



Province of the  
**EASTERN CAPE**  
COOPERATIVE GOVERNANCE  
& TRADITIONAL AFFAIRS

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**CORPORATE COMMUNICATION POLICY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF CO-OPERATIVE GOVERNMENT  
AND TRADITIONAL AFFAIRS, EASTERN CAPE PROVINCE, BHISHO**

**SERVING OUR COMMUNITIES BETTER**


**B·B**  
**BACK TO BASICS**  
SERVING OUR COMMUNITIES BETTER

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| <b>Related Policies</b>             |   |

## 1. HEAD OF DEPARTMENT


This Corporate Communication Policy has been approved by Head of Department (HoD) for the Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs (DCoGTA).

I am satisfied and concur with the contents of this Policy. The development of the Corporate Communication Policy will ensure that the departmental employees use the documents as guide to communicate decision-making in the organization.

|             |  |
|-------------|--|
| Signed      |  |
| Designation | Head of Department   |
| Date        | 18/01/2019   |

## 2. EXECUTIVE AUTHORITY

In line with the applicable legislation for communication services in the Republic of South Africa, I therefore trust that guidance from this Corporate Communication Policy will contribute to the improvement of the management of official departmental information by all internal stakeholders of the department.

|             |  |
|-------------|--|
| Signed      |  |
| Designation | MEC: Honourable FD Xasa,<br>DCoGTA   |
| Date        | 18/01/2019   |

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**ACRONYMS**

|                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| <b>1. APP</b>    | <b>Annual Performance Plan</b>                                      |
| <b>2. BCCSA</b>  | <b>Broadcasting Complaints Commission of South Africa</b>           |
| <b>3. CI</b>     | <b>Corporate Identity</b>   |
| <b>4. DCoGTA</b> | <b>Department of Cooperative Governance And Traditional Affairs</b> |
| <b>5. HoD</b>    | <b>Head of Department</b>   |
| <b>6. GCIS</b>   | <b>Government Communication and Information Services</b>            |
| <b>7. GM</b>     | <b>General Manager</b>  |
| <b>8. GCH</b>    | <b>Government Communicator's Handbook</b>                           |
| <b>9. GCP</b>    | <b>Government Communication Policy</b>                              |
| <b>10. LGCF</b>  | <b>Local Government Communicator's Forum</b>                        |
| <b>11. MEC</b>   | <b>Member of the Executive Council</b>                              |
| <b>12. MLO</b>   | <b>Media Liaison Officer</b>  |
| <b>13. MTSF</b>  | <b>Medium Term Strategic Framework</b>                              |
| <b>14. NCSF</b>  | <b>National Communication Strategic Framework</b>                   |
| <b>15. NDP</b>   | <b>National Development Plan</b>                                    |
| <b>16. OP</b>    | <b>Operational Plan</b>   |
| <b>17. PAIA</b>  | <b>Promotion Of Access to Information Action</b>                    |
| <b>18. PC</b>    | <b>Press Council</b>  |
| <b>19. PC</b>    | <b>Policy Speech</b>  |
| <b>20. PAJA</b>  | <b>Promotion of Administrative Justice Act</b>                      |
| <b>21. PSA</b>   | <b>Public Service Act</b>   |
| <b>22. SALGA</b> | <b>South African Local Government Association</b>                   |

|                |                                      |
|----------------|--------------------------------------|
| <b>23.SDC</b>  | <b>Service Delivery Charter</b>      |
| <b>24.SM</b>   | <b>Senior Manager</b>                |
| <b>25.SoNA</b> | <b>State of the Nation Address</b>   |
| <b>26.SoPA</b> | <b>State of the Province Address</b> |



## 1. INTRODUCTION

- a) The Constitution of the RSA, 1996, Chapter 2 of the Bill of Rights, on Freedom of Expression states that “everyone has the right to freedom of expression which includes freedom to receive or impart information or ideas.”
- b) The Promotion of Access to Information Act 2 of 2000, fosters a culture of transparency and accountability in public and private bodies by giving effect to the right of access to information.
- c) Employees are the most valuable resource an organisation has and it is therefore important to communicate effectively to maximise their potential. Keeping them highly motivated, informed and loyal to the CoGTA vision, goals and objectives through an internal communication programme that is inclusive, free-flowing and tailored to obtain maximum participation, will help to fulfil the organisation’s long term objectives.
- d) The intensification of internal and external communication about government programmes is motivated by the need for public servants to have a good grasp of government’s programme of action. This will assist them to do their job well and intensify the struggle against poverty, unemployment and inequality. In the end, they become good ambassadors of the department.

## 1. PURPOSE

- a) The purpose of the Policy is to achieve an integrated, coordinated and coherent communication system internally and externally between the department and its key stakeholders
- b) The Policy will provide direction regarding the basic requirements of communication guidelines for effective two-way departmental communication.
- c) The Policy is not intended to be exhaustive, hence it will be updated once a year or as and when necessary.

### 3. BACKGROUND

- a) 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 govern in partnership with all South African citizens.
- b) In that context government communication becomes an integral part in an attempt 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.
- c) Communication is a key strategic service to ensure that information is widely accessible within the public space, engage citizens in conversation around critical issues and to empower them to participate in not only shaping government policies but also in taking up opportunities that affect their lives.
- d) Effective communication also can 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.
- e) The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 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.
- f) Government communication is driven by democratic principles of openness and participation, including the basic principles of transparency, accountability and consultation.
- g) This Communication Policy is meant to strengthen departmental communication services to deliver on its mandate in line with a developmental communication approach of national government.

#### 4. REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

The Policy is informed by the following statutes and other related policies and legislative mandates:

- a) Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996
- b) Public Service Act, 1994 (Act 103 of 1994 as amended by Act 30 of 2007).
- c) Promotion of Access to Information Act 14 of 2000
- d) Government Communicator's Handbook
- e) National Development Plan Vision (NDP) 2030
- f) Government Communication Policy, September 2016

#### 5. POLICY PRINCIPLES

The Policy proposes a professional two-way effective communication process between DCoGTA and its various internal and external publics, underpinned by the Batho Pele principles namely;

- i) Courtesy and 'People First',
- ii) Consultation,
- iii) Service excellence,
- iv) Access to services,
- v) Promotion of access to information,
- vi) Public participation,
- vii) Openness and transparency,
- viii) Redress, and
- ix) Value for money.

The following DCoGTA Values are also taken into account namely;

- a) **Consultation:** We always consult our customers on the level, quality and choices of the services we offer.
- b) **Quality:** We set high standards geared towards effective and efficient services delivery.
- c) **Equality:** We shall give equal access to our services to all, with special emphasis on targeted groups.
- d) **Professionalism:** We believe that our customers are entitled to be treated courteously and with the highest level of professionalism.



- e) **Highest ethical standards:** We shall always maintain zero tolerance towards fraud and corruption.
- f) **Staff our greatest assets:** We believe that our employees are integral to the success of the Department and we will at all times endeavor to ensure that their organizational needs are satisfied.
- g) **Responsiveness:** We pledge to respond speedily and effectively to the needs of stakeholders and communities.

## 6. POLICY APPLICATION AND SCOPE

The Policy applies to all employees of the Department without exception.

## 7. INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

Organizational communication happens downwards and upwards, horizontally and vertically, interpersonal and in small groups. In this regard, the following should apply;

- a) Communication planning must be integrated into strategic departmental planning at management level. This means that when the various programmes hold their planning meetings, communicators must be included.
- b) 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.
- c) Corporate Communication Directorate must be headed by a Senior Manager and subordinates in line with the official and approved organogram.
- d) Communicators must participate in: all strategic decision-making structures at the political and administrative interface levels and in those communication structures that have been set up internally to realise the communication objectives of the department
- e) A Communication Action Plan should be signed off by the HoD of DCoGTA or his designated official.

### 7.1 Internal Publications and Banding Material

The Directorate of Corporate Communications is responsible for the production of the following publications;

- i) Strategic Documents (Annual Performance Plan, Operational Plan, Service Delivery Charter and the Policy Speech).
- ii) Annual Report
- iii) Half Yearly Report
- iv) DCoGTA Newsletter
- v) News Flash
- vi) Did You Know Newsletter
- vii) Promotional and branding material

## **8. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF VARIOUS STAKEHOLDERS**

### **8.1 Political Principal**

The MEC as the political principal for DCoGTA must:

- a) Take responsibility for the political communication of the department.
- b) Account to the public on government policy, its aims and objectives and report back on deliverables.
- c) Interact with the public to solicit views and input into government activities.

### **8.2 HoD**

The HoD, his/her delegate is the final authority on DCoGTA communication and his/her performance agreement must include communication deliverables. The HoD or his/her delegate must:

- a) Designate the Senior Manager who will be responsible for ensuring that all other communication functions are adequately staffed.
- b) Ensure that there is an adequate budget for communication activities.
- c) Advocate for communication to be recognised as a strategic function.
- d) Ensure that the Communication Strategy and Action Plan are approved and implemented.
- e) Ensure that the Senior Manager has the adequate skills and knowledge for the post.

- f) Provides oversight to the communication function.
- g) Assist with the delivery of information to specific forums and the general public when called upon to do so.

### **8.3 Senior Manager: Corporate Communication**

#### **8.3.1 Structures and Authority**

The Senior Manager's structures and authority are as follows;

- a) The SM is the most senior communication official in a department. He/she straddles the communication function across the political and administrative arms and is responsible for the overall communications function.
- b) The SM reports to the General Manager: Communication, Strategy and Information Management Services, DDG, HoD or the most senior government official.
- c) The SM must be included in the executive structure of the department to enable him/her to better articulate departmental policy, ensure that policy and programmes are communicated effectively, to present current affairs and to provide advice on the communication implications of deliberations. Examples of these structures include, but not limited to the following:
  - i) Executive and Top Management meetings.
  - ii) Extended MEC and Executive Management meetings
  - iii) Technical and Political MuniMEC meetings
  - iv) Technical Cluster meetings
  - v) Premier's Coordinating Forum (PCF)
- d) The SM must take the lead in the establishment of communication structures to ensure proper coordination and integration of communication policies and programmes throughout the department.

#### **8.3.2 Departmental Spokesperson**

- a) The SM is the official spokesperson of the department.
- b) The departmental spokesperson must:

- i) Convey the decisions of the highest decision-making authority of the department and this can be done with the support of the GCIS, Office of the Premier, Municipal Communicators or any other Communicator from the Sector Departments provincially and nationally.
  - ii) Chair Media Briefings sessions
  - iii) Liaise with all relevant communication stakeholders to ensure that issues that might have arisen in the media environment are clearly articulated.
  - iv) Consult with relevant programmes, Sector departments or municipalities and inform them of current issues in the media environment that require intervention.
  - v) Provide advice and make recommendations on communication matters to the political principal and HoD.
- c) The Departmental spokesperson should be supported by a professional and dedicated team of officials from the various programmes to:
- i) Advise on what should be included in the departmental media campaigns including statements.
  - ii) Summarise key documents including the Policy Speech for consideration by the MEC.
  - iii) Look out for communication issues arising in the media environment that will require deliberation by the Top Management.
  - iv) Media enquiries relating to the department must first be brought to the attention of the SM: Corporate Communication, who will engage with the relevant officials before comment is provided to the media.
  - v) GCIS can provide advice on all aspects of media relations and assist DCoGTA to prepare strategic approaches to communication in general and media in particular.

vi) GCIS must therefore be notified of all potentially sensitive, contentious or controversial media enquiries with respect to an institution's activities.

vii) The spokespersons must adhere to the following:

- a) Have the required training for the job,
- b) Attend induction into government communications and undergo ongoing media training to hone their skills. No spokesperson will be permitted to represent the department if they have not undertaken this training.
- c) Media training will be managed by the SM: Corporate Communication, GCIS or their designated officials and maybe 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.
- d) The SM: Corporate Communication, must make available briefing notes or speaking notes and speeches for the MEC before any interview is undertaken.

### **8.3.3 Roles and Responsibilities**

The SM needs to, among other things,

- a) Deliver an integrated Communication Strategy and Action Plan aligned to the Provincial Strategy and the National Communication Strategy Framework of GCIS for the electoral political term.
- b) Oversee the implementation of the integrated Communication Action Plan
- c) Provide advice and make recommendations on communication to the political principal and Accounting Officer.
- d) Manage the coordination and implementation of the communication response to unplanned and urgent communication needs, including crisis situations.
- e) Provide overall management of the communication team to support the implementation of effective communication, including but not limited to media engagement, communication platforms, campaigns, marketing and Public Relations functions, as well as research and analysis to measure the impact of communication activities.



- f) Ensure that the institution is informed and fully aware of the Communication Policy.
- g) Oversee the ongoing training and capacity-building of communicators, including their induction.
- h) Participate actively in all strategic meetings of the organisation.
- i) 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.
- j) Monitor communication activities and report on progress and impact.

#### **8.3.4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES (this was paragraph 9)**

- a) The media engagement function is allocated to SM for Corporate Communication, or any person so delegated by him/her.
- b) The SM: Corporate Communication must:
  - i) Lead the media engagement activities within the department
  - ii) Be the official point of entry for media into the department on any media related issues affecting the department
  - iii) Design and implement a proactive Media Relations Strategy and Action Plan to build and maintain good relations with the media.

#### **9. MEDIA ENGAGEMENT**

- a) 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 the Directorate of Corporate Communication of the department.
- b) Media engagement 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. This also applies equally to all departmental employees across all District locations.
- c) The media must be given equal access to information and all interactions with them must be professional at all times. The target audience determines which media the department selects in its engagement with journalists.

d) No official of the department is allowed to speak to the media without the approval of the HoD or his/her designate. Acting within his/her scope of employment and in his/her official capacity.

e) No employee is permitted to use time and resources of the department outside of his/her official duties.

### **9.1 Labour Unions**

a) 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.

b) 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 department.

## **10. COMMUNICATION STRUCTURES**

### **10.1 Local Government Communicator's Forum**

a) The LGCF is designed to ensure integration, consistency and coherence to local government communication.

b) Integration of government communication ensures that communication reaches the intended audience and government structures remain up to date.

c) Discuss strategic government communication issues within the NCSF, MTSF and SoNA, SoPA and departmental Policy Speech.

d) Assess the implementation of government's communication programme and the strategies that have been aligned to this programme.

e) Share information and iron out communication problems.

f) Introduce case studies, share lessons learnt and establish best practices.

g) Establish relations with communication partners and stakeholders at national, provincial, district and local levels.

h) Assist with building capacity and the development of Communication Strategies and Action Plans.

- i) Coordinate and organise a calendar of events and ensure that these activities are streamlined to avoid duplication and a waste of resources
- j) Strategise and plan communication activities for the forthcoming year.

## 11. GOVERNANCE

- a) The LGCF is required to meet quarterly organised by DCoGTA and supported by GCIS, SALGA, District, Metro and Local Municipalities.
- b) Monitoring of the forum is done by the Core Team on Local Government comprised of CoGTA, GCIS and SALGA.

## 12. GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES AS PRIVATE CITIZENS

- a) Any media communication emanating from departmental employees in their private capacity (blogs, social media posts; letters to the editor) must subscribe to the Public Service Act, 1994 (Act 103 of 1994) and the Code of Conduct for Public Servants.
- b) Information acquired while on duty must not be used to voice personal opinions.
- c) Inappropriate media engagement is further discouraged. This refers to engagement that:
  - i) Brings the department or stakeholders into disrepute
  - ii) Undermines the integrity and reputation of government, department and its leadership or its stakeholders.
  - iii) Presents a personal viewpoint as a position that is held by the department
  - iv) Discloses sensitive or classified departmental information without proper authority
  - v) Comments on pending or current legal issues relating to the department
- c) Government officials at a senior level (MLOs, SM, DDGs, General Managers, Managers, etc) act as government representatives and their opinions and comments, even in private spaces, are likely to be seen as official by the media. Government communicators at this level therefore cannot engage in private communication on any media platform or express views and opinions that would be seen as contrary to an official government position.

- d) Where the media perceives a government employee to be a representative of government and where the opinion/comment is likely to be seen as official, this representation will require official approval from the HoD before it is submitted.
- e) At times, these communication opinion pieces may require further approval at a political level.
- f) Cogta spokesperson must at all times strive to avoid to contradict communication messages of another government department.

### **13. RESPONSE AND LIAISON STANDARDS FOR MEDIA ENQUIRIES**

- a) DCoGTA must respect media deadline requirements and endeavour to provide open and equal access to all news media.
- b) All media queries must preferably be acknowledged in a reasonable time that directly relates to the particular medium, whether print, broadcast or online.
- c) Agreement should be reached between the media and the Cogta spokesperson on deadline delivery times and all changes to these agreements communicated.
- d) Communication channels should be kept open at all times and the media updated on any of pending media enquiries.
- e) Designated departmental spokespersons must be available to deal with media enquiries and return calls timeously.
- f) The SM has the authority to approve media statements to enable achievement of deadlines.
- g) Top, Executive and Senior Managers are expected at all times to provide timeously content and feedback to maintain a good reputation of DCogta.

### **14. SOCIAL MEDIA**

- a) 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.
- b) The SM must be given the flexibility to operate in this changing environment, create relevant content and respond to issues emerging in real time.
- c) Communication campaigns must consider the most appropriate communication channels/methods for a particular audience. Where necessary, the DCoGTA 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.

## **15. WEBSITE**

- a) Websites are widely used by government to publish information and engage with the public.
- b) DCoGta must ensure that its website is accessible 24/7 and is updated regularly by designated employees.
- c) Website content and branding should be managed through official applicable Corporate Branding Manual of DCoGTA.
- d) The SM or his/her designate must verify all content that is to be placed on the website.

## **16. COMPLAINTS ABOUT MEDIA COVERAGE OR BEHAVIOUR OF A JOURNALIST**

- a) Any complaints from within government regarding the performance of the media, e.g. the content or tone of media coverage, the behaviour of a reporter in their dealings with the government, shall be made to the Office of the SM.
- b) The Office of the SM will be responsible for deciding which, if any, action will be taken in response to such a complaint.
- c) Should the SM 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.
- d) If the SM is not satisfied with the response from the media institution and the matter concerns media content, a complaint may be logged with the following:
  - i) The Press Council in a print media or online media environment ([www.presscouncil.org.za](http://www.presscouncil.org.za))
  - ii) The Broadcast Complaints Commission of South Africa in a broadcasting environment ([www.bccsa.co.za](http://www.bccsa.co.za))
- e) The SM, in consultation with his/her legal team, must decide whether the complaint is of such a serious nature that it warrants further legal action.



## **17. OFF-THE-RECORD COMMENTS**

a) No government employee will speak to the media “off the record”. The only exception is the MEC and the SM Corporate Communication with the authority of the MEC and the HoD, who might in certain circumstances be required to do so.

## **18. PUBLIC DISCLOSURE AND RIGHT TO INFORMATION**

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

b) 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 SM will, whenever possible, require the requesting party to sign the documentation, which will then be time-stamped. Must be made in writing and in the prescribed form as provided for in the act

c) 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. Withholding such information will only force the media representative to use other sources.

d) Requests from non-media sources for information under the PAIA (Act 2 of 2000) should be directed to the department’s chief information officer.

e) The HOD should be informed of all requests for information under the PAIA of 2000, as such information may find itself in the public domain and have implications for future media coverage relating to the department.

## **19. CLASSIFIED INFORMATION**

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

## **20. PHOTOGRAPHIC AND VIDEO COVERAGE BY THE MEDIA**

a) Taking of photographs or videography is expressly prohibited on the departmental property without the prior approval of the SM or his/her nominee.

b) If authorised by the SM, media representatives may be allowed inside government facilities under the supervision of the SM or his/her representative for official purposes. This includes video filming, interviews, documentaries, news releases or other approved projects.

## **21. SUPPLY OF PHOTOGRAPHS AND FILM FOOTAGE**

- a) Any departmental official submitting photographs and video footage to the media must advise that copyright rests with the DCoGTA and this should be reflected in the credits.
- b) The Directorate of Corporate Communication must ensure that photographs and visual material supplied to media houses are used for the same reason(s) for which they were requested.
- c) If need be, a final copy of the product must be made available to the DCoGTA.

## **22. FUNDING FOR COMMUNICATION**

- a) Resources of 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.
- b) In addition to other standard items, the communication budget should include funding for:
  - i) Staff to fulfil the strategic communication functions
  - ii) Training, and
  - iii) Internal and external communication programmes.



### **23. CORPORATE IDENTITY**

- a) The Directorate of Corporate Communication is the custodian of the Corporate Identity Manual of the DCoGTA.
- b) All procurement of promotional material and official documents should be done in consultation with the Directorate of Corporate Communication to ensure consistency and correct brand application.
- c) DCoGTA employees must become familiar with the Corporate Identity and Branding Guidelines of the department. These guidelines limit the abuse of the brand and protect it from commercial exploitation.
- d) The Corporate Identity guidelines are to be adhered to without fail, by all DCoGTA employees.

### **24. NON-PERMISSIBLE USE OF DEPARTMENTAL LOGOS AND BRANDING**

- a) The use of department stationery or business cards other than for bona fide official departmental business is prohibited.
- b) The use of departmental 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.

### **25. POLICY REVIEW**

The Policy will be reviewed after two (2) years or sooner if and when deemed necessary, in accordance with the monitoring and evaluation processes of the Department.

**End**