



# LIMPOPO

PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DEPARTMENT OF  
SPORT, ARTS AND CULTURE

COMMUNICATIONS AND EVENTS MANAGEMENT

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

HEADING	PAGE
1. Acronyms and abbreviations	3
2. Introduction	4
3. Purpose and objectives of the policy	5
4. Authority of policy	5
5. Legal Framework	6
6. Scope of application	6
7. Definition of Terms	6
8. Policy pronouncements	7
9. Privacy Policy	16
10. Social Media	17
11. Department Employees on Social Media	17
12. Social Media Security Control	18
13. Legal issue	18
14. Citizen Conduct	19
15. Default	19
16. Inception date	19
17. Termination and review conditions	19
18. Enquiries	20
19. Recommendation & approval	20

## 1. ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATION

MEC	Member of Executive Council
HOD	Head of Department
HOC	Head of Communications
MLO	Media Liaison Officer
CDC	Chief Director Corporate Services
SMS	Senior Management Services

## **2. Background**

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. The government immediately set out developing policies and programmes 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. This required planning and coordination – but especially communication – regarding with whom government had to consult and to whom government had to listen, and furthermore involved considering the needs and interests of the public and receiving feedback as part of this developmental process.

Communication remains key to effective and efficient government even today (for implementation of policy, programmes, services, and projects). Communication is a key strategic service – to ensure that information is widely accessible within the public space, to engage citizens in conversation around critical issues and to empower citizens to participate in not only shaping government policies but also in taking up opportunities that affect their lives.

Effective communication contributes positively to government endeavors – 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.

## **2. INTRODUCTION**

The Communication Directorate has drafted this Communication Policy to strengthen the departmental communications to deliver on its mandate of social cohesion and nation building. This is in line with a developmental communication approach adopted by the Government Communication and Information System (GCIS), as the custodian of government communications

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act 108 of 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. Government communication is driven by democratic principles of openness and participation, and is guided by the basic principles of:

- transparency
- accountability
- consultation

## **3. PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES**

3.1. The purpose of this policy is to augment the regulations with regard to ensure that all communicators operate from a developmental communication paradigm.

3.1.1. To ensure that communication at all spheres of the department are well-integrated, coherent, coordinated and consistent; reliable, ethical, open, encourages participation, transformative, professional, credible, effectively managed, impactful and meets the needs of all citizens.

3.1.2. To strengthen a government communication system that enables citizens and the local community to participate in and take up opportunities from government policies and departmental programmes.

3.1.3. To coordinate communication so that all Branches within the department work collaboratively to provide clear and effective communication to citizens.

3.1.4. To prescribe communication policy, provide for the regulations, processes, and procedures, and assign responsibilities within and across departmental Branches so as to ensure that communication objectives are achieved.

3.1.5. To advocate for communication as a strategic function that is allocated the required resources to be able to fulfil its aims and objectives; and to ensure efficient use of the existing departmental communications infrastructure.

#### **4. AUTHORITY OF THE POLICY**

4.1. This policy is authorized and issued by the MEC for Limpopo Provincial Department of Sport, Arts and Culture. The policy resides with the Communications and Events Management Directorate, which is responsible for its implementation and monitoring.

#### **5. LEGAL FRAMEWORK**

- 5.1. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act No. 108 of 1996.
- 5.2. The Promotion of Access to Information Act no 2 of 2000.
- 5.3. The Safety at Sports and Recreational Events Act No.2 of 2010 (SASREA)
- 5.4. Regulation of Gatherings Act No. 205 of 1993
- 5.5. Pan South African Language Board Act 59 of 1995.
- 5.6. The National GCIS Strategic Framework for Communication
- 5.7. The State Information Technology Agency (SITA) Act 1999.
- 5.8. Electronic Communications and Transactions Act.
- 5.9. Minimum Information Security Standards.
- 5.10. The Public Service Regulation, of 2016 as amended
- 5.11. The Public Service Act, 1994.
- 5.12. Senior Management Service handbook.

#### **6. SCOPE OF APPLICATION**

6.1. This policy shall be applicable to all employees of the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture appointed or recruited in terms of the Public Service Act, 1994.

## **7. DEFINITION OF TERMS**

Department shall mean the Limpopo Department of Sport, Arts and Culture.

- 7.1. MEC shall mean Member of Executive Council.
- 7.2. MEC shall mean Member of Executive Council
- 7.3. HOD shall mean Head of Department.
- 7.4. COMMS shall mean Communications Directorate/Sub-Branch
- 7.5. HoC shall mean Head of Communications.
- 7.6. MLO shall mean Media Liaison Officer

## **8. POLICY PRONOUNCEMENTS**

### **8.1. PRINCIPLES**

- 8.1.1. Effective and efficient service should be provided through a citizen-centered and client-focused communication system.
- 8.1.2. The image of the public service in general must be promoted through effective and efficient communications and professional events management.

### **8.2. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

- 8.2.1. COMMS personnel to advise management/authorities on proper implementation of communications practices and management to support and encourage proper implementation communications practices.
- 8.2.2. High authorities to lead in implementing effective, efficient, fair and just communications practices.

### **8.3. COMMUNICATIONS PROCESSES, ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

- 8.3.1. Communications planning must be integrated into strategic departmental planning at management level. This means that when the department is holding planning meetings, communicators must be included.
- 8.3.2. 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 permanent, consistent, and stable.

### **8.3.1. HoC must participate in:**

- 8.3.1.1. All strategic decision-making bodies at the political/administrative interface and in those communication structures that have been set up internally to realise the communication objectives of government.
- 8.3.1.2. Those structures that integrate and coordinate government communication activities in support of government's service delivery objectives.
- 8.3.1.3. Costed communication plans must be signed off by the appropriate authorities within the department.

### **8.3.2. THE HEAD OF COMMUNICATIONS (HOC)**

- 8.3.2.1. The HoC is the most senior communication official in a department. He/She straddles the communication function across the political and administrative entities and is accountable/responsible for the overall communications function.
- 8.3.2.2. The HoC reports to the Chief Director: Corporate Services within the Department.
- 8.3.2.3. The HoC must be included in the executive structures. Inclusion in the executive structures would enable the HoC to better articulate government policy, ensure that policy and programmes are communicated effectively, to present current affairs and to advise on the communication implications of deliberations
- 8.3.2.4. The HoC must take the lead in integrated communication structures to ensure proper coordination and integration of communication policies and programmes throughout government.

### **8.3.3. The HoC needs to, among other things:**

- 8.3.3.1. Deliver an integrated communication strategy and plan in line with the Departmental Annual Performance Plan; and oversee the implementation of the integrated communication strategy and plan;
- 8.3.3.2. Provide advice and make recommendations on communications to the political principals and accounting officers;



- 8.3.3.3. Manage the coordination and implementation of the communication response to unplanned and urgent communication, including a crisis;
- 8.3.3.4. Provide overall management of the communications team to support the implementation of effective communications, including but not limited to media engagement, all communication platforms, campaigns, marketing and PR functions, as well as research and analysis to measure the impact of communications;
- 8.3.3.5. Ensure that the institution is informed and fully aware of the Communication Policy and that communicators are aware of their roles and responsibilities; and oversee the ongoing training and capacity-building of communicators, including their induction; participate actively in all strategic meetings of the organisation;
- 8.3.3.6. Oversee the assessment of annual communication strategic plans and make adjustments where necessary; and monitor communication deliverables and report

#### **8.3.4. THE ROLE AND FUNCTIONS OF THE MLO**

- 8.3.4.1. The MLO reports to the Ministry and needs to, among other things:
  - enhance the public image of the political principal and manage media liaison for the office;
  - strengthen relationships with the media leading to increased profiling of the political principal;
  - contribute to the development of an integrated communication strategy and plan, particularly through developing the political principal's media engagement strategy and plan;
  - collaborate with the HoC to ensure that all communication objectives are achieved, the Communication Policy is implemented and all communication protocols are observed;
  - provide communication advice and support to the MEC; oversee the development of communications material including media releases, social media and website copy as well as briefing notes in support of the politician's outreach activities;

- monitor print, broadcast, and online media reports so as to be able to respond effectively to issues within the communication environment.

#### **8.4. COMMUNICATING WITH MEDIA AND THE PUBLIC**

- 8.4.1. An employee shall not release official information to the public unless he/she has the necessary authority (Public Service Regulation 1/II/E).
- 8.4.2. An employee shall not disclose any official information for personal gain or the gain of others. (Public Service Regulation 2/C.5.4).
- 8.4.3. An employee shall not in his/her official capacity; irresponsibly criticise government policy at a public gathering or in a publication, or in the printed or other media (Public Service Regulation 1/II/H.5).
- 8.4.4. An employee shall honour the confidentiality of matters, documents, and discussions, classified, or implied as being confidential or secret.
- 8.4.5. Any inquiries by the public/media relating to the Department activities shall be directