



**LIMPOPO**

**PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT**  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

**COMMUNICATION POLICY**

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# DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION POLICY: LIMPOPO PROVINCE

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In any organization or institution, communication services play a critical role in ensuring that there is a positive image that is portrayed at all times. It is therefore important that the department's communication is at all times clear, accurate and coordinated in a manner that it responds to the challenges of the day. To that effect the Department is committed to a two-way communication process i.e. building relationships with its internal and external stakeholders and to form partnerships with the private sector.

The purpose of this policy is to provide clear guidelines and principles that guide communications in the department. This policy will ensure that communication takes place in a coordinated and uniform way.

The last section of this policy contains the procedure that governs the implementation of the policy and needs to be adhered to on everyday communication activities.

## 2. GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF THIS DOCUMENT

This communication policy seeks to ensure that the department:

- Acknowledges the importance of communications as a strategic management function and as an integral part of the daily functioning of the department;
- Demonstrates that the department is committed to a transparent and effective relationship with its internal and external stakeholders and will do so through the process of consultation and information dissemination;
- Acknowledges that it has a responsibility to inform its internal and external stakeholders of identified issues, progress made and results achieved in addressing its mandate;
- Acknowledges that all communication activities are cost effective and procured within these guidelines of the government's procurement policies;
- Communication Services has the responsibility and authority of ensuring that all communications activities, including procurement of services are done in accordance with these policies and procedures. This requires all communication and communication related activities to be co-ordinated and recommended by the directorate.

## 3. POLICY STATEMENT

3.1 It is the responsibility of the department to:

- Provide information to its internal and external stakeholders about government and departmental policies, programmes and services. This has to be done in an accurate, timely, relevant and understandable manner.
- Ensure that it reports its achievements with regard to its mandate.
- Ensure that the department is visible, accessible and answerable to the internal and external publics it serves.



- 3.2 Reflect the integration of the different directorates of the department, as well as the broader policy and communication priorities of government.
- 3.3 Ensure that the MEC is the Chief communicator on behalf of the department and ministry. In this regard the Directorate: Communication Services shall support and co-ordinate all communication efforts with the main aim of enabling the MEC to perform his/her function as chief communicator.
- 3.4 Communication Services shall be ultimately responsible for communications of the department and MEC's activities thereby ensuring better co-ordination and effective communications.
- 3.5 The MEC shall delegate the Media Liaison Officer to represent the department during media queries and media agendas.

**3.6 Communications in terms of this policy refers to:**

- ❖ Strategic advice and counsel with regard to policy development, programme planning, programme implementation and issues management.
- ❖ Developmental of strategies and implementation plans;
- ❖ Communication management refers to the management and implementation of all communication activities including the procurement of communication products and services (Procurement undertaken in terms of Department procurement procedures);
- ❖ Communication research and analysis entails the evaluation and analysis of communication activities and departmental image;
- ❖ Communication to stakeholders refers to both the internal and external audience;
- ❖ The Communication policy and its procedures applies to all structures and staff members in the department.

**4. COMMUNICATION FRAMEWORK**

- Province Environment

The department's communication programme / strategy for each year is guided by the President's State of the Nation Address, Premier's State of the Province Address, MEC Budget Vote 12, the Government's Communication Strategy and the Department priorities

- Government Communication as a co-ordinated function

All Government departments' communication activities are structured within a specific framework, which is co-ordinated, integrated, streamlined and structured. All these activities are co-ordinated and overseen by the Presidency and GCIS Nationally, however provincially activities are co-ordinated and overseen by the Premier and Provincial GCIS.

The series of forum for government communicators at, provincial and local level have been established to ensure collective planning and strategizing around all government communications.

The Provincial Government Communication Forum (PGCF), which provides a platform for Government communications to be planned in a manner that ensure coherence and consistency.

All these structures or processes including parliamentary, cabinet and budget vote, media briefings and Imbizo's creating a specific framework within which government and departmental communications must be executed.

## **5. COMMUNICATION ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

In order to ensure effective communication and compliance to Government policy the following roles and responsibilities are adopted:

### **5.1 MEC: Health and Social Development**

- Communication Services will be responsible for defining the annual communication priorities, objectives and requirements. This is done in consultation with the Department's Executive Management.
- The Chief Communicator of the Department (MEC). He / she can delegate these responsibilities to the HOD or Media Liaison Officer whenever required.
- The Executive management approves the annual communication strategy of the Department.
- The MEC approves all policy statements.

