



cooperative
governance

Department:
Cooperative Governance
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



**THE ROLE OF COGTA IN ENHANCING THE
COMMUNICATION POLICY
IMPLEMENTATION IN MUNICIPALITIES**

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

- Communication represents an important function of government, responsible for improving three principle elements of government: **effectiveness** (building broad support and legitimacy for programs), **responsiveness** (knowing citizens needs and responding to them), and **accountability** (explaining government stewardship and leadership).
 - a. It is within this context that government communication is based on the premise that access to development information enables people to become active and conscious participants in the complex process of social transformation.
 - a. Key among these is the commitment to intensify direct and unmediated communication with the public and sharpening media response mechanisms and nurturing the relationship between the media and government.

- a. Communications is a political function – **“Political Principals are the main spokespersons”**
- b. Political Principals across the three spheres - are significant players in shaping public perceptions on government performance in addressing key priorities
 - The above must compels government to ensure that it maintains a continued interaction with the citizenry.
 - This communication should guarantee an informed and appropriate response to people’s needs.
 - It must also ensure that government is sensitive to the information needs of the people.

THE RIGHT TO INFORMATION

PRINCIPLE

The function of government communication in the current political dispensation is founded within constitutional framework

Our constitution guarantees freedom of expression and the Right of access to information

*“Everyone has a **right to freedom of expression**, including **freedom of the press and other media**”*

What does the above mean?

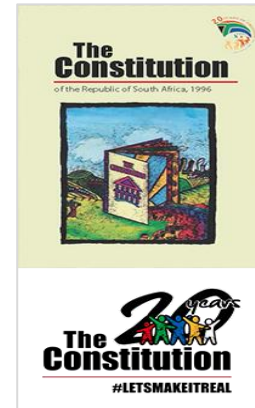
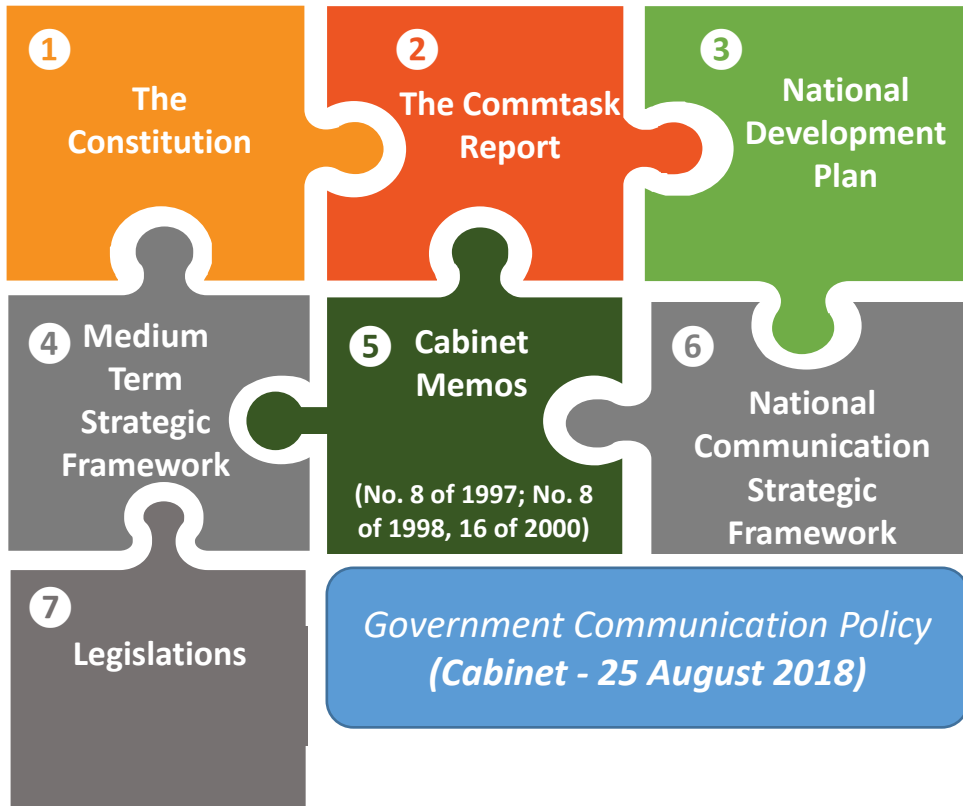
- **Government communication should be a strategic and planned process aimed at ensuring effective dialogue between government & communities**

- Providing people with information which they can use to improve their lives, based on their needs
- Encouraging people to participate in shaping the policies of government
- Keeping people informed of programmes & progress in implementing them

- The public has a right to government information – *“**Actively sharing information is therefore one of government's most important communication tasks. The right to information is set out in the Constitution**”*

COMMS POLICY

WHAT IS THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK



Framing Docs

Relationship between the public and government

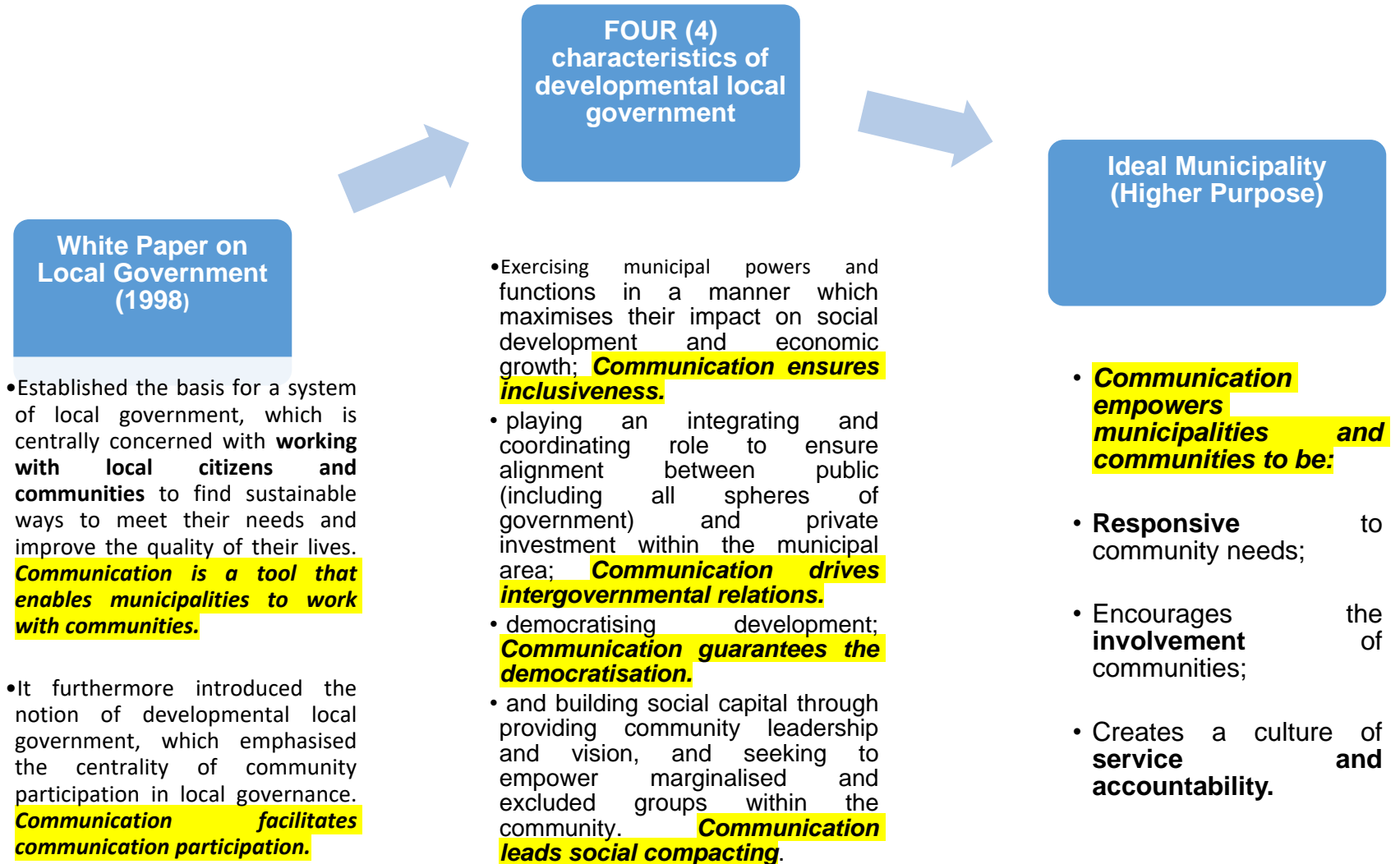
Government's mandate requires that communication should expand access to information that would enable the public to participate in the country's transformation and in bettering their own lives; that it should bring the realities of our emergent and thriving democracy to the attention of the all stakeholders.

CABINET DECISION

The central message of decisions adopted by cabinet is that communication should be recognised as a strategic element in service delivery by government.

Strengthening and integrating the government communication remains of critical importance

THE NEED FOR COMMUNICATIONS



THE NEED FOR COMMUNICATIONS

From the above – it is clear that Government has to communicate

It is the above paradigm that compels a government to view communication as a strategic element in service delivery. Public communication has a crucial role to play to support the design and delivery of policies and services. Indeed, it is a primary vehicle through which citizens learn about government action and programmes geared to improve their lives.

“Government has to tell South Africa its good story through online infographics, orchestrated optics, televised speeches, interviews and analysis. This has to be followed by hard facts, examples – showing that we have a transparent government that is ready to respond to the information needs of the people”

Ongoing Comms – all channels, Regular Briefings,

Political leadership - critical in leading communications of government policies.

Public Participation: Izimbizo

Political leadership must interact with communities; and providing feedback to communities;

Mainstream; Public Broadcast and Community Radio

Extending reach of government messages.

Interviews; Talkshows

Supporting communication products and platforms from departments

Thusong Service Centres & Provincial Activations

Provide strategic communication support on the ground.

Digital & Social Media

Ensuring strategic communication access to information – multiple channels.

KEY CHALLENGES TO NOTE

If we agree that Government must communicate with communities, then what is the challenge?

Do we have the right, in the right positions? Or comms is a second or third choice for others?

Comms not recognised as strategic element in service delivery

Spin doctor syndrome – Comms is more than Media Engagement

Comms not respected – “not able to provide strategic advise”

Comms not seat in strategic meetings

Comms not given management support

Confusion as to where comms report

No Comms budget

Comms not capacitated

Comms not well informed about govt work - “failure to respond to media queries”

Scramble eggs scenario in Municipal Comms accross the 257 Munics

These and many other challenges clearly shows the need to do more to ensure – “Integrated; Coordinated; Seamless and Strategic Comms across the three spheres”.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT ANSWERS

UNIFORMITY?

WHY DOES EVERYONE SEEMS TO BE AN EXPERT IN GOVT COMMS?

ARE WE IN A COMPETITION?

IS IT THE ISSUE OF SIZE AND BUDGET?

- 8X METROS
- 44 DISTRICTS
- 205 LM'S

*No one can be a master of everything?
Different type of skills are required for a successful Comms*

IS IT ABOUT WHO IS IN CHARGE FOR COMMS TO BE RECOGNISED AS STRATEGIC?

IS COMMS ARE DUMPING SITE?

DO WE NEED A SKILLS AUDIT SO THAT WE KNOW WHERE TO PROVIDE SUPPORT?

LEADERSHIP IN GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATION?

GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATION – “STRATEGIC ELEMENT IN SERVICE DELIVERY”?

THE CASE FOR ALIGNMENT

Essentially, citizens have to experience government across all spheres of government the same way. Government must ensure that communities can experience consistency in communication guided by known guide or policy. This familiarity will make it easy for media and the communities to know how government will respond in any situations.

Does this mean that we need a Government Communication Policy or Guidelines?

We do have a Comms Policy? GCIS developed

- How does this policy cover local government?

The Comms Policy has its own issues to consider?

- Financial Implications
- DPSA - Structures
- GCIS role in leading comms
- Does LG recognize this policy
- How will we ensure that all of government recognize this policy/guideline

NB

With the above in mind – Do we need a separate Communications Policy for Local Government, to ensure that there is uniformity across the 257 municipalities?

THE CASE FOR ALIGNMENT

We need a communications Policy/Guideline that is binding to all the 257 Municipalities

A single, coherent communication policy is an invaluable tool that will help to ensure consistency in communication across the 257 municipalities

From the challenges with the Current Policy - We need an all of Government Approach

A CASE FOR GOVT COMMS POLICY

Does a Communication Policy Actually Improve Comms?

Comms Policy will assist government communicators to locate themselves in the overall government communication system in a rapidly changing environment. It provide the government communicator with simple guidelines and reference tool around government communication.

It Makes Information More Accessible

It Standardizes Your Communication Tools

It Helps Develop Channels for Feedback

It Helps Create Spaces for Communication

It Sets a Standard for Communication

Communication policy:

❖ *Sets of principles and norms established to guide the behaviour of communication systems. It is shaped over time in the context of society's general approach to communication and to the media.*

Government and other institutions create policies to ensure coherence and to avoid contradictions in the actions of various public and private entities. Policy instruments also seek to solve social and technical problems and to legitimise the implementation of programs and projects.

IMPLEMENTATION

Capacity

- Human Capital is needed to develop and implement the communication plans.

Capability

- The Human Capital must be capable to drive the communication action plan.

Professionalisation

- Communication is science as such the Human Capital must be Communication discipline professionals and that are on a continuous learning because the environment is not static especially to leverage the technological advancement dividend.

Resource

- Tools of trade are key to be able to tell the municipal story employing internal platforms. Content development and production of communication products for specific audiences through suitable channels.

Budget

- To maximise reach and impact financial means are needed to achieve effective communication.

Effective, efficient and strategic pro-active communications requires political support. (*Political support has mean many things*)



EXAMPLES

An example of a strategic communication that is the same across all municipalities is the DDM

- The communication approach will bring both **Internal and External** communication working in tandem to communicate key message across all channels and platforms to targeted audiences through identified levers and partnerships.

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION OBJECTIVES:

A major aspect of this communication approach is to develop and strengthen the avenues where both internal and external communications can be accelerated and contribute to highlighting achievements, carrying out advocacy interventions, conveying to the media and general public a sense of DDM support to the Government priorities aimed at promoting development of communities through the sustainable provision of services.

Uniformity will assist govt to focus:

- To timely communicate important information on DDM.
- To improve the understanding of sustainable long-term development.
- To increase understanding within key target audiences that DDM is an important and necessary game changer
- To help people understand that partnerships with government is the answer to addressing challenges of service delivery.
- To raise awareness of the importance of service delivery and the difficulties communities face without services.
- To raise awareness on the positive impact of the DDM partnerships across the country.

There are many other examples of Programmes requiring uniformity and strategic communication that is the same across all municipalities

A CASE FOR GOVT COMMS POLICY/GUIDE/Framework

Comms Policy:

- Is a means to realise the injunctions of our Constitution by setting the rules, procedures and process for standardisation and uniformity.

A single, coherent communication policy is an invaluable tool that will help to ensure consistency in communication across the 257 municipalities

To infuse an appreciation of government communication as a strategic element in service delivery. Uniformity and Common approaches to communication across the 257 Munics:

- a. We need another government process lead by GCIS to look at Communication Policy for LG - (Skills; Structures; Budgets; etc).
- b. Need a process to put together a guide looking at the size of municipalities – ***“the Comms Structures in various Municipalities”***.
- c. CoGTA and SALGA to partner with National GCIS.
- d. Encourage the strengthening of Provincials and Municipal Comms Forums.
- e. Provincial Core teams should be strengthened to support municipalities experiencing challenges.
- f. SALGA induction of local government leaders should include comms.
- g. Through meetings with mayors – make a case for the Institutionalisation of government communication in Municipalities.
- h. Through MINMEC – urge Provinces to work with Municipalities to capacitate communication and make it a strategic element in service delivery as directed by Cabinet.
- i. Do away with SILOS – as enjoined by President Ramaphosa

CONCLUSION

Comms Policy: Is a means to realise the injunctions of our Constitution by setting the rules, procedures and process for standardisation and uniformity.

A communication policy goes beyond just setting expectations for better information – but it's about creating an environment where everyone knows their roles and responsibilities and are also familiar with communication approach.

Communication doesn't happen on its own – hence the need to have a communication policy/guideline/framework in place to ensure that they are communicating effectively and appropriately.

- a. The Communication Policy should be developed to serve as a tool to assist Government in defining and determining communication deliverables.
- b. It should be intended to promote and ensure uniformity in the quality of communications work, as well as to standardize performance requirements of HOCs.
- c. It should be envisaged to serve as a development tool against which HOCs can identify areas for development.

- **ULTIMATELY - Policy Implementation?** We need to reach a stage where government executes an adopted policy as specified by the legislation or policy action. At this stage, various spheres cant do different things.
- We need alignment and uniformity

Our Vision: An efficient & effective cooperative governance system that enables resilient, safe, sustainable, prosperous, cohesive, connected and climate smart communities
Our Mission: To lead the Cooperative Governance System in support of integrated planning and implementation across all spheres of government

THANK YOU

Ngiyabonga | Re a leboga | Ndo livhuwa | Nndza¹ nkhensa | Ke a leboha haholo | Dankie | Enkosi