Generally, there is a positive climate in the country for developmental communication to take place. Furthermore, the Government pursues service delivery with a firm belief that communication itself is a site of service delivery, a constitutional obligation and a fundamental component of the government's political mandate.

The Toolkit is meant to share with government communicator's mechanisms of dealing with different functions expected of them. It will outline the policy positions relating to their work as well as provide guidance on how to approach certain functions.

4.1 Government communication as a co-ordinated function

The Communication Task Team (COMTASK) that was set up by Cabinet in 1995 to investigate and make recommendations about government communication revealed as part of its findings that 'government lacks central co-ordination of messaging and adequate planning of information campaigns'.

As a result of COMTASK's findings and recommendations, government established the GCIS as a structure within which the framework of all government communication and information would be co-ordinated. The GCIS was given a mandate to introduce a system that is comprehensive, integrated, streamlined and structured for delivery.

Over the past few years since its birth in May 1998, the GCIS has put in place systems to co-ordinate and plan the communication work of government. Among these is the Extranet, which serves as a calendar of events designed to enable government communicators to share their plans for public activities and programmes. This system enables communicators to take advantage of the opportunities created by other departments for bilateral work, to be more sensitive to the environment within which information is released and approaches taken, and to be more proactive in setting the government agenda.
Additional to this is a series of forums for government communicators at national, provincial and local level designed to ensure collective planning and strategising around communication in government.

The GCF, which is convened quarterly by the GCIS, provides 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 accelerate service delivery. The introduction of the GCF web page (*www.gcis.gov.za/gcf*) assists government communicators to access minutes of previous GCF meetings, presentations and current information around government communication issues.

In addition, Communication Clusters have been established to provide a platform for government communicators to jointly plan and collectively implement government communication programmes. These Communication Clusters are designed in the same manner as the Cabinet Clusters and thereby allow for communication programmes to be developed on the basis of concrete plans that emanate from the Cabinet.

BuaNews Online is an electronic government publication targeting especially community media. It provides stories on a daily basis covering activities of government and other sectors of society to mainly community media across the country. The Head of GCIS sits

in Cabinet and conducts post-Cabinet briefings to communicate the decisions taken by the Government on a number of policy matters.

Accordingly, Communication Clusters, the GCF, *BuaNews* Online, Post-Cabinet Briefings and Parliamentary Briefing Weeks have helped enhance government's approach to co-operative governance and have responded to the need for a co-ordinated process of realising messages and information of government.

These efforts have created a new consciousness and appreciation of communication as a strategic tool for service delivery.

GCIS SECRETARIAT STRUCTURE

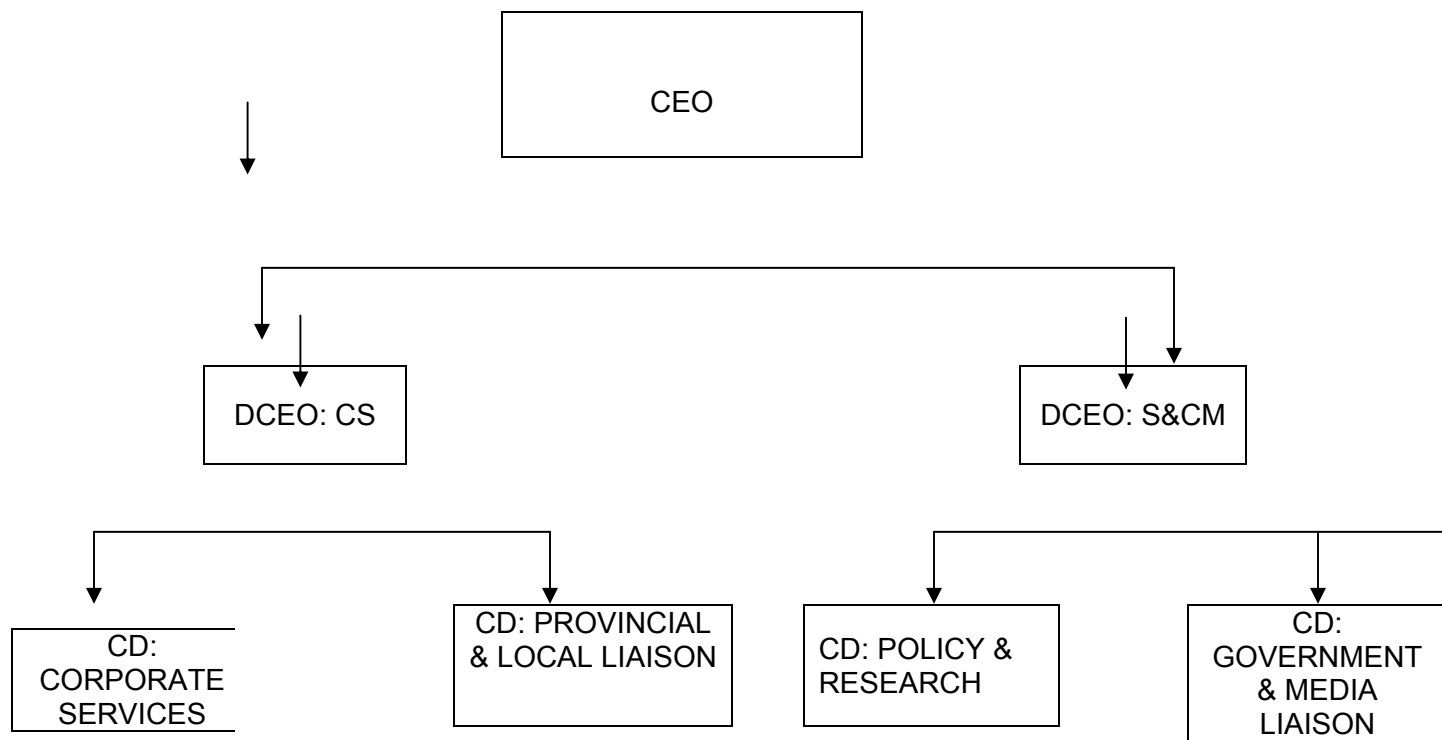Legend

Officer

Executive Officer

Services

CEO: Chief Executive

DCEO: Deputy Chief

CS: Centralised

S&CM: Strategy & Content Management
CD: Chief Director

CEO

DCEO: CS	DCEO: S&CM

CD: CORPORATE SERVICES	CD: PROVINCIAL & LOCAL LIAISON	CD: POLICY & RESEARCH	CD: GOVERNMENT & MEDIA LIAISON

CHIEF DIRECTORATES

• Corporate Services is in charge of the human resource needs of the organisation. This section is responsible for the overall leadership and management of the activities, personnel and budget of the two Directorates: Human Resources and Training Services, and the Subdirectorates: Internal Communication, Human Resource Management, and Information Centre.
Tel: (012) 314 2402.

• Government and Media Liaison (G&ML) co-ordinates and facilitates the development, analysis and implementation of communication strategies. It manages and strengthens the relationship between government and the media, and convenes all the co-ordination forums aimed at promoting the integration of government communication. G&ML is responsible for the overall leadership and management of the activities, personnel and budget of the three Directorates: National Liaison, International and Media Liaison, and News Service, as well as the Communication Centre, Parliamentary Office and Parliamentary Resource Centre.
Tel: (012) 314 2108.

• Policy and Research is responsible for analysing the impact of government policy as well as research into the communication environment within which government operates. This section also facilitates research into the communication needs of other government departments on request. The Chief Directorate is responsible for the overall leadership and management of the activities, personnel and budget of the two Directorates: Policy Development and Research.
Tel: (012) 314 2176.

• The Communication Services Agency (CSA) is responsible for the content development and production of government information products; co-ordinating bulk-buying of advertising and marketing space for government; and managing the video, photography and radio units of GCIS. CSA is responsible for the overall leadership and management of the activities, personnel and budget of the three Directorates: Content Development, Product Development, Marketing, Advertising and Distribution, as well as the Subdirectorate: Support Services.
Tel: (012) 314 2297.

• Provincial and Local Liaison (PLL) is responsible for the co-ordination and facilitation of all development communication work aimed at providing government information and services to citizens of South Africa to better their lives and promote development. One of the leading approaches in providing such useful information and services is through the establishment of Multi-Purpose Community Centres (MPCCs), one-stop information and service points that are being rolled out in especially rural and under-serviced areas. PLL is responsible for the overall leadership and management of the activities, personnel and budget of the following Directorates: PLL Administration, Institutional Development, and Local Liaison and Information Management. The nine regional and 85 district-based GCIS offices are also co-ordinated through PLL.
Tel: (012) 314 2426.

• The GCIS Project Desk assists government departments with specific campaigns and events. It develops a Government Communication Programme (GCP) and constitutes

project teams in line with the imperatives of the GCP. It receives and processes cross-cutting communication projects / campaigns requests for assistance from other government departments on behalf of the GCIS. These requests for assistance relate to strategising for communication:
Tel: (012) 314 2293.

• The Information Management and Technology division is responsible for the efficient and effective utilisation of information and information technology as strategic resources in the execution by GCIS of its functions. The section comprises four sub-programmes: Network and Server Support; Regional Support and Training; Systems Development, Electronic Information Resources.
Tel: (012) 314 2187.

Government Communication Strategy

The GCS sets the framework for government communication each year. Taking serious account of their key programmes, departments are expected to follow this framework in determining their communication strategies and plans. The GCIS is mandated to monitor progress in the implementation of the GCS. The Cabinet *lekgotla* deliberates on the broad programme and strategic priorities of government.

Towards the end of each financial year, departmental reports are assembled for the SONA. The President announces the Government's Programme of Action in the SONA at the beginning of each financial year. On the basis of this programme, the GCIS then finalises the GCS. At this point, the GCIS then presents the government communication programme with the central government message, which then guides the work of a government communicator for that particular year. Heads of Communication (HoCs) are, therefore, expected to submit to the GCIS, departmental communication strategies and programmes that are developed in line with the overall GCS within two weeks of Cabinet approval.

4.3   Generic framework for developing a communication strategy – a process in outline

Why strategise for communication?

A thousand voices speaking without a common message and single purpose will in the end just make an indistinct noise that few will hear.

We must, therefore, speak with shared purpose and clarity of message. Our actions must be informed by an understanding of the environment we are working in, of who we are trying to reach, what they are thinking, how they are best reached.

In other words, we must strategise for communication, translating our ideas into a concrete Programme of Action that promotes our objectives.

The strategising process:

There are many ways of approaching this challenge. What follows is a process that has emerged out of the GCIS' own experience in strategising for communication. It is