### **5.2 HOD: Social Development**

- The HOD ensures that the annual communications strategy is in line with Governments communication objectives and reflects the Department's priorities.
- The HOD ensures the integration of the communication function within the Department's organizational decision-making processes and the integration of strategic communication planning in the overall planning of the department.
- The HOD ensures that the Senior Manager: Communication Services functions as part of executive.
- The HOD serves as the department's communicator in the absence of the MEC. This can be delegated to Programme Managers (Heads of Branches) whenever necessary.
- The HOD approves all external and internal communication activities. This can be delegated to the senior manager: communication services.

### **5.3 Programme Managers**

- Programme managers must ensure compliance with the department's communication policy and procedures.
- Programme managers are responsible for ensuring key communication issues and priorities are identified constantly in line with the departmental communication strategy.

- Programme managers must ensure that the communication activities identified in their area of jurisdiction have communication plans this includes providing adequate budget for the implementation.

#### 5.4 Programme manager: Communication Services

- Communication services serves as the departmental authority on communication issues.
- He /she is responsible for co-ordination of all communications activities including the procurement of communication products and services. This includes the appointment of service providers and consultants and those activities of the various directorates /Branches of the department. All these activities must be either approved or recommended by him / her
- He/she ensure that the communication policy and procedures are communicated to staff and adhered to.
- He/she provide communication advice and counsel to the MEC and department.

### 6. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE DIRECTORATE : COMMUNICATION SERVICES

The Directorate: Communication Services is responsible for coordinating all communications in the Department of Social Development that are of public nature.

The approach to communication is the following:

The departmental communication strategy for each year sets the framework for departmental and ministerial communication activities.

The departmental communication structure has been designed to complement as well as to meet the requirements of the government communications framework.

#### 6.1 Corporate and Internal Communications

Dedicated communication managers exist for each of the departmental functional areas.

They are responsible for all the communication requirements of those in the department that deal with these functional areas – this includes identifying communication issues, developing communication strategies, implement and manage communication actions viz.: campaigns, events, advertising, management of consultants, design of communication material and printing thereof, audio – visual and still communication, marketing, communication research.

Corporate communication is also responsible for the management of the departmental corporate image. This includes the look and feel of departmental building, the corporate identity sponsorship and corporate gifts.

This unit is responsible for the co-ordination of media production activities, internal communication and web management



Media production activities include print and electronic products viz.: publication, radio, print, television advertisements, graphic design, audio visual material, printing and the procurement process for media production. Media production activities for regions have been delegated to district liaison officers.

Internal communications refers to the internal coordination and effective management of the flow of information, the promotion of interactive communication programmes campaigns and to staff members, with the intention of creating a well motivated and satisfied staff. In the district offices this activity is the responsibility of the community liaison officers. This includes administrative communication of circulars, notices etc.

### **6.3 Media Liaison**

This unit is responsible for co-ordinating liaison with the media, arranging media conferences, media briefings, issuing of media statement/release and handling media queries. The unit is responsible for both MEC and departmental media liaison.

Media liaison in the department is done from the premise of building relationships with the media, timeous responses, accurate and clear information.

### **6.4 Corporate Communication**

This unit comprises communication managers and Liaison officials who are entrusted with all communication, activities in their respective district and institutions. Although falling under the district office these officials is accountable to the communications services for all communication policy issues as well as campaigns. A monthly communications report referring to key activities must be submitted to the communications services monthly, supporting transversals and other campaigns.

### **6.5. Speech and Research**

Research, preparation and the writing of speeches and briefing notes for the MEC, this unit will also set control measures for rendering the services and ensuring compliance thereof.

### **6.6. Events management Unit shall be responsible for following level.**

- Ensure the establishment and chairing of Events coordinating committee both at the Provincial and District and institutional.
- Organize departmental events consistently with the brand manifestations.
- Form a common platform with other directorates for the planning of events.
- Create and update departmental invitation list.
- Draw-up a checklist, disseminate and ensure adoption, implementation of the checklist and advise.

## **7. PROCEDURES AND REGULATIONS**

The following Procedures and Regulations are the rules that govern the implementation of the communication policy:

### 7.1 Senior manager: Communication Services

The senior manager communication services is the head of communications in the Department he / she should be part of Executive Management. He/she will meet with the MEC and HOD on regular basis to discuss policy issues and strategic issues relating to communication.

### 7.2 MEC's Speeches / Briefing Notes

Speeches /notes for the MEC must be send to the Communications Services Seven (7) days prior to the event.

### 7.3 Media Relations

Communication Service is the MEC and Department's first line of contact with the media and is responsible for co-coordinating all media relations. The following procedures have to be followed with regards to media liaison:

- Communication Service shall be consulted for advice before responding to the Media queries. In a situation where this is not possible, the response must be signed off by the relevant Senior Managers. Please refer to section 5.3 with regard to who are classified as Senior Managers.
- Employees, in their private capacity, have the right to make public comment and enter into public debate issues, **but when doing so, must make it clear that they act in their private capacity. In this regard employees may not take improper advantage of official information in a way, which is in breach of the code of conduct for the public service in Chapter 2 of the public Service Regulations.** The Code of Conduct stipulates that an employee may **not use or disclose any official information for personal gain (regulation 2/c.5.4.). Furthermore, an employee may not, in his or her official capacity, irresponsibly criticize Government policy at a public gathering or in a publication, or in the printed or other public media (Public Service Regulation 1/I/H.5).**
- Communication Services is to give approval for the issuing of any media statement /press release.
- An employee may not release official information to the public unless he or she the necessary authority (Public Service Regulation 1/II/E). The code of conduct for the public service also requires that an employee honors the confidentiality of matters documents, and discussions, classified or implied as being confidential or secret ( regulation 2/C.4.12). A contravention of the Code of Conduct is expressly stated to constitute misconduct (regulation 2/B.3)
- Instead of at all time media queries must be referred to the communication services who will then engage with the relevant managers or line functionaries for an adequate response. In situations where this is not possible no official below the level Senior Manager as described in 5.3 of this policy shall respond to any queries from the media without the authority of their Supervisors.
- The communication service is responsible for media evaluation and monitoring. A media monitoring transcripts and press cutting (clips) service is available from the directorate. Press cuttings should be available on the Department Intranet and Website
- Items of importance will be circulated to those they impacts upon, either for information purposes or for a draft response.
- Interaction with the media is to be courteous, co-operative and not detrimental to the Ministry, MEC or the Department.



- Media queries are to be dealt with within the stipulated deadline or otherwise within 24 hours inquiries received after hours will only be dealt with during office hours unless there is obvious urgency or instruction to do so.
- Inquiries from the media should be in writing. Responses are to be supplied in writing except for radio and television interviews.
- Media queries must be treated as top priority.
- Communication managers are to work closely with the media relations and liaison officials when their relevant events and functions are taking place.

#### **7.4 Communication Strategies and Action Plans**

The department's communication strategy is the guiding document for departmental communications for that specific year.

The department's communication strategy is derived as follows:

- The Cabinet Lekgotla resolves on broad programme and strategic priorities of government.
- The President announces the government's programme of action in the state of the Nation Address at the beginning of each year.
- Premier state of the province address
- MEC budget vote

It is the responsibility of communication and line-function managers to ensure that all the communication activities for the given period has a relevant communication strategy and implementation plan, which is in line with the department's communication strategy. All of these strategies and plans are to be approved by the communication services before implementation.

#### **7.5 Internal and Corporate Communications**

##### **7.5.1 Internal Communication**

The main purpose of internal communication is to facilitate and manage the flow of information within the department in order to create an informed workforce. Internal communications involves information about health and social development, relevant human resource information, information on government programmes, special days and other useful information that staff may have an interest in.

The following communication tools and mediums are used to communicate with staff members:

- Newsletters i.e. internal and external
- Posters
- Notice Boards
- Intranet
- Electronic notice boards
- Exhibitions
- Road shows
- Workshops
- Departmental Website
- Intercom

- Email
- Bulk sms

#### 7.5.1.1 Reporting of suspected irregularities

- The Code of Conduct for the public service also stipulates that an employee must use the appropriate channels to air his or her grievances or to direct representation (Public Service Regulation 2/C.3.4). The Public Service Commission issued an Explanatory Manual on the Code of Conduct for the public services, which is a practical guide to ethical dilemmas in the workplace. Copies of this Manual can be obtained from the Office of the Public Service Commission.
- Equally, the Code of Conduct obliges an employee, in the course of his official duties, to report to the appropriate authorities, fraud, corruption, nepotism, maladministration and any other act which constitutes an offence or which is prejudicial to the public interest (Public Service Regulation 2/C.4.10). the responsibility of every employer and employee to disclose criminal and any other irregular conduct in the workplace also underpins the protected Disclosure Act, 2000 (Preamble).
- As to which channels or authorities will be appropriate in a particular instance will depend on inter alia the nature of the suspected irregularity and / or the capacity of the suspected transgressor. Some of the general reporting or remedying mechanism for public service employees are as follows:
  - Lodging a grievance or complaint for investigation by the Public Service Commission concerning an official act or omission (section 35 of the Public Service Act, 1994). The public Service Commission recently issued new rules for dealing with such grievances. Those rules commenced on 19 September 2003 and should be generally made known to all employees in each department (Government Notice No.R1012 of 25 July 2003 *Government Gazette* No. 25209);
  - Lodging a complaint with the Public Protector or a Provincial Public Protector concerning a suspected unlawful or improper official act or omission (the Constitution and the Public Protector Act, 1994)
  - Lodging a complaint with the Human Rights Commission concerning an official act or omission that is suspected to constitute a violation of or threat to any fundamental rights (Human Rights Commission Act, 1994)
  - Making a disclosure about unlawful or irregular conduct by the employer or a fellow employee in the workplace in terms of the procedures, and to the stipulated institutions or persons, as set out in the Protected Disclosures Act, 2000. An employee who makes a disclosure in accordance with the Act will enjoy protection against reprisals as a result of the disclosure;
  - Using labour law remedies regarding official acts or omissions of a labour nature, namely disputes or rights ( the Public Service Act and Labour Relations Act, 1995)
  - Lodging a complaint with a labour inspector or any other specified functionary concerning any alleged contravention of the Basic Conditions of Employment Act, 1997 (section 78(1) (a), or the Employment Equity Act, 1998 (section 34(e))

#### 7.5.1. Corporate Communication

The main purpose of external communication is to inform stakeholders of policy and legislation matters of the department, results of the work that the department does,



information about campaigns, best practices, issues, roles and responsibilities. Information is targeted specific.

Different communication tools and mediums are used to communicate with stakeholders:

- Billboards
- Communication campaigns with different elements
- Radio
- Television
- Newspapers
- Magazines
- Roadshows
- Exhibitions
- Conferences, Summits, workshops, meetings

All external communication campaigns must be approved by Communication Services

When events/functions in the department are conducted, the program manager responsible for that specific area of work has to plan closely with Communication services to coordinate activities.

## **7.6 Production of Communication Material**

Communication Services must be consulted on communication material that is produced on behalf of the department of social development.

Decisions to outsource such activity or part of an outsourced activity must carry the approval of the Communication Services. In the case of outsourcing, the following procurement guidelines must be adhered to:

### **7.6.1 Professional Service Providers**

The appointment of professional Services providers must be in accordance with Departmental Procurement Policy. It must be noted that such appointments must also carry the recommendation of the Communication Services.

Communication Services has the responsibility of ensuring that communication activities including that of consultants or services are acquired in a fair and equitable manner and in line with departmental procedures.

Communication Services must be consulted on procurement process for communication.

- The following criteria are used for outsourcing or procuring communication activities / material:
- Provide a thorough brief in the tender submission.
- Follow the departmental procurement rules
- Only South African owned business to be approached
- The business is registered on the departmental database
- Preferences will be given to historically disadvantaged business
- All services providers / minimum of 5 must be provided with an opportunity to tender.





- A tender must be submitted within the stipulated rules and regulations.
- A panel consisting of the line function directorate, Communication Services for approval purposes.
- Communication Services must be approached to evaluate the performance and quality of work.
- The black listing of service providers will be done in line with departmental policy.
- All evaluations must be done against set criteria and weighting which must be agreed to prior to the tender being sent out. These can be stipulated in the tender if agreed upon. The criteria set must not conflict with the departmental procurement criteria.

It is advisable to make use of the Communication Services' in-house production team, depending on the type of project, the time frames, capacity available and budgets.

Communication material shall include any type of publication, newsletter or magazine or brochure, audiovisual material and any other material (except daily general correspondence) intended to convey to the public information about the ministry and /or department.

### **7.7 Advertising**

- The Communication Services is responsible for co-coordinating all advertising activity ( excluding personnel advertising);
- Communication Services must approve all advertising or procurement of advertising services. No contract or payment can be designed without the approval of the Senior manager: Communication Services;
- Senior Communication Services may approve the placement of advertising campaign.
- For media bulk buying Premier's office and GCIS should be consulted.
- In all instances follow the correct procurement procedure

### **7.8 Corporate Image**

Communication service is responsible for the corporate image of the MEC and of the department. This responsibility includes the following:

- The look and feel of the department's office buildings,
- The type of communication material to be used by the department i.e. folders, letterheads, business cards etc.
- The way communication material is used and produced i.e. the font, use of logos, corporate identity, etc.
- The provincial Coat of Arms is the official Departmental logo
- At all times the Coat of Arms is used as prescribed in the corporate identity manual, a copy of which is available at the Communications Service.
- The unit shall introduce and market the New Approved Provincial code of arms for adoption and uniformity at all times in all our departmental print electronic and print works.

### **7.9 Branding and Promotional Material**

- Promotional material using the corporate identity of the department shall only be used for official purposes.

- The production of such material must be authorized by the Communication Services. Branded merchandise is an integral part of the departments branding strategy and as such cannot be developed or distributed without the approval of the communication services.
- The use of the departmental logo on projects not initiated by the department has to be approved by the communication Services.
- Strict adherence to the corporate identity is a given with the development of any branded material.
- Artwork shall be centralized at Head Office communications and given to end-user.

#### **7.10 Sponsorship, Partnership, Endorsements**

Sponsorship must only be approached with the intention of building positive association to enhance and extend a campaign, project or event. This is done by extending or developing the message, supplementing the budget or providing additional support.

Sponsorships are potentially sensitive areas and have corporate implications. Careful consideration must be given to suitability and appropriateness of any sponsor. The issue of whether associations will cause embarrassment or be interpreted as preferential treatment is major issues to consider. All sponsorship approaches and agreements must carry the recommendation of communications services.

#### **7.11 COPYRIGHT**

- The department owns all the publicity material and information it has paid for or created. Consistently, the reproduction of any such material requires the approval of the department.
- Copyright to the department allows the department the freedom to allow others to sue the material without paying fees to the original producer.
- It also gives the department the authority to prevent misuse of the material by the producer or anyone else.

#### **7.14. Communication Training**

- It is the responsibility of all communication staff to bring their training needs under the attention of the directorate. It is also the responsibility through staff evaluation for the communication managers to identify training needs.

#### **7.12 Crisis communication**

In the event of a crisis the following should be adhered to;

- The line function/institution/district involved should immediately inform head office;
- The Line manager is to be copied on the information as well as the head of communication services; Media Liaison Officer.
- A crisis committee will consist of the HOD, Head of Branches, relevant programme managers, senior manager communications, media liaison officer and other relevant officials;
- The MEC to be informed immediately
- A plan of action should be drafted

- The committee will manage the issue, communication thereof and release necessary statements with the consultation of the MEC.
- Staff members to be kept posted at all times.
- District Executive Manager, Risk, District Manager communication and liaison office should work closely

**8. PROCEDURE AND COMPLIANCE**

The policy is intended to ensure that the department engages in a co-ordinated manner with regard to communications and communicates in a standard manner with unified messages. Adherence to the policy will result in a coherent image for the department. It will also be applicable to every staff member in the department. The policy falls within the scope of internal and corporate communications, in order to create awareness amongst staff, and it will be communicated accordingly. The policy will be reviewed on annual basis.

In conclusion, approval of this Policy document by the relevant authorities will require compliance and corporation by every member of staff, failure to do so would mean nothing but violation of the departmental communication set standards, rules and principles and necessary disciplinary measures will be exercised to address such violations and non-compliance.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that the communication Policy be approved

SUPPORTED / ~~NOT SUPPORTED~~

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 HEAD OF DEPARTMENT SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT      14/1/12  
 DATE

APPROVED / ~~NOT APPROVED~~

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 HONOURABLE MEC: HEALTH AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT      25/06/2012  
 DATE

COMMUNICATION POLICY FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT