strategic function, central to service delivery;

ii. lead, drive and coordinate government communication across all spheres of government;

iii. determine policy and establish norms and standards for communication best practice, e.g. the Government Communicators' Handbook, Editorial Style Guide

iv. develop the NCSF to which entities must align;

v. determine and drive coherent government messaging;

vi. guide national/provincial and local government on the minimum communication structures to be established across all spheres;

vii. Coordinate the induction for political principals;

viii. monitor progress within the entire government communication system, including the implementation of the overarching government communication strategy;

ix. submit a Current Affairs Report which reflects the communication environment to national and provincial cabinets, respectively. This should be done fortnightly and/or when these cabinets meet;

x. The Current Affairs Report must bring to the attention of Cabinet those communication issues that require advice and/or a decision;

xi. Relevant departments that have communication issues must submit these items and/or the key messages to GCIS timeously. The approved key messages must be attached as an addendum to the Current Affairs document;

xii. deal with the media queiries relating to the Cabinet brieifings;

xiii. manage centralised media bulk buying so as to ensure that government realises benefits from economies of scale;

xiv. assist national departments with a range of services which include media buying, marketing and distribution, copywriting and editing, translations, media liaison, media monitoring and communication research, outreach, digital and social media, and website services;

xv. manage, communicate and uphold the corporate identity (CI) and branding requirements of government;

xvi. uphold government's reputation across all spheres and intervene where necessary;

xvii. set up a performance management system that will be used across government to measure the performance of HoC, senior management and communicators;

xviii. provide departments/provinces/municipalities with a set of communication indicators that can be used to measure performance;

xix. The DG of GCIS will issue guidelines for communictions during elections.

3.9 COMMUNICATION STRUCTURES: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES: COMMUNICATION CLUSTERS

3.9.1 The DG of GCIS forms part of Fosad and must present communication research and report on the implementation of the communication plans and any other issue that needs direction from the Directors General

3.9.2 Communication clusters comprise the HoC from each national/provincial line department.

3.9.3 The current five communication clusters mirror the FOSAD clusters and Cabinet committees, and are made up of departments whose work is seen as complementary. These clusters are: Governance and Administration; Social Protection, Community and Human Development; Justice, Crime Prevention and Security; Economic Sector, Employment and Infrastructure Development; and International Cooperation, Trade and Security.

3.9.4   Similar structures must be available provincially. Where these do not exist currently, provincial government communicators' forums (PGCF) must fulfil the role of communication clusters until these are formed.

3.9.5   The national cluster chair/supervisor and the GCIS Cluster Supersvision must attend the DG cluster meetings.

(i.e. FOSAD) while the provincial cluster chair/supervisor will attend the Forum for the Heads of Department (FOHAD) coordinated through the Office of the Premier. These meetings will be for planning and executive purposes and to align communication to national/cluster projects and programmes.

3.9.6   Communication clusters must meet monthly to:

i.   coordinate and plan for communication, cluster briefings, Bills, projects and programmes;
ii.   profile programmes and projects implemented in line with the PoA;
iii.   agree on the communication priorities, develop and implement strategic plans;
iv.   participate, where appropriate, in media briefings that take place every second month;
v.   identify platforms and opportunities for communicating government work and progress in terms of its mandate;
vi.   prepare reports for monthly DG cluster meetings;
vii.   assess and plan for communication issues arising from Cabinet and DGs clusters meetings;
viii. monitor and assess the implementation of the cluster communication strategies and share information

3.9.7   Annually, develop a communication strategy for the communication clusters.

3.10   GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATORS' FORUMS (NATIONAL, PROVINCIAL AND LOCAL)

3.10.1 On local, provincial and national level, coordinating forums are designed to ensure integration, consistency and coherence within government communication.

3.10.2 District and provincial communication policies must be informed by national communication policy.

3.10.3 Integration of government communication ensures that communication reaches the intended audience and government structures remain up to date with local, district, that provincial and national trends so as to inform strategy. The following represents key integration points:

i.   The National Government Communicators' Forum

a.   The National Government Communicators' Forum (NGCF) is a strategic meeting of government communicators from national government departments and the provincial core teams. The GCF aims to provide a platform for government communicators to plan and identify communication opportunities across all spheres and sectors of government through substantive discussions and joint planning to fulfil the government's commitment to accelerating service delivery to ensure a better life for all. It forms part of the formal cycle of the system that determines the strategic approach and messaging for government communications.

b.   The Communication Cluster Chairpersons must play a leading role in shaping and delivering the NGCF programme and content areas.

c.   The Minister and Deputy Minister should guide and give political direction to the NGCF, challenging communicators to address key political imperatives as raised in Cabinet, Cabinet Lekgotla and various other committees and forums.

d.   The meetings of GCF should discuss the communication strategy and provide a framework for monitoring compliance and implementation by all government departments. All government communication should be geared towards the implementation of the annual communication strategy guided by the Programme of Action and State of the Nation Address pronouncements.

e.   There should be two sittings of the GCF in a year, which follow the Government communication cycle of planning and review. The first meetings should be held immediately after January Lekgotla and SoNA, i.e. in late February early March and the second one should be after the August Lekgotla in September October.

f. The first NGCF discusses the communication priorities guided by the January Lekgotla decisions and SoNA announcements. The aim of this meeting would be to come up with the communications plan to support the PoA for that particular year. Chairperson of the South African Local Government Association (Salga), GCIS provincial offices, Offices of the Premier and representatives from the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA) HoCs and MLOs must attend the forum at a national level. The GCIS coordinates this forum.

g. The second NGCF focuses on the achievements and review issues emanating from the discussions of the July Lekgotla. Where necessary the communication priorities should be refocused. The duration and length of the meeting should be guided by the content as well as the issues in the environment.

ii. The Internal government Communicators' Forum (GICF)

The Internal Communicators' Forum was established to improve the understanding of government priorities and outcomes, assist other governmental employees to be better informed with knowledge of government programmes; and to share best practices amongst Internal Communicators. The objectives of the internal communicator's Forum are to:

a. bring together Heads of Internal Communication and relevant support staff;

b. nurture internal communicators to become communication agents, able to mobilise public servants to contribute towards better and effective communication between government and the people;

c. encourage effective communication between an employer and employees.

d. share best practice, knowledge and information, successes, products and experience.

iii. The Provincial Government Communicators' Forum

The Provincial Government Communicators' Forum (PGCF) comprises:

a. The Office of the Premier (convener)

b. GCIS provincial office and provincial government departments

c. district HoCs

d. representatives of national departments in the province

e. representatives from state-owned enterprises (SOEs)

f. Salga.

iv. The District Communicators' Forum

The District Communicators' Forum (DCF) comprises:

a. HoCs of district municipalities

b. municipal communicators

c. provincial and national departments operating in the district

d. community development workers (CDWs)

e. parastatals and any other government-related structures in the district

v. The Local Communicators' Forum

The Local Communicators' Forum (LCF) comprises HoCs of local municipalities, parastatals and other government-related structures at local level. This forum should be convened by Salga, GCIS and CoGTA.

3.10.4 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The government communicators' forums among other things need to:

i. discuss strategic government communication issues within the NCSF, MTSF and SoNA, etc.

ii. assess implementation of government's communication programme and the strategies that have been aligned to this programme;

iii. share information and iron out communication problems;

iv. introduce case studies, share lessons learnt and establish best practice;

v. establish relations with communication partners/ stakeholders at national/provincial/district or local level;

vi. assist with building capacity and the development of communication strategies;

vii. coordinate and organise a calendar of events and ensure that these activities are streamlined to avoid duplication and a waste of resources;

viii. strategise and plan communication activities for the forthcoming year.

3.10.5 GOVERNANCE

All communicators' forums are required to meet quarterly. Monitoring of these communicators' forums should happen as follows:

a. the LCF to be monitored by the DCF
b. the PGCF to monitor the DCF
c. the NGCF to monitor the PGCF

3.11 INTERGOVERNMENTAL COMMUNICATOR'S FORUM

3.11.1 The Intergovernmental Communicators' Forum (IGCF) meets quarterly and comprises GCIS MANCO; nine provincial HoCs; nine GCIS provincial directors; Salga HoC and CoGTA HoC.

3.11.2 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The IGCF needs to among other things:

i.   share information and address communication challenges in the province and at local level
ii. consider and provide input into provincial communication strategies and action plans
iii. align provincial strategies and action plans with the
     National Government Communication Strategy;
iv. approve and monitor provincial communication strategies   and plans;
v.   receive progress reports from provinces on imple-mentation   of communication pro-grammes at provincial and local level;

vi. review the implementation of provincial and local communication strategies and begin the planning process;
vii.   assist with capacity-building and profiling of case studies with a view to share best practices, establish norms and standards, and to allow for the cross pollination of ideas;
viii.   share technical information, research and provide guidance on common support initiatives within government;
ix. share information arising from the local environment that can impact communication strategic planning and implementation;
x.   develop and roll out capacity-building programmes for political principals and communicators.

3.11.3 GCIS/CoGTA and Salga to monitor communication guidelines and develop status reports to relevant political structures: GCIS to FOSAD; provincial HoC to FOHAD.

3.12 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION STRUCTURES/FORUMS

3.12.1 Government supports development communication that:

i.   is responsive to the needs of the community
ii. provides for a two-way communication system where information is delivered, consultations held and feedback received – public participation and direct interaction with communities form the cornerstone of a developmental approach

Communicators must plan for and engage in a number of direct communication activities as part of community outreach. Established structures

that support development communication initiatives include the following:

3.12.2 THUSONG SERVICE CENTRES

i.   Thusong service centres are one-stop integrated community development centres that enable two-way communication between citizens and government, public participation and the delivery of services.
ii. Communicators can use Thusong service centres to:

c. identify community information and service needs
d. provide government information to the public in a manner in which it can be used by people to improve their lives
e. open up a two-way communication system between government and the people
f. improve community participation in government decision-making processes
g. enhance cooperation among the three spheres of government in terms of delivery
h. provide access to and use of information and communication technologies that will further assist communication endeavours in the building of an informed citizenry

iii. In instances where there are no Thusong service centres, the local municipality must act as a one-stop hub for government information. Government facilities such as clinics, hospitals and libraries should be used for the purposes of providing information to the public.

3.12.3 IZIMBIZO

i. Communicators must develop public participation communication programmes as part of their communication strategies.
ii. A national task team consisting of the GCIS, The Presidency, CoGTA, other national departments and provincial HoCs are responsible for coordinating the public-participation process.
iii. At the provincial/district/local level, political principals and/ or accounting officers are responsible for coordinating a public participation process in consultation with Salga, CoGTA and GCIS.
iv. Izimbizo preparations should incorporate research around the needs and issues of the community in the area where the forum is to take place. Political principals and/or accounting officers must be briefed prior to attending the imbizo to enable them to respond appropriately to these issues.
v. Role-players in public participation events include:

  a. Community members: They are the beneficiaries of the public-participation process.
  b. Administration: The national department, province or municipality must avail resources, implement

c. capacity-building programmes and integrate all processes, programmes and activities into the public-participation cycle.
d. 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.
e. Ward committees: They have an advisory role and represent the interests of their wards.
f. CDWs: They fulfil their responsibility as community fieldworkers.
g. External players:
  • other provincial and national government departments
  • representatives from provincial and national structures (there should be integrated programmes)
  • the provincial legislature and the National Council of Provinces
  • CDW coordinator at district level
  • members of the district council
  • stakeholder groupings, e.g. business, labour and NGOs

vi. An imbizo should be scribed and the feedback made available to national/provincial/local communication structures so as to inform marketing communication strategies and plans at all levels.

3.12.4 COUNCILLORS'/WARD COMMITTEES AND CDWS

i. Councillors, through their ward committees, must have communication as a KPA in the contractual agreements that they sign.

ii. Councillors must hold community meetings at least once per quarter. The Speaker should monitor whether these meetings are taking place and provide reports to the council.

iii. Local government communicators must provide councillors with the necessary support to enable them to report back to the community on deliverables.

3.13 COMMUNICATION ENABLERS

3.13.1 CABINET MEMOS

i. The national and provincial Cabinet/local councils meet fortnightly to deliberate on government policies and programmes, and to reflect on key issues emerging from within the environment.

ii. A department/entity must, when deemed necessary, prepare a Cabinet/council memo that defines the issue requiring an executive decision.

iii. A Communication Plan must be attached to the Cabinet/council memo and must outline internal and external activities that support effective communication around the content communicated in the memo.

iv. Where Cabinet/council makes a pronouncement that affects a department/municipality, the HoC must work with the GCIS on the implementation of the Communication Plan.

3.14 PROFESSIONALISING THE PUBLIC SECTOR/ BUILDING A CAPABLE STATE

3.14.1 All political principals, accounting officers and communicators must attend communication induction. This induction will introduce the Communication Policy not only to ensure integration into the government communication system but also to develop insights into the strategic importance of the function and why it should form part of all government activities.

3.14.2 The HoC must ensure that all communicators are trained and introduced to the Communication Policy so they are made aware of their particular roles and responsibilities.

3.14.3 Each institution should provide a budget for training and development of communicators. This should include funding for ongoing training to keep skills updated and relevant. This should be a reasonable percentage of the institutional training budget.

3.14.4 The GCIS will list those qualifications/service providers the institution has endorsed for the purposes of training of practitioners in government communications field. Otherwise:

i. Senior communicators (HoC/MLOs/chief directors) are required to have a postgraduate qualification and/or a minimum of five years' experience in the communications field in which they are/have been employed. Management training is an additional requirement for senior communicators.

ii. All communicators must have a relevant communications qualification and/or three years' experience related to the specialist field for which they are employed.

iii. Experiential learning will be recognised and formalised through a recognition of prior learning process.

3.14.5 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.

4.

MEDIA ENGAGEMENT

4.1 THE CONTEXT

4.1.1 ALL communication with the news media – including media releases, advisories, statements, interviews, conferences and briefings, letters to the editor, opinion pieces ("op eds"), technical announcements and other information or material given to news media representatives – fall under the media engagement activities of government.

4.1.2 News media representatives is 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.

4.1.3 This media engagement policy applies to public-speaking engagements and written articles where it might be expected that the publication or circulation of the comments can spread to the community at large. The policy applies equally to all government employees across all departments and geographic locations.

4.1.4 The media must be given equal access to information and all interactions with them must be professional. The target audience determines which media the government selects when engaging with media.

4.2 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

4.2.1 The media engagement function should be allocated to a person employed at a managerial level, e.g. a director/chief director/MLO.

4.2.2 Where a government institution has no Chief Director/Director: Media Engagement/MLO due to its limited resource capacity or size, the HoC must fulfil these obligations.

4.2.3 The Chief Director/Director: Media Engagement must:
i. lead the media engagement activities within a department/province or district/local municipality;

ii. manage staff within the media engagement unit. be the official point of entry for media into the department on issues that are of a technical nature or relate to policy that has been adopted;

iii. design and implement a proactive media relations strategy and plan;

iv. build and maintain relations with the media: report to the HoC on all media engagement related matters affecting the government institution.

4.3 AUTHORISED MEDIA SPOKESPERSONS

Authorised spokesperson	Issue
The political principal and his/her official spokesperson (MLO) at the national and provincial sphere of government; the mayor/Speaker at local government level.	Any issue within the institution, with a focus on strategy, policy and performance.

The political principal, accounting officer and the HoC.	All matters that may have an impact on the image of government. Where a matter has been declared a crisis, the crisis communication protocol will come into effect. (See Crisis Communication Policy Section 6).
Technical spokesperson, identified by political principals and accounting officers in consultation with the HoC.	Issues of a technical nature where this person has the particular expertise needed. This can include language proficiency.
IMC chairperson.	Issues affecting a number of departments and/or where an IMC has been established.

4.3.1 All media spokespersons must adhere to the following:
- have the required training for the job; attend induction into government communications and undergo ongoing media training to hone their skills.
- No spokesperson will be permitted to represent the department/province/municipality if they have not undertaken this training.

4.3.2 Media engagement/communication training will be managed by the HoC, the GCIS or their designated agents and will be conducted before the employee is appointed as a media spokesperson. In instances where a media spokesperson has already been employed without this training (prior to this policy directive), the media spokesperson will need to avail themselves for training.

4.3.3 The HoC must keep a list of all staff who have received appropriate media training and who are authorised to speak on behalf of the institution. This must be updated annually.

4.3.4 This policy does not restrict the right of elected representatives of recognised trade unions or staff associations to express their views through or to the media directly. Elected representatives of recognised trade unions or staff associations are fully entitled to make comments on behalf of their staff associations or trade unions. They are not permitted, however, to comment on behalf of, or represent, the government institution.

4.3.5 Media enquiries relating to the institution must first be brought to the attention of the Director: Media Liaison, who will engage with the HoC before comment is provided to the media.

4.3.6 The GCIS can provide advice on all aspects of media relations and assist institutions to prepare strategic approaches. The GCIS must therefore be notified of all potentially sensitive, contentious or controversial media enquiries with respect to an institution's activities.

4.4 GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES AS PRIVATE CITIZENS

4.4.1 Any media communication emanating from government employees in their private capacity (blogs, social media posts; letters to the editor) must subscribe to the Public Service Ac (Act 103 of 1994) and the Code of Conduct for Public Servants. Information acquired while on duty must not be used when voicing personal opinions and inappropriate media engagement is prohibited.

This refers to engagement that:
i. brings the government, its departments or stakeholders into disrepute;

ii. undermines the integrity and reputation of the government, its leadership or its stakeholders;

iii. presents a personal viewpoint as a position that is held by the department;

iv. discloses sensitive/classified departmental information without proper authority;

v. comments on pending or current legal issues relating to the department;

4.4.2 Any media communication representing an employee's personal opinion as a private citizen not associated with the department/province/municipality does not require any approval. However, the government employee must ensure that the media is aware that he/she is writing in their personal capacity, and that his/her views represent his/her personal opinion.

4.4.3 Government communicators at a senior level (HoCs, MLOs, DDGs, chief directors, managers) act as government representatives and their opinions/comments – even in a private space – are likely to be seen as official by the media. Government communicators at this level therefore cannot engage in private communication on any platform or express views/opinions that would be seen as contrary to an official government position.

4.4.4 Where the media perceives a government employee to be a media practitioner/representative of government and where the opinion/comment is likely to be seen as official, this representation will require official approval from the HoC before it is submitted. At times, these communication pieces may require further approval at a political level, and sufficient advance planning and coordination time should be allowed for.

4.4.5 Government communicators must not contradict the communication messages of another department or sphere of government within the media space.

4.5 RESPONSE AND LIAISON STANDARDS FOR MEDIA ENQUIRIES

4.5.1 TRADITIONAL MEDIA PLATFORMS (PRINT, BROADCAST AND ONLINE)

i. A government institution must respect media deadline requirements and endeavour to provide open and equal access to all news media.

ii. All media queries must preferably be acknowledged in a reasonable time that directly relates to the particular medium – whether print, broadcast or online.

iii. Agreement should be reached between the media and the government spokesperson on deadline delivery times and all changes to these agreements communicated.

iv. Communication channels should be kept open at all times and the media updated on any of the pending media enquiries.

v. Designated government spokespersons must be available and accessible so as to deal with media enquiries and return calls timeously.

vi. The HoCs must timeously get approval of media statements from the accounting officer to enable achievement of deadlines.

4.5.2 SOCIAL MEDIA

i. Digital technology has changed the way people communicate and share information. Platforms like Facebook and Twitter operate in real-time where news breaks and citizens engage in online discussions.

ii. The HoC must be given the flexibility to operate in this changing environment, create relevant content and respond to issues emerging in real time.

4.6 HOUSE STYLE AND STANDARD FORMATS

4.6.1 Media releases, statements and advisories need to adhere to an agreed standard. All communication issued to the media must be presented in plain language, without compromising the accuracy of the message and in a way that is understood by the target audience. The department, province or municipality may decide on the language to be used when issuing the media release, statement and/or advisory but this should conform to South Africa's language policies.

4.6.2 All email 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 does not bring the department into disrepute if published by the media.

4.6.3   The tone, content and standard of language (grammar, spelling, etc.) of electronic correspondence with members of the media should always be constructed from a perspective that the correspondence may find its way into the public domain.

4.6.4   The use of Short Message Service (SMS) abbreviations should not be used in any official correspondence and/or when interacting with the media.

4.7   COMPLAINTS ABOUT MEDIA COVERAGE OR BEHAVIOUR

4.1.1   Any complaints from within government regarding the performance of the media, e.g. the content and/or tone of media coverage, or the behaviour of a reporter in their dealings with the government, shall be made to the Office of the HoC.

4.1.2   The Office of the HoC will be responsible for deciding which, if any, action will be taken in response to such a complaint. Should the HoC consider the matter to sufficiently warrant further action, the following steps may be taken:
i.   An official letter must be sent to the media institution outlining the nature of the complaint and the recommended remedial action;

ii.   If the HoC is not satisfied with the response from the media institution and the matter concerns media content, a complaint may be logged with the following:
   c.   the Press Council in a print media or online media environment (www.presscouncil.org.za);
   d.   the Broadcast Complaints Commission of South Africa in a broadcasting environment (www.bccsa.co.za).

4.1.3   The HoC, in consultation with his/her legal team, must decide whether the complaint is of such a serious nature that it warrants further legal action.

4.8   OFF-THE-RECORD COMMENTS

4.8.1   No government employee will speak to the media "off the record". The only exception is the political principal and the MLO/HoC with the authority of the political principal, who might in certain circumstances be required to do so.

4.9   PUBLIC DISCLOSURE AND RIGHT TO INFORMATION

4.9.1   The Promotion of Access to Information Act (PAIA), (Act 2 of 2000) provides for requests addressed to the department by members of the media to be directed to the HoC immediately for consideration.

4.9.2   If the department receives a PAIA request from the media in writing, it must 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; the HoC will, whenever possible, require the requesting party to sign the documentation, which will then be time-stamped.

4.9.3   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.

4.9.4   Requests from non-media sources for information under the PAIA of should be directed to the department's chief information officer.

4.9.5   The HoC should be informed of all requests for information under the PAIA, as such information may find itself in the public domain and have implications for future media coverage relating to the department.

4.10 CLASSIFIED INFORMATION

4.10.1 Unauthorised disclosure of classified information to the public or the media will result in disciplinary action being taken against the government official responsible.

4.11 PHOTOGRAPHIC AND VIDEO COVERAGE/USAGE BY MEDIA

4.11.1 Media photography or videography is expressly prohibited on government property without the prior approval of the HoC or his/her nominee.

4.11.2 If authorised by the HoC, media representatives may be allowed inside government facilities under the supervision of an HoC representative. This will be for the purposes of photographic and/or video filming that is required for recording interviews, documentaries, news releases or other approved applications.

4.12 SUPPLY OF PHOTOGRAPHS AND FILM FOOTAGE

4.12.1 Any government institution submitting photographs and video footage to the media must advise that copyright rests with the GCIS/supplying department/municipality and that this should be reflected in the credits. All copyright laws must be upheld.

4.12.2 Government institutions must ensure that the photographs and visual material supplied are used for the same reason(s) for which they were requested. A final copy of the product must be made available to the relevant government institution.

4.13 MEDIA ENGAGEMENT TOOLS

4.13.1 QUARTERLY MEDIA SCHEDULES

i. Media must be targeted for specific interventions based on the news value of the release and the profile of their readers/viewers/listeners.

ii. The department/province or municipality must furnish the GCIS with a copy of their quarterly media schedule at least 14 days ahead of the start of the implementation of the media engagement programme for the quarter.

4.13.2 MEDIA RELEASES

i. The Accounting Officer or his/her designate must approve and sign all media releases.

ii. The GCIS, as the authorised custodian of CI standards and formats, has produced a number of media engagement templates to ensure a consistent approach and format for all government spheres and entities.

iii. The media statement must be posted on the department's/institution's website immediately after its release to targeted media.

iv. Media statements that refer to a campaign partner must be issued with the approval of the campaign partner.

v. Joint press releases can only be released with non-commercial organisations.

vi. Media engagement must ensure that media releases, statements and advisories are monitored.

4.13.3 MEDIA CONFERENCES

i. Political principals and/or accounting officers must authorise all media conferences. Where possible, the request must be submitted at least five 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.

ii. The HoC/MLO or a designated official must preside over the press conference or briefing.

4.13.4 PAID MEDIA COVERAGE

i. Government departments are encouraged not to 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.

ii. All government communicators must leverage editorial opportunities.

4.13.5 OPINION PIECES

i. The HoC may, with the assistance of appointed and recognised specialists, write opinion pieces on topical issues relating to the department. Such articles serve as reference documents for media and other enquiries, and ensure consistent and integrated messaging to the media.

4.14 INTERNATIONAL MISSIONS

4.14.1 International missions abroad are required to:

i. Project a positive view of a democratic South Africa internationally;

ii.

iii. Assert and defend its position as an advocate for peace, democracy and development;

iv. iii. Advance the African agenda;

v. Promote economic development, investment and trade in the country.

4.14.2 The head of mission and the press attachés are responsible for communication at international missions. Each mission must have a trained communication officer/press attaché whose core responsibilities will include:

i. acting as the spokesperson of the mission;

ii. writing media advisories and statements;

iii. arranging media briefings guided by key messages provided and according to the brief;

iv. ensuring that all media releases are posted on the mission's website immediately after they have been made available to targeted media;

v. ensuring that media releases conform to the approved government CI standards and format;

vi. responding to media queries on the advice of the head of public diplomacy;

vii. writing articles or opinion pieces, including some to communicate the country's foreign policy;

viii. interacting with other missions to share information and best practice case scenarios;

5.

ONLINE COMMUNICATION PLATFORMS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

5.1.1 Technological innovation is a feature of our rapidly changing communication environment. Government needs to be up to date with these technological innovations and be aware of how technology can benefit the public.

5.1.2 Communication campaigns must consider the most appropriate communication channels/methods for a particular audience. Where necessary, the government must continue to use traditional forms of media in conjunction with new media so as to not exclude members of the public who for various reasons might not have access to the new technology.

5.2 GOVERNMENT WEBSITES

Websites are widely used by government to publish information and engage with the public.

5.2.1 All government departments – nationally, provincially and locally – must have a website that is accessible 24/7 and is updated regularly by a designated employee/s. Website content and branding should be managed through the communicator/communications division. The HoC or his/her designate must verify all content that is to be placed on the website.

Government websites must:
i. provide current, factual and official information to the public;

ii. market the department to external and internal stakeholders;

iii. conform to the GCIS web content guidelines; these guidelines outline a common look-and-feel that incorporates the relevant CI guidelines, search functions and minimum content requirements;

iv. provide links to: the South African Government Online (www.gov.za), relevant advisory and/or statutory bodies associated with the department as well as relevant websites at national and provincial level – as a general rule, departmental websites must not provide links to commercial websites;

5.2.2 Paid advertising, including endorsement or advertising of commercial products, is not allowed on any government websites.

5.2.3 When government departments have a significant role to play in an event such as a conference organised by a commercial event management company, this event may be promoted and a link provided to a website where the user can get more information or register. Organisations sponsoring departmental activities may only be acknowledged in text on the relevant page.

5.2.4 The HoC or his designate must:
i. decide whether logos of organisations sponsoring government events may be added to a website;

ii. annually review websites to ensure that they accurately reflect branding obligations, carry accurate messaging and are in line with all governmental requirements;

iii. approve website content;

5.2.5 Only information suitable for the public must be posted on the website. Classified information and/or information intended for departmental officials only must not be posted.

5.2.6 A feedback mechanism for receiving/acknowledging citizens' inputs and/or replying to queries must be developed. The recommended response time is 24 hours to acknowledge receipt of an electronic enquiry and 48 hours to answer the query.

5.3   EMAIL NEWSLETTERS

5.3.1   Email newsletters in a communication context are different from regular email correspondence used in the day-to-day execution of departmental functions. The email newsletter is a communication tool that brings users up to date with key policies, programmes, campaigns and activities happening within the department or across the public service.

5.4   MOBILE APPLICATIONS

5.4.1   Mobile applications are internet services that run on smartphones or mobile devices;

5.4.2   The regulations that apply for website development and use apply equally for mobile applications.

5.5   SOCIAL MEDIA

5.5.1   THE CONTEXT

i.   Social media refers to channels that can include blogs, wikis and social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, Tumblr and LinkedIn. However, there are many more and others are still evolving. This policy covers the broad spectrum of social media platforms that are currently available and will be available in the near future.

ii.   The use of social media platforms has been gaining acceptance in all spheres of government around the world. This provides an opportunity for two-way communication between government and citizens, partners and stakeholders; where the frequency and speed of engagement has increased.

iii.   Social media presents new challenges though as citizens' expectations need to be addressed, differences in communication culture explored, all the while navigating the line between official and personal use.

5.5.2   ACCOUNT MANAGEMENT

i.   The HoC and/or his designate (in instances where a Director: Online Communication is available) is responsible for:

b.   developing an overarching social media strategy and plan

c.   overseeing the creation, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and final closure of a social media account

d.   ensuring that only official social media sites of the government institution are operating and that all links are made available on the government website

e.   defining and communicating to all employees what appropriate government information should be communicated.

ii.   Each department (national, provincial, and local) must appoint/designate an employee who will be responsible for:

a.   liaising with the HoC and approving requests to set up social media accounts for the government institution;

b.   evaluating each request, authorising which staff member can use these social media platforms and recommending that they acquire the required skills;

c.   maintaining a list of official and active social networking sites as well as the employees responsible for this oversight;

d.   ensuring that all social media pages comply with government's CI and branding guidelines;

e.   monitoring and reviewing the content posted for accuracy and adherence to consistent government messaging;

f.   acting as the appointed custodian or the point

of contact between the institutions, provincial, national and local counterparts and the GCIS.

iii. In instances where there are resource limitations, the HoC will be responsible for the social media function.

iv. Employees appointed as custodians of the social media function will have this aspect incorporated into their job description.

v. Communication personnel should have access to all official social media platforms within their sphere of government for the purposes of monitoring and following issues arising in the environment but also to monitor debates around this.

vi. The HoC or his/her designate will be authorised to engage in debates arising in the social media environment that require immediate interaction or engagement.

5.5.3   ACCEPTABLE USE

i. Only the HoC or his/her designate can discuss government operations on the official social media sites. Any unauthorised communication is prohibited and will not be considered an official view.

ii. Government employees recognised as official spokespersons or representatives of government by the media or in the public space, cannot comment on government activities and/or provide commentary that is contrary to the official government position on official/private social media sites. They may, however, relay the contents of press releases, conferences, etc. on the public/their private social-media accounts.

iii. Government employees using social media sites in their private capacity must be made aware of the relevant laws and regulations that apply in respect of privacy and confidentiality issues. They must declare upfront that they are writing in their personal capacity so that their comments are not interpreted as the official view of government. Social media activity at Government is regulated by the following policies:
   a. Acceptable Use of ICT Policy
   b. Code of Conduct for the Public Servants
   c. Government Communication Policy

   d. Government Communicators' Handbook
   e. Brand Guidelines
   f. Privacy Policy

iv. Any personal social media accounts or accounts unrelated to the government that currently exist or will be created in future, may not be registered using a government issued email address. This applies to any social media platform that requires an email account to register. These accounts must use private email addresses and contact details.

v. Public servants cannot use government-related usernames or handles when setting up their personal accounts. e.g. DeptHealth_Joseph.

vi. Once an employee or contractor leaves Government service, such employee/contractor must update all social media accounts to reflect that they are no longer in the employ of Government.

5.5.4   CONTENT

i. All social media content published by departments must adhere to the Government Online Content Guidelines as defined by the GCIS.

ii. Government resources should not be used to access or post any material that is fraudulent, harassing, threatening, bullying, embarrassing, sexually explicit, profane, obscene, racist, sexist, intimidating, defamatory or otherwise inappropriate or unlawful.

iii. The Constitution provides that everyone has the right to freedom of expression. This right does not extend to speech that constitutes: propaganda for war; incitement of imminent violence; or advocacy of hatred that is based on race, ethnicity, gender or religion and that constitutes incitement to cause harm.

iv. Do not disclose any information pertaining to Government's physical or information security practices and procedures or any other information which may be used to breach either physical or information security procedures in place. The Information Security Manager must keep abreast of new and emerging information security threats arising from social media use.

v. All content posted must reflect government values and be professional – whether on personal or official sites.

vi. Content that is copyright protected may not be published.

vii. When engaging in social media activity government employees must adhere to these fundamental principles:
   a. The use of social media must consider the needs of society, and not be primarily used as an agenda-setting communication tool.
   b. Information provided on social media platforms must be relevant, timeous and helpful.
   c. The interaction on social media must demonstrate an awareness of Government's responsibility to be understanding and empathetic to requests and consultation.
   d. To promote transparency in Government operations and decisions, requests for the sharing of various types of information must be timeously dealt with.

viii. Each government entity is:
   a. responsible for ensuring that content on all social media platforms is current and relevant at all times, and that derogatory comments are removed where possible
   b. expected to respond to positive or negative engagement via their social media accounts
   c. expected to ensure that these campaigns are supported through other media channels
   d. required to manage their own content on the various social media accounts

5.5.5 SECURITY

i. All entities must change the password to their social media accounts at least twice a year. Where users access social media accounts via their personal accounts, users must be removed from the account when they are no longer part of the operational team. It is recommended that this password complies with the organisational IT security policy. The policy suggests that the password used has at least one special character and one number along with plain text.

5.5.6 LEGAL ISSUES

i. All entities through their social media account managers are mandated to keep a record of all information posted online. All information and correspondence on social media must be recorded and archived. While most social networks do not provide this functionality, third-party services allow for the implementation of this requirement.

ii. When publishing information or providing advice online, necessary records must be captured, retained and filed in accordance with the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa's Records Management Policy.

iii. Any content that is removed must be retained, including the time, date and identity of the poster in accordance with the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa's Records Management Policy.

5.5.7 CITIZEN CONDUCT

All government entities must make citizens aware of their social media policy when interacting with government. Social media commentary by citizens will be removed if it:

i. is used to defame, insult, abuse, harass, threaten or attack anyone

ii. includes the use of language that is obscene and/or offensive

iii. goes against the principles of the Constitution and discriminates against any particular race, gender, sexual preference, religion, etc.

iv. advertises or promotes commercial interests

v. promotes illegal or unethical activities

If an individual and/or group continues to breach this policy, that person/organisation must be blocked/deleted and reported to the service provider.

5.5.8 MONITORING

Social media accounts must be monitored daily. Items to be monitored include the following:
   i. comments on published content and whether these adhere to social media guidelines

   ii. enquiries received via comment or inbox/direct messages

   iii. whether online sentiments are becoming increasingly negative

CRISIS COMMUNICATION

6.1 BACKGROUND

6.1.1 A crisis is an unforeseen or unexpected event that threatens institutional operations and can have extreme negative consequences. A crisis can be man-made and can impact public safety, lead to financial loss or even reputational damage for the institution. If it is not effectively managed, a crisis can lead to an emergency.

6.1.2 The National Disaster Management Act (Act of 2001)defines a dsaster as a progressive or sudden, widespread or localise, natural or human-caused occurence which causes or threatens to cause death, injury or disease, damage property, infrastructure or the environmentor the disruption of the life of a community.

6.1.3 All government institutions must strive to avoid a crisis. This requires that political principals and accounting officers remain in touch with citizens, assess public mood and conduct research/activities that might help to avert a crisis.

6.1.4 Communicators should be made aware of any potential crisis and should manage communication activities to avert or limit a potential crisis.

6.1.5 Any crisis – be this an emergency and/or a disaster – requires immediate communication intervention. Effective communication management in a time of crisis and/or emergency provides an opportunity for government to show leadership and for the institution to maintain or restore the public's confidence.

6.1.6 This policy provides the key communication actions and processes that should follow in the event of such a crisis and gives the criteria for when a crisis must be referred to GCIS for communication leadership and guidance. The policy complements rather than competes with or replaces other disaster and crisis-management protocols within government.

6.1.7 Communicators should be familiar with relevant national/provincial disaster management strategies in order to inform their approach to crisis communication at this level.

6.1.8 A crisis can be identified and declared:
Nationally by:
i. the President and/or through a decision of Cabinet
ii. the IMC: Information and Publicity
iii. a decision of Rapid Response
iv. a War Room
v. a National Joint Operations Centre (NatJOC)
vi. a National Disaster Management Committee

Provincially and Locally by:
i. the premier/or through a decision of council
ii. a decision of Rapid Response
iii. a War Room
iv. a Provincial Disaster Management Committee
v. a Provincial Joint Operations Centre

6.1.9 Once a crisis has been identified, each institution must establish a Communication Crisis Committee, formulate a crisis management plan and a communication strategy that is aligned to this.

6.1.10 A crisis communication plan must be attached to the national, provincial or local disaster management plan so that there is a clear understanding of what should happen when there is a natural or man-made disaster.

6.1.11 Any institution faced with a crisis must inform the GCIS that they have a crisis, advise what they are doing about it and request support where this is needed.

6.1.12 In instances where a crisis is transversal, no government institution should issue media statements in the public domain that contradict what other departments are saying.

6.1.13 The GCIS should be engaged at the outset and be ready to play a leading coordination role as the coherent and authentic voice of government.

6.1.14 A comprehensive set of crisis communication resources that can be used at the discretion of communicators to build, manage and maintain an effective crisis management capability must be available.

6.2 DEALING WITH CRISES

6.2.1 Crises relating to the following transversal issues are classified as potential emergencies and must be immediately referred nationally/provincially to the political principals/accounting officers as well as to GCIS for guidance on how to respond to the issue. These are:

i. acts of terror committed in South Africa
ii. international acts of terror impacting on South Africa and/or its citizens
iii. major natural disasters
iv. issues affecting national security
v. incidents impacting on the safety and well-being of communities in South Africa
vi. crises related to the communication of controversial issues or the unintended consequence of government's communication or actions,

including the actions of political/administrative structures/individuals
vii. crises emanating from the personal conduct of an official

6.2.2 Government/political principals in responding to these transversal emergencies will then either:

i. establish a Crisis Committee/Command Centre/ Ops Room (herein referred to as Crisis Command Centre) led by the GCIS and the lead department, to manage communication collectively or
iii. assign communication leadership to a specific department in the case of a cluster response, with the GCIS playing a supporting role.

6.3 CRISIS PROTOCOL

6.3.1 The HoC must:

i. be notified immediately of any crisis that is emerging or breaking by the political principal and/or DG/municipal manager of the affected institution
ii. gather and verify information about the crisis, assess its severity and consider whether it should be escalated to the GCIS for leadership (emergency/controversial issues) or managed at an institutional level
iii. given the need for urgent communication, be given the authority to take action immediately under guidance, until a broader decision can be made about how the institution must proceed

iv. form part of the Crisis Committee, Crisis Command Centre and establish permanent representation
v. be responsible for developing the strategy and tactics on how information is to be released, who must speak for the department on the issue, and the audiences with whom will be communicated
vi. identify the target audience, the multiple communication platforms, appoint a spokesperson and draft a holding statement
vii. communicate facts quickly, accurately and be open and accessible to all audiences, although mindful of confidentiality, and legal and privacy considerations

6.4 CRISIS SPOKESPERSONS

6.4.1 The political principal at the national, provincial and local spheres of government are the official spokespersons during a crisis. At national level this would be the President, departmental ministers/ deputy ministers. At provincial level, premiers would assume this role while at local level this would be mayors.

6.4.2 The political principals as well as the DGs/ municipal managers in consultation with the HoCs must identify 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.

6.4.3 Designated spokespersons must make themselves available to:
i. participate in communication planning and the preparation of key messages relating to the crisis
ii. respond to media enquiries in a prompt and professional manner, using all possible communication tools, including the Crisis Command Centre.

6.5 WORKING WITH THE MEDIA

6.5.1 All media enquiries relating to the issue must be directed to the accounting officer/HoC/spokesperson. In any crisis, regular media briefings are strongly recommended, accompanied by regular interviews.

6.5.2 Depending on the severity of the crisis, the Crisis Committee must decide on the frequency of the media briefings, whether hourly, daily, weekly or monthly.

6.5.3 All media enquiries must ideally be acknowledged within 30 minutes of receipt. A more comprehensive response should then be prepared based on the facts that have been established. This comprehensive response must be prepared within 24 hours.

6.5.4 After releasing information, the HoC must monitor the news coverage and respond appropriately, where necessary.

6.6 COMMUNICATION APPROVAL PROCESSES

6.6.1 The HoC and Crisis Command Centre should establish an approval process that will fast-track decision-making during a crisis.

6.6.2 All approvals should adhere to a strictly agreed turnaround time, bearing in mind the quality and accuracy of information that must be made available.

6.7 EMPLOYEE COMMUNICATION

6.7.1 The accounting officer/HoC, working with Human Resources, must inform departmental employees of the issues relating to the crisis using established internal communication channels. This should happen before or at the same time as details are being released to external audiences.

6.8 INTEGRITY OF COMMUNICATION

6.8.1 When communicating during a crisis, there is a need to strike a balance between presenting the relevant facts in the public domain without causing unnecessary panic.

6.9   INFORMING OTHER GOVERNMENT STAKEHOLDERS

6.9.1   The HoC will arrange a stakeholder forum to keep all abreast of the crisis and the way it is being managed.

6.10   SOCIAL MEDIA USE IN A CRISIS

6.10.1 Institutions that have innovative social media strategies in place are in a better position to manage this media during a crisis. Pre-emptive and early detection mechanisms need to be in place to help identify a potential crisis.

6.10.2 Each government institution should allocate a person who will be responsible for managing social media as part of crisis management. This person will be required to:
i.   develop a social media strategic plan aligned to the Crisis Plan

ii.   ensure that social media measurement tools are in place to monitor engagement on social media sites
iii. ensure that information and updates are placed on the institutions social media sites and webpages in a timely manner and that these are used as alert/feedback mechanisms to citizens
iv.   monitor all social media sites for any mentions of the crisis and to prepare adequate responses
v.   respond to any social media activity on the institution's own profile pages in a timely manner

6.11   MEDIA MONITORING

6.11.1 The HoC must monitor international, national and regional print, broadcast and online media daily and maintain regular contact with the political principals/accounting officers, advising the department's leadership on emerging issues and how government is being portrayed that may result in a reputational crisis.

6.11.2 The HoC must accordingly maintain or adjust the communication response as needed to limit rumours, correct errors and maintain confidence in the department.

6.11.3 Summaries of relevant media coverage must be provided to the department's senior leadership and crisis management team   at least twice a day during a crisis situation.

6.12.1 When the crisis has passed, the HoC must:

i.   organise a debriefing session with members of the Crisis Committee/Command Centre/Ops Room and prepare a close-out report
ii.   supply the Crisis Committee/Command Centre/Ops Room, the DG, the minister and GCIS with a summary of news coverage relating to the crisis

6.12.2 Members of these structures must review this report and evaluate the department's performance "under fire". The team must note:
i.   overall   success   or   failure   of   the   crisis communication effort
ii.   problems to be avoided in the future
iii. appropriate follow-up measures

6.12.3 Attention also must be focused on identifying and implementing measures to improve the action plan used during the crisis.

CRISIS

INTEGRITY

PROTOCOL

INFORMING EMPLOYEE MEDIA

EVALUATION

CRISIS COMMUNICATION

MONITORING

FOLLOW-UP INTEGRITY

COMMUNICATION PROCESSES

MEDIA STAKEHOLDERS

7.

MARKETING AND CAMPAIGN MANAGEMENT

7.1 GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATORS' TOOLKIT

7.1.1 Marketing and campaign management strategic plans must be developed annually and must fit into the overall Communication Plan of the department. These plans must include: identification and segmentation of target audiences; suggestions on relevant content and messaging; and determination of the appropriate medium for the intended audience.

7.1.2 This Communications Policy does 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. Instead, the focus is on marketing tools that constitute the bulk of the government communicators' toolkit, namely:

i. content, language, tone and images
ii. advertising and media bulk-buying
iii. public relations (including events, exhibitions and promotional items)
iv. distribution and direct marketing
v. digital marketing
vi. corporate identity
vii. sponsorship

7.2 CONTENT, LANGUAGE, TONE AND IMAGE OF MARKETING CAMPAIGNS

7.2.1 CONTENT

i. Departments must ensure that the content of marketing campaigns is consistent with government policy and that the design and presentation reflect positively and professionally on the department and government as a whole.

ii. Information must be based on accurate and verifiable facts. No unsubstantiated claim or statement must be made.

iii. All content must be aimed at educating or informing the public so as to enable them to participate fully in democracy, change behaviour and improve their lives.

iv. All government messaging must be sensitive to the cultural diversity that exists within the environment.

7.2.2 VISUAL AND AUDIO CONTENT

i. Images must reflect the diverse nature of South African society and, where appropriate, be as representative as possible.

ii. The use of images in campaign advertising must be consistent with the "people-centred" approach of government. In instances where images of politicians/accounting officers may be required, there must be an appropriate balance between the message and the image.

iii. Government institutions should respect the relevant copyright laws of the Republic of South Africa when publishing visual and audio content.

iv. All visual and audio content/products produced by either officials and/or service providers without a copyright sharing agreement remain the intellectual property of government.

v. National, provincial or local government will not have to pay royalties for use of visual and audio content obtained from the GCIS. However, the costs to make this available will be from the department requesting this with rates determined by the GCIS.

7.2.3 CORE MESSAGE DEVELOPMENT

i. The focus of government's marketing campaigns must be on the messages that enable the public to participate in democracy and improve their lives.

ii. In the development of specific government campaigns, messages must be in line with the overall core messages of government.

iii. All government institutions will have some specific programme messaging that will depend on the specific campaign objectives and audiences. This must address one or more of the following objectives to warrant a 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 that are 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.

7.2.4   LANGUAGE REQUIREMENTS

i. All communication by government institutions must comply with the Use of Official Languages Act, (Act 12 of 2012).

ii. Different audience segments have different communication needs. All marketing communication must consider the preferred official language of the segmented and target audience.

iii. All 11 official languages, as well as Braille and South African Sign Language, must be considered. Presentation in the 11 official languages as well as in Braille and audio formats must be considered where applicable so as to facilitate accessibility for all language groups and people with disabilities.

iv. 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.

v. All marketing communication must be presented in plain and clear language to facilitate understanding and improve communication.

7.2.5   CORPORATE IDENTITY

i. National government departments must become familiar with governments' National Corporate Identity and Branding Guidelines that regulate the use of the Coat of Arms and branding for government. These guidelines limit the use of the Coat of Arms, to further protect it from commercial exploitation and abuse.

ii. Provincial government and district/local municipalities must become familiar with the CI guidelines that regulate the use of their logos and branding for government at this level. The HoC within the provincial and district municipalities must draft these CI guidelines and ensure that they are adhered to.

iii. Government's CI must be clear and consistent so as to be easily recognised and identifiable by the public.

iv. The GCIS is the authorised custodian of government's national CI and has delegated this authority to departmental HoCs, where applicable. Provincial and district HoCs are responsible for CI and government branding at provincial and local level.

7.2.6   NON-PERMISSIBLE USE OF GOVERNMENT LOGOS AND BRANDING

i. The use of government stationery or business cards other than for bona fide departmental business is prohibited.

ii. The use of government stationery or business cards or other official trademarks or documents to further an individual's private business interests or to express political or personal viewpoints is expressly forbidden.

7.2.7 ADVERTISING AND MEDIA BULK-BUYING

Use of GCIS services:

a. GCIS advertising services include:
b. strategy development
c. research on industry trends
d. creative
e. media planning and placement
f. return on investment (ROI)

ii. Government institutions and entities making use of GCIS advertising or bulk-buying services must sign a service level agreement (SLA) with the GCIS before work begins. (See Guidelines to working with GCIS Advertising and Media Buying Chief Directorate).

iii. Advertising of posts in the national government newspaper is mandatory.

7.2.8 CAMPAIGN ADVERTISING

i. Campaign advertising by a government institution must be aimed at educating or informing the public regarding the institution's services, products, programmes or policies.

ii. Government must 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.

iii. Government must plan advertising campaigns proactively at the beginning of the annual communication cycle when communication strategies are due.

iv. If GCIS services are requested, the GCIS will cost the advertising campaign in consultation with the client government institutions.

v. The agreed budget for the advertising campaign must be transferred to the GCIS prior to the implementation of the campaign.

7.2.9 NON-CAMPAIGN ADVERTISING

i. Non-campaign advertising is generally limited to tenders, statutory public notices, auction notices, recruitment advertising, invitations to make submissions and similar print advertising; and does not form part of an ongoing marketing campaign requiring high budgets

7.2.10 ADVERTISING IN EMERGENCY OR CRISIS SITUATIONS

i. Proposals to advertise during a crisis or emergency must be directed to the political principal/ accounting officer or the GCIS any time such a contingency may arise.

7.2.11 NON-PERMISSIBLE ADVERTISING

i. Public funds must not be used for advertising where:
   • adverts are placed in a medium that does not reach the intended target audience
   • the content mentions or appears to be promoting or communicating on behalf of a political party
   • members of the department are depicted in a manner that a reasonable person would regard as excessive or gratuitous
   • the advertising creates a perception that a campaign promotes an individual, like a minister or a public official
   • there has been no clear line of accountability, appropriate audit procedures or government-approved procurement processes

7.2.12 AUTHORITY FOR MARKETING CAMPAIGNS

i. The HoC is responsible for approving and implementing marketing and advertising strategies at departmental/provincial or local level.

ii. For the commissioning of advertising and public relations services, the GCIS, as the custodian of media bulk-buying, will use its delegation for the procurement of media space and time; and advise departments, provinces and local spheres on the appointment of suitable agencies from the GCIS database.

iii. A copy of the approved campaign marketing strategy must be submitted to the GCIS at least 10 working days prior to the planned implementation of multimedia advertising campaigns exceeding R1 million, and at least five working days for standard advertising campaigns.

iv. 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.

v. The GCIS does not prescribe a format for a marketing strategy, but the minimum requirements are that it must cover the content areas outlined in the Government Communicators' Handbook, (see www.gcis.gov.za).

vi. The right of final approval for media placement and campaign content rests with the GCIS, which will take all aspects addressed into careful consideration when assessing the suitability of departmental marketing campaigns for implementation.

7.2.13 PANEL OF ADVERTISING/PUBLIC RELATIONS AGENCIES

i. Any department, province or local municipality using GCIS services must accept that the GCIS panel of advertising/PR agencies will be used should outsourcing arrangements be required to complete the project/programme.

7.2.14 GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING DURING AN ELECTION PERIOD

i. 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 (Icasa's) regulations apply.

ii. 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.

iii. According to the regulations, state-financed media will not be used during an election period to promote or prejudice the interests of any political party.

iv. 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 email, 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.

v. 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.

7.2.15 PERMISSIBLE MARKETING ACTIVITIES PRE AND DURING AN ELECTION PERIOD

i. 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.

ii. 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.

iii. The GCIS can provide advice and counsel to departments on pre-election marketing activities.

iv. Such advice and counsel will not constitute approval or clearance of material. In all cases the obligation to comply with legislation and guidelines will belong to the department and its HoC.

7.2.16 THIRD-PARTY MARKETING ENDORSEMENTS

i. 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.

ii. Officials may not accept invitations to speak at public engagements that have been convened for profit, where the organisation gains credibility from the official and where it might be perceived that this official is endorsing the host organisation.

iii.   Departments must not advertise or publicly endorse the products or services they purchase or obtain from the private sector under contract.

7.3   PUBLIC RELATIONS

The section considers PR policy and tools that extend beyond the traditional media relations interventions.

7.3.1   EVENTS

i.   The organiser of a newsworthy departmental event or function should submit notice of such events to the GCIS's Diary of Government Activity, which is managed by the GCIS's Internal Communication Unit.

ii.   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.

iii.   The procurement of all suppliers for an event (e.g. catering, sound systems, décor, entertainment) must be in accordance with government procurement policies.

7.3.2   SOUTH AFRICAN-BASED EXHIBITIONS AND TRADE SHOWS

i.   Participation in a South African-based exhibition or trade show is at the discretion of the government entity.
ii.   If the request is approved, the HoC is responsible for ensuring that the design of the stand conforms to departmental CI and quality standards.

7.3.3   INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITIONS AND TRADE SHOWS

i.   Departments wanting to officially participate in international trade shows or exhibitions should work and/or consult with Brand South Africa at least six months in advance of the opening date of the trade show or exhibition.

ii.   CI, quality standards and budgeting for all exhibition elements is the responsibility of the entity participating in the exhibition and/or trade show and not Brand South Africa.

7.4   GIFTS, DONATIONS AND SPONSORSHIPS: ARRANGEMENTS

All gifts, donations and sponsorship arrangements must be in line with the Public Finance Management Act, 1999 (Act 1 of 1999), Municipal Finance Management Act, 2003 (Act 56 of 2003) and National Treasury Regulations (21.1.1), Financial Disclosure Regulations and internal departmental policies on gifts, donations and sponsorships.

7.4.1   Gifts, donations and sponsorships are defined in line with Treasury Regulations as follows:

i.   Gift: An item given willingly to an official without payment or receiving anything in return.

ii.   Donation: A contribution to the department in cash or in kind acquired without compensation or assistance.

iii.   Sponsorship: A form of marketing in which a private company pays for all or some of the costs associated with a project in exchange for recognition.

All donations/sponsorships 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 for the marketing communication campaign.

7.4.2 RECEIPT OF GIFTS, DONATIONS AND SPONSORSHIPS

i. The accounting officer or a designated official of the department must approve gifts, donations and sponsorships.

ii. All cash gifts, donations and sponsorships above R100 000 must be paid directly into the Revenue Fund. National Treasury will then make these funds available during the adjustment budget.

iii. Sign-off procedures for any sponsorship arrangements must: be endorsed by directorate managers, be in line with applicable financial delegation and adhere to the departmental policy on gifts, sponsorships and donations.

7.4.3 GOVERNMENT AS A SPONSOR

i. The directorate closely tied with the event must develop requests for sponsorships/donations related to marketing communication projects, but approval must be in line with the financial delegation within the department.

ii. Sponsorships/donations can be in cash and in kind and must always be recorded in the donations register of the department.

iii. Reporting will be done in line with the relevant legislation and/or prescriptions of the relevant department.

7.4.4 PRIVATE SECTOR AND INTERNA-TIONAL DONOR-SPONSORED PROJECTS

i. Government will not enter into marketing communication sponsorship/donation 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.

7.4.5 DONATIONS/SPONSORSHIP ARRANGEMENTS

i. Communication units of the applicable entities are required to process applications that relate specifically to their core business. All sponsorship/donations 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.

ii. The official who writes up a sponsorship/donation agreement must check the context of the agreement to ensure that it does not conflict with the core business of the entity or with any existing agreements and that it does not expose government to any type of liability.

iii. All signatories must have the required authority to sign such an agreement. It is advisable in the case of a government entity that the official head of such an organisation be the signatory on sponsorship agreements.

iv. For full sponsorship/donations guiding principles, refer to Annexure A.

7.5 PUBLICATIONS

7.5.1 RESPONSIBILITY OF THE HOC

i. HoCs must ensure 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, national departments' Annual Report Number or provincial departments' Annual Report Number are allocated to all official publications.

7.5.2 PUBLICATION STRATEGY

i. vi. Departments must produce publications that educate, inform and have a legitimate public benefit.

ii. vii. All departmental marketing publications – brochures, newsletters, reports, magazines, newspapers and the like – must be based on the marketing strategy approved by the HoC.

iii. All publications must be printed with due regard for the language preferences of the intended audience, including consideration of the visually and hearing impaired and plain-language requirements.

iv. The content of publications must conform to the content requirements outlined in Section 7.2.1 of this policy.

v. The HoC must ensure that the publications do not bring the government into disrepute by virtue of their content and/or the quality of the written content, photographic images or other graphic material. These publications should also respect the relevant copyright and privacy requirements.

7.5.3   ONLINE PUBLICATIONS

Publications issued by a department/province or local municipality must be made available electronically on the department's/province's or local municipality's website.

7.6   THIRD-PARTY ADVERTISING AND REFERENCES ON WEBSITES

7.6.1   Paid advertising is not allowed on any government entities' websites.

7.6.2   Organisations sponsoring government activities may only be acknowledged in text on relevant pages. They may, only in exceptional circumstances, have their logos added to the department website if this is approved by the HoC or designate.
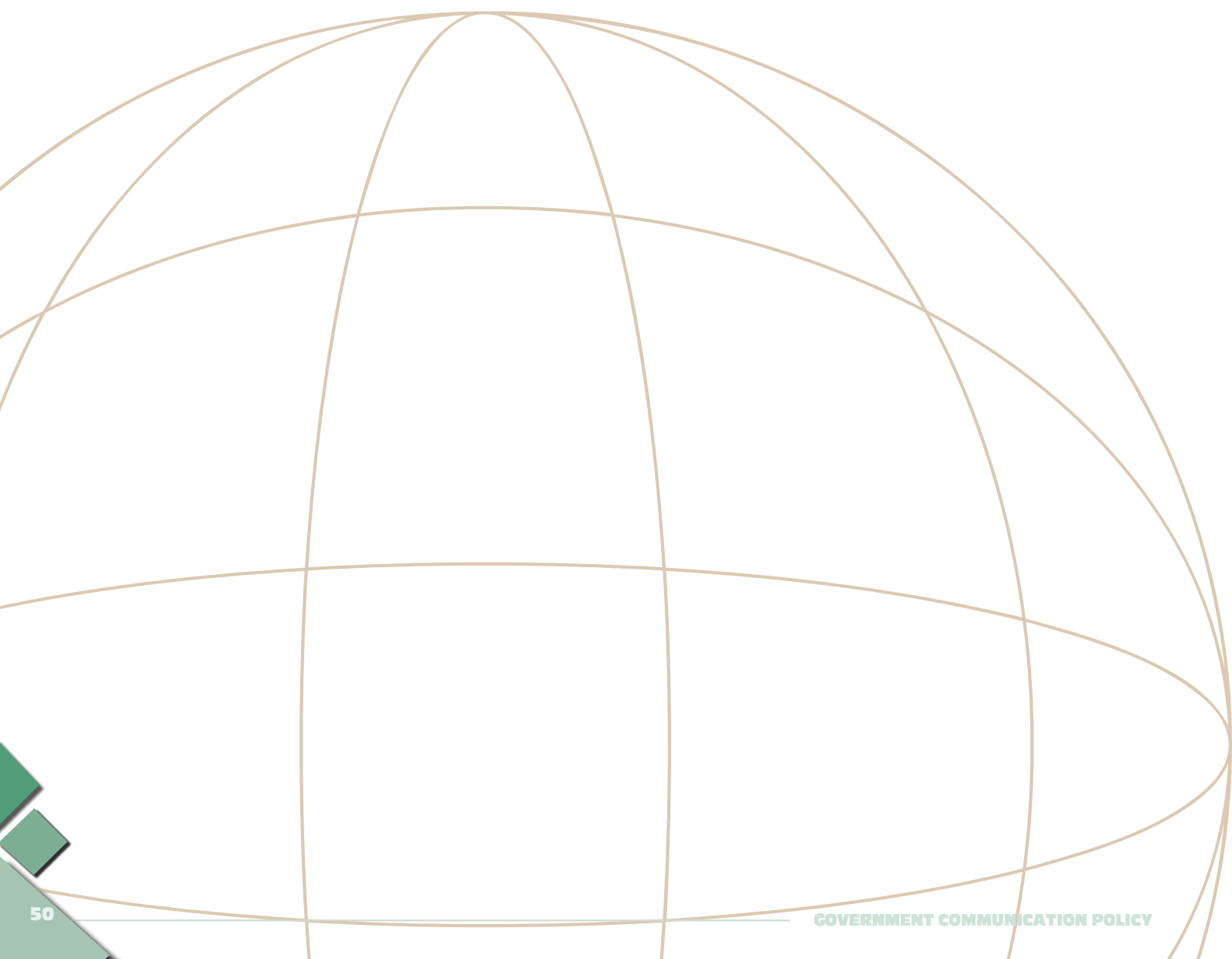
8.

INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

8.1   DEFINITIONS

8.1.1   Internal communication is the effective exchange of communication/information, both vertically and horizontally. between members within an organisational space in the context of government this i and between employees at national, provincial and local spheres across a variety of platforms.

8.1.2   An organisation that has an effective internal communication strategy is likely to have professional, committed and highly efficient employees who will act as its key ambassadors and messengers.

8.1.3   Internal communication can be seen to be effective if the transformational messages of government, service-delivery information and work-related instructions are developed and understood, and are then made available to the general public. Internal communication is a necessary requirement for all government institutions.

8.2   AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Internal communication has the following aims:
8.2.1   to keep all employees – from the senior manager to the general worker – informed and mobilised to participate in the implementation of government's projects/programmes for the realisation of its goals;

8.2.2   to create a conducive working environment where all employees are informed, understand a common vision and are inspired to work towards the same organisational goals;

8.2.3   to establish a culture that it is built on the values and principles of Batho Pele;

8.2.4   to introduce public servants to the values and mandate of government so that they can act as its key ambassadors and messengers;

8.2.5   to encourage the sharing of knowledge and best practice in government internal communications in order to promote service excellence;

8.2.6   to enable all employees to articulate the department's vision, mission and mandate. ;

8.2.7   to build a professional public service and a capable state.

PLANNING

8.3.1   Each entity must develop a five-year Internal Communication Strategy and annual plans to support the strategy.

8.3.2   The Internal Communication Strategy must form part of their overall Communication Strategy, be aligned to the NCSF of government and support government's mandate and priorities.

8.4 INTERNAL COMMUNICATION PLATFORMS

8.4.1 Communication can take place in different ways, formally and informally. Formal communication takes place through established channels in an organisation. This could be meetings called by recognised authorities and/or through written communication. Informal communication is normally built around social relationships and is usually oral.

8.4.2 The internal communication strategic plan must indicate the channels/platforms the entity will use in order to communicate specific campaigns and/or information. Platforms can include but must not be limited to:
- notice/bulletin boards
- newsletters/magazines
- letters/ Circulars
- videos/in-house TV
- emails and intranet (see below)
- presentations
- team-building
- group meetings
- employee-attitude surveys
- focus groups
- face-to-face meeting with managers
- social events
- audio recordings
- social media
- general staff meetings

8.4.3 Each entity must have an intranet that allows for the free flow of information between political principals, managers and employees within the organisation. If capacity issues do not allow entities to have their own intranet, email/website platforms must be used to fulfil the same functions.

i.   i. This intranet must incorporate government policies/programmes and activities, and must be updated weekly.

ii. The internal communicator or his/her designate will be responsible for intranet content and for ensuring that this is updated, accurate and easy to understand.

iii. Staff will be provided with access rights and be able to post blogs, comments subject to the same rules of "acceptable use" and "content" as outlined in Section 5: Online Communication platforms.

8.4.4 WEBSITE (SEE SECTION 6: ONLINE COMMUNICATION PLATFORMS)

Each department must identify and contribute relevant content such as campaign toolkits to be uploaded to the government communicators' website managed by the GCIS.

8.5 INTERNAL COMMUNICATION STRUCTURES

8.5.1 THE INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS DIVISION

i.   Each institution (national department, provincial department and the local sphere of government) must have an internal communications division (ICD) responsible for facilitating the production, approval and dissemination of information within that institution at that particular sphere. This should be made up of representatives from the different business units;

ii. An internal communicator must manage the ICD by:

a.   ensuring that there is two-way communication between employees and management on policy, programmes and issues affecting day-to-day implementation of the government's PoA;

b.   ensuring that all staff members understand the mandate, vision, mission, values and the strategic plan of the government and the relevant department;

c.   engaging politicians, senior management and line managers so that department policies and programmes are communicated to staff;

d.   developing and implementing an internal communication strategic plan that is part of the overall developmental strategy;

e. identifying and understanding the communications needs of public servants in their respective department or government organisation.

iii. Government institutions with resource limitations must allocate an employee to the internal communications function. This staff member must be able to draw on the support of other employees when fulfilling the internal communications function. The staff allocation must be in line with the Human Resources policies and practices of government.

iv. The ICD manager and/or designated employee must be appointed at a level that is in line with departmental size and complexity and the level of responsibility. This person will report to the HoC and must have access to political principals through a range of forums.

v. The ICD manager and/or employee allocated to the internal communications function must have a minimum of three years of relevant communications-centred experience.

vi. The the budget of the ICD must be included in the communications budget to carry out the planned activities.

vii. The ICD manager/designated employee must participate in the National Integrated Internal Communicators' Forum (NIICF).

8.5.2 INTEGRATED INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS FORUMS

i. NATIONAL INTEGRATED INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS FORUM

a. The GCIS convenes the NIICF quarterly: to provide guidelines for communication; to assist with joint planning; to share information and best practice cases and monitor implementation of government-wide internal communication plans. Departmental strategic/annual communication plans and campaigns

can be shared at this meeting. The GCIS may also convene special information-sharing sessions for this purpose.

b. All internal communicators from the national departments and their entities/parastatals/state-owned enterprises must attend this forum.

c. Biannual meetings will be called and must include a representative from the Provincial Internal Communicators' Forum (PICF).

ii. PROVINCIAL/LOCAL INTERNAL COMMUNICATORS' FORUM

a. Each province must establish a PICF that should meet quarterly. The GCIS will convene this forum with the following aims: to provide guidelines for communication; assist with joint planning; share information and best case practices; and monitor implementation of government-wide internal communication plans. Departmental strategic/annual communication plans and campaigns can be shared at this meeting.

b. Internal communicators in the Office of the Premier, provincial departments, and district and local municipalities must attend this forum.

c. Each province must send a representative to participate in a biannual NIICF.

iii. GCIS: INTERNAL COMMUNICATION: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

a. to provide direction with the necessary authority and strategic leadership to government internal communications forums

b. to lead and manage government internal communication campaigns across the broadest spectrum of communication platforms

c. to be responsible for gathering information materials from internal communicators so that they can ensure distribution throughout the public sector.

8.6   ACCEPTABLE USE

8.6.1   The DG/municipal manager is the designated official responsible for authorising and overseeing the distribution of internal communications materials, unless he/she delegates this authority to additional employees. Such delegation shall be done in writing with the delegated powers or responsibility listed in the letter.

8.6.2   The database of internal communicators and employee databases must not be made available to external service providers for the purposes of promoting their businesses/commercial interests.

8.6.3   Internal communications will not be used by public servants or other persons to promote their own commercial/business interests.

8.7   MONITORING

8.7.1   The GCIS will monitor the departments to ensure that they:
i.   share information
ii.   participate in internal communicators' forums
iii.   create platforms for implementation and share best practices
iv.   develop a Strategic Plan and implement activities

9.

RESEARCH

9.1   COMMUNICATION RESEARCH

Research, monitoring and evaluation is a critical component of communication, as it is used to:

9.1.1   create awareness of issues arising in the public arena that need to be addressed or require a response

9.1.2   monitor and assess the communication activities of government and the impact that they have,

9.1.3   improve and build on future communication campaigns, initiatives and activities

9.1.4   assess public information needs for government projects and programmes

Research activities take on a variety of forms:

9.2   ENVIRONMENTAL SCANNING/CONTENT RESEARCH

9.2.1 Content research/environmental scanning must be done to inform communications campaigns.

9.3   PUBLIC OPINION RESEARCH

9.3.1 Public opinion research must be conducted to help government better understand and identify our stakeholders and citizens' needs, expectations and priorities. Research must be further used to:
  a.   measure the effectiveness of information and communication campaigns
  b.   evaluate the success of marketing initiatives undertaken
  c.   assess the public's response to proposals or changes that are to occur
  d.   assess perceptions in respect of the effectiveness of policies and programmes that have been introduced
  e.   determine preferred platforms to inform the public

9.4   ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

9.4.1   National, provincial and local government departments as well as government entities should ensure that they are aware of public information requirements. Where funding is available, public opinion research should be conducted.

9.4.2   The GCIS must coordinate cross-cutting research initiatives that focus on the effectiveness of marketing and communication campaigns in instances where a number of government departments and/or agencies are affected.

9.4.3   The GCIS must plan, coordinate and conduct its own annual public opinion research into the impact and effect of activities in support of the national communication plan.

9.5 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

9.5.1 COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES AND CAMPAIGNS

i. Monitoring and Evaluation measures the impact as well as the effectiveness of communication within a departmental/provincial/local and/or campaign environment.

ii. Communication activities and campaigns must have smart measurable targets and communication plans must be assessed by the department/province or local authority managing these activities against these targets annually.

iii. Monitoring and Evaluation reports must be made available to relevant managers and corrective action pursued in order to ensure communication improvements.

9.5.2 COMPLIANCE

i. The Accounting Oficer or his/her designates must monitor and evaluate the degree of compliance with the Communication Policy within their department. This should be done in line with the Monitoring and Evaluation Guidelines for the Communication Policy. In areas where there has been little compliance with policy, the HoCs should institute corrective action to ensure behavioural change.

ii. Annual Monitoring and Evaluation reports must be made available to GCIS as the department responsible for oversight of the government communication function.

iii. GCIS should conduct a formal review every five years of implementation so as to evaluate the impact and effectiveness of the Communication Policy and to put in place changes where these might be required.

iv. GCIS should consider the kind of sanctions required in instances where a department or government institution fails to comply with the Communication Policy.

9.5.3 FUNDING

i. Research forms an integral part of any communication activity. All communication budgets must therefore include a research aspect.

ii. For any communication campaign budget over R10 million, about 2% of the budget must be allocated to research.

10.

ANNEXURE A:

10.1 DONATIONS/SPONSORSHIP GUIDELINES

10.1.1 All agreements must clarify the roles, rights and responsibilities of both parties and protect the department and government from unwanted liabilities;

10.1.2 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 those of the department;

10.1.3 Any marketing communication donation/sponsorship deal undertaken by a department must not compromise the department's reputation, public image, integrity or its ability to fulfil its functions;

10.1.4 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;

10.1.5 Protecting government's and the department's reputation must be expressed as a term or terms in the sponsorship agreement. All departmental sponsorship agreements must have certain standard criteria, which are outlined later in the policy;

10.1.6 Terms and conditions for donations/sponsorship must be precise and should address the following:
i. identify all parties to the sponsorship (including any third parties)
ii. specify the exact nature and value of the donation/sponsorship
iii. specify the payment terms, including how and when the payment will be made and to whom
iv. 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
v. describe what the money is to be used for as set out in the budget
vi. specify in detail both parties' rights and benefits
vii. set out any special conditions that apply

viii. 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
ix. specify what must happen to any surplus funds
x. specify warranties and details concerning liability, including limits to liability and who is responsible for public liability and insurance
xi. stipulate that the department is under no obligation to continue the relationship beyond the contract period
xii. set out procedures for communicating with and reporting on suppliers
xiii. specify who owns any intellectual property which might arise
xiv. specify relations with any employees of the organisation seeking sponsorship opportunities
xv. consider methods to secure payment against the other party's failure to deliver
xvi. indemnify the department and government against risk.

10.1.7 When co-branding activities, government's CI must be adhered to with respect to all creative material developed in the promotion of the sponsored activity;

10.1.8 The sponsorship agreement must indicate where and how the sponsor's CI will be used in relation to the department's CI. It is important to note that the GCIS's CSA must approve any co-branding activities;

10.1.9 Officials responsible for developing sponsorship agreements must ensure that the guidelines for the use of the Coat of Arms are met (these are also available on *www.gcis.gov.za)*;

10.1.10 Sponsorship agreements must include the department's right to review all promotional material and activities, including specific uses prior to release.

11.

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