

GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATION POLICY REVIEW

2023



government
communications

Department:
Government Communication and Information System
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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THE POLICY REVIEW PROCESS



CONTEXT

- a. This Policy was drafted as part of a collective effort to strengthen the government communication system so that it is well-integrated, co-ordinated and professional and allows for citizens to interact with government so they are able to take up opportunities to better their lives.
- b. Other efforts aimed at professionalising government communications include The National Communication Strategic Framework and the Government Communication Excellence Tool (G-CET). This is a monitoring and evaluation tool that seeks to guide and measure government communication performance.



REASON FOR THE REVIEW

- a. The Policy states that the GCIS should conduct a five-year review of impact and effectiveness of the Communication Policy and to put in place changes where these might be required.
- b. The updated policy seeks to ensure that the policy is aligned to current norms and standards in the communication environment.



CONSULTATIONS

- a. In the course of this policy review, three consultative workshops attended by communicators from national, provincial and local spheres of government were held.
- b. During the workshops inputs, changes and amendments were sourced.
- c. Following suggestions from the three workshops, five sub-committees workshops that focused on each particular chapter were conducted for further inputs.
- d. The draft policy was presented to the GSCID Technical Committee, GSCID DG, Fosad and TTIS Sub-committee



DIFFERENTIATION BETWEEN POLICY AND WHITE PAPER

- a. The Government Communication Policy was introduced to professionalise the government communication system, the policy is not binding or enforceable by law.
- b. In order to remedy this, GCIS is in the process of developing a broader White Paper which deals with all aspects of communication.
- c. The Government Communication Policy will continue to exist until the White Paper Process has been finalised.



INTRODUCTION (CHAPTER 1)



POLICY AIMS

- a. Sets the rules, processes and procedures for communication for all of government
- b. Adopts a holistic approach
- c. Considers seven key communication areas
- d. Serves as a framework for government's communication strategy.
- e. Link to the Policy:
<https://www.gcis.gov.za/sites/default/files/Government%20Communication%20Policy%20Cabinet%20Approved%20Oct%202018.pdf>

VS

STRATEGY

- a. Determines path or actions to be taken.



APPLICATION

- a. All three spheres of government and government entities
- b. All government communicators must familiarise themselves with this policy and apply it within their immediate communication environment.



COMPLIANCE

- a. Every Communication official/ government messenger is required to act in accordance with the policy
- b. HoCs at all spheres must bring the policy to the attention of the officials



GCIS will report to the DPME bi-annually as stipulated in the MTSF on the level of compliance on this Policy. This will be managed through the Government Communication Excellence Tool (G-CET).

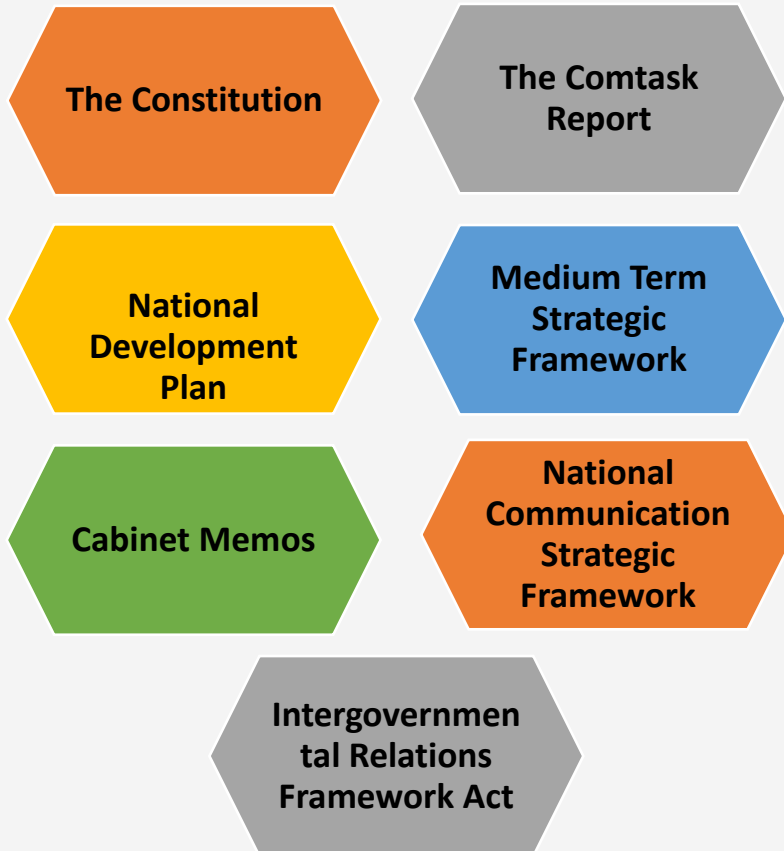


All department's communication strategies must be costed, and finalised with an allocated budget and approved by the Accounting Officer before the end of the first quarter of any given financial year. Approved strategies must be shared with the GCIS cluster coordination.



CHAPTER 2: Contextual Framework

FRAMING DOCUMENTS



THE PROMOTION OF ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT (PAIA)

- Gives effect to Section 32 of the Constitution, which provides that everyone has the **right to access information held by the State, as well as information held by another person** (or private body) when such information held privately is required for the exercise and protection of rights.
- **PAIA emphasises** the importance of access to information in a democratic society by fostering a culture of transparency and accountability. It **requires public (government) and private (non-governmental) organisations to create a manual describing the types of records they keep, as well as procedures for others to access that information.**

CLASSIFIED INFORMATION



CHAPTER 3: Roles, responsibilities and structures

COMMUNICATION AS A STRATEGIC FUNCTION

- Communication planning must be integrated into strategic departmental planning at management level as well as integrated structures across government.

FUNDING OF COMMUNICATION

WHAT'S NEW?

- **At least 1% to 5% of the institutional budget (previously read 1 - 5%) – must be allocated for communication, based on the institution's size and functions.**



HUMAN RESOURCES

- Adequate human resources to be made available
- Communication units must be established at national and provincial government, as well as at district, local and metro councils.





Ministers; Premiers; Mayors & Councillors)



Political Principals:

- Has overall responsibility for government communication
- Accounts to the public on government policy, aims and objectives, reports on deliverables and solicit views
- The Minister responsible for government communication provides political direction to government communicators.
- Minister's role extends to transversal communication programmes of government.
- Must attend media training

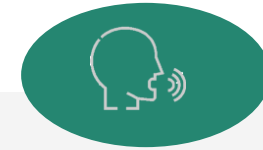
WHAT'S NEW? **Appoint an MLO in terms of chapter three of the Ministerial Handbook**



Accounting Officer:

- Appoints the HoC and provides oversight to the function
- Ensures communication is adequately resourced, strategies approved, and implemented
- Advocates for communication as strategic function

WHAT'S NEW? **Represent the executive authority in an event where a political principal is not available.**



Head of Communication:

- Delivers a costed and integrated communication strategy; plans and oversees implementation
- Participates in executive structures and leads integrated communication forums
- Provides advice and make recommendations on communication to political principals/ accounting officers
- Manages the communication' team
- Oversees training and capacity building
- Monitors and evaluates communication strategic plans
- Manages communication deliverables, including crises



CHAPTER 3: GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATION: ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES

AND STRUCTURES



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

- National, provincial and local coordinatng forums are designed to ensure integration, consistency and coherence to government communication.



The Provincial Government Communicators' Forum (PGCF):

- PGCF comprises:**
- The Office of the Premier (convener)
 - GCIS provincial offices and provincial government departments;
 - District HoCs;
 - Representatives of national departments in the province;
 - SOE representatives
 - SALGA



ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE FORUMS

- The GCFs should, among other things:**
- **discuss strategic** government **communication** issues within NCSF, MTSF and SoNA;
 - assess implementation of programme and the strategies
 - **build capacity**; develop communication strategies
 - **coordinate** and organise a calendar of events, **streamline** activities
 - **strategise and plan** communication activities



GOVERNANCE ISSUES:

- All communicators' forums are required to meet quarterly. Monitoring of these communicators' forums should happen as follows:**
- the LCF to be monitored by the DCF;
 - the PGCF to monitor the DCF; and
 - the NGCF to monitor the PGCF.



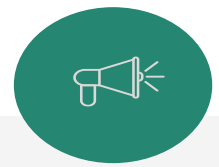
CHAPTER 3: GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATION: ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES AND STRUCTURES



RAPID RESPONSE (RR)



- RR meets daily to discuss issues in the media environment
- Plan proactively on around issues covered in the media during the week, and, where applicable, daily
- When an issue necessitates communication intervention, the GCIS will advise departments and provide advice on key messaging.
- At provincial level, the DG in the Premier's Office chairs RR



PARLIAMENT AND PARLIAMENTARY QUESTIONS

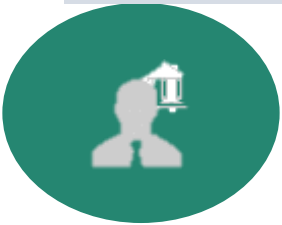


- Parliamentary sessions/questions provide communication opportunities for government departments.
- Parliamentary questions can be raised with individual ministries and/or be cross-cutting.
- All parliamentary questions must have input of the HoC.
- The HoC or MLO of a department where a parliamentary question has arisen must develop a communication strategy/statement to support these parliamentary interactions.



CHAPTER 4: Media Engagement

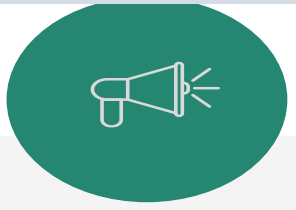
Focus on norms and standards of how deal with the media



CONDUCT OF GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES AS PRIVATE CITIZENS



- HoCs, MLOs, DDGs, CD, Directors (all other government employees) are seen as government representatives and cannot engage with the media and express views that **would bring the department into disrepute.**
- **Must comply with the Minimum Information Security Standards (MISS)**



AUTHORISED MEDIA SPOKESPERSONS:

Includes political principal, accounting officer, MLO, HoC; & technical experts



Spokespersons must undergo the compulsory communication induction with the GCIS within the first six months of employment to government communication.



COMPLAINTS MECHANISM



For media houses that **do not** subscribe to the press code communicators must consider their **internal complaints** mechanisms.



Complaints with regard to editors and the sector as a collective can also be sent to the **South African National Editors Forum.**



COPYRIGHT LAWS:



In line with Copyright laws, communicators must seek permission from publisher and owners of the artwork before using them for their own communication purposes.



PUBLIC DISCLOSURE AND RIGHT TO INFORMATION:



All personal information collected in the course of media engagement must be dealt with in terms of the Protection of Personal Information Act,13 (Act 4 of 2013)

CHAPTER 5: Digital Communication Platforms

SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNT MANAGEMENT



- Social media accounts must be updated regularly. Updates should be provided on social media channels on **a daily basis.**

- All entities must change the password to their social media accounts **quarterly.**

WEBSITE



- All government departments must have
- **Paid advertising, including endorsement or advertising of commercial products, is allowed on government websites subject to the approval by National Treasury/ the board/ accounting officer.**

WHAT'S NEW?

To ensure an informed citizenry and access to the latest information, all official government websites must be updated regularly. Websites must be updated with new information within **8 working hours of the information being available.**

CHAPTER 6: Crisis Communication

WHAT'S NEW?



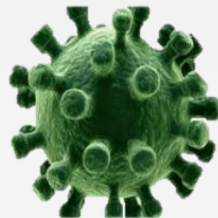
IDENTIFYING A DISASTER:

- Communicators should **help identify** or be made aware of any potential crisis and should manage communication activities to avert or limit a potential crisis.



EXPANSION OF CRISIS LIST:

- **Malicious attacks**
- **Serious and Organised Crime**
- **Environmental Hazards**
- **Human and Animal Health**
- **Major Accidents**
- **Societal Risks**



GCIS COORDINATING ROLE:

- The GCIS should be **engaged at the outset** and should act urgently and be ready to play a **leading coordination role** as the coherent and authentic voice of government.
- **In a transversal crisis**, no government institution should issue media statements that **contradict** other departments without consulting the relevant communicator.



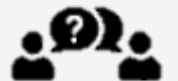
CRISIS PROTOCOL:

- HoC must be notified immediately (by the institution) of any emerging crisis
- Draft **a holding line or statement to be used** while a broader decision is being made about how the communication must be managed.



MEDIA ENQUIRIES:

- All media enquiries must ideally be acknowledged **as soon as possible**. 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.



CHAPTER 6: Crisis Protocol



CRISIS PROTOCOL:



CRISIS SPOKESPERSON:

- The Official spokespersons during a crisis = **Political principal, Accounting Officer and HoC**
- Political principal + the DG/municipal manager, in consultation with the HoC, 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.



CRISIS PROTOCOL: Working with the media

- Media enquiries should be directed to the **Accounting Officer/HoC/spokesperson**.
- Daily media briefings should be held in any crisis, along with by daily interviews.
- Crisis Committee must decide on frequency of briefings depending on the severity of the crisis.
- Following the release of information, the HoC must monitor news coverage and respond appropriately, where necessary.



Approval Processes:

- The HoC and Crisis Command Centre should establish an approval process that will fast-track decision-making during a crisis.
- Approvals should adhere to a strict timeline.



CHAPTER 7: Marketing and Campaign Management

WHAT'S NEW?



NON-PERMISSIBLE USE OF GOVERNMENT LOGOS AND BRANDING:

- Use of government Coat of Arms on branding material must **follow corporate identity (CI) guidelines**. <https://www.gcis.gov.za/content/resourcecentre/guidelines/corp-id>
- In some instances, the use of the Coat of Arms is completely **forbidden on apparel**.
- **Crisis communication resources must be in line with an approved campaign look and follow CI guidelines.**



NON-PERMISSIBLE USE OF GOVERNMENT INFORMATION:

- Use of government information on private websites should be done **with the approval** of the concerned department



ADVERTISING IN EMERGENCY OR CRISIS SITUATIONS:

- Proposals to **advertise during a crisis or emergency must follow National Treasury Regulations and Instruction Notes.**
- 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,
- GCIS provide guidelines on communications during elections.



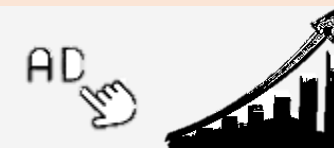
CAMPAIGN ADVERTISING:

- If GCIS services are requested, the GCIS will cost the advertising campaign in consultation with the client government institutions and **in line with the Government Segmentation Model.**
- **Government institutions must ensure that part of advertising spend goes to community and small commercial media entities taking into consideration campaign objectives and its target audience.**



NON-PERMISSIBLE ADVERTISING:

- Government institutions may not place advertising in platforms or a channel or station or publication **that do not comply with industry and government regulations.**



CHAPTER 8: Internal Communication

No amendments



DEFINITION:

- Is the effective exchange of communication / information within departments and across spheres.
- Helps to build professional, committed and highly efficient employees.



AIMS AND OBJECTIVES:

- Keep all employees informed and mobilised around implementation
- To create a conducive working environment
- Encourages the sharing of knowledge and best practices
- To build a professional public service



ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Facilitates:
- Production
 - Approval
 - Information dissemination within the institution.



PLANNING:

- Each entity must develop a **five-year Internal Communication Strategy** and annual plans to support the strategy.
- The Internal Communication Strategy must form part of their overall Communication Strategy, be aligned with the NCSF, and support government's mandate and priorities.



INTERNAL COMMUNICATION PLATFORMS:

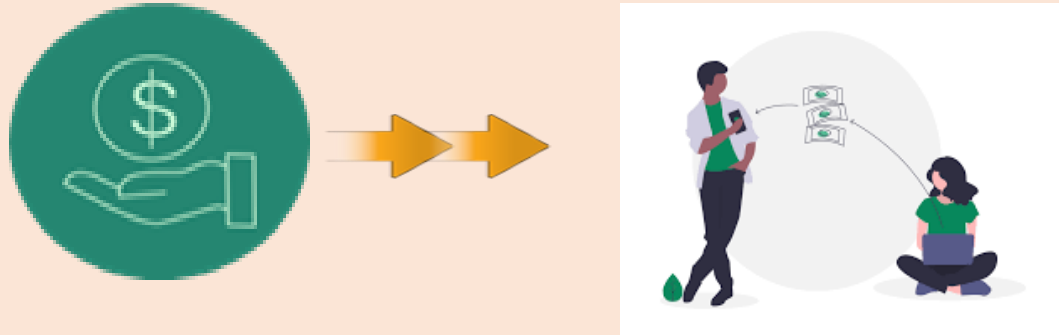
- Notice/bulletin boards
- Newsletters/magazines
- Letters;
- Videos/in-house TV
- Emails and intranet Presentations;
- Team-building;
- Group meetings;
- Employee-attitude surveys;
- Face-to-face meeting with managers
- Social events;
- Audio recordings
- General staff meetings.



CHAPTER 9: Research

FUNDING OF COMMUNICATION RESEARCH

WHAT'S NEW? For any communication **campaign budget of over R10 million, research must be conducted** to assess its effectiveness. **This must be included in the media plan approved by the department. Buy-in at an affordable amount is available through an existing GCIS Quantitative Tracker Research.**



COMPLIANCE WITH THE COMMUNICATION POLICY

- WHAT'S NEW?** • Government departments must use the G-CET to ensure seamless reporting on government communication activities.
- While the GCIS will coordinate implementation of the G-CET at the national level of government, the Office of the Premier (OTP) will coordinate implementation at the provincial level, and the office of the municipal manager will manage its implementation at the local level.
- The GCIS will provide support to both provincial and local levels of government in their implementation of the G-CET. **G-CET reports must regularly (at least twice a year)** be processed for submission to the highest levels of authority that govern the three levels of government.



Thank You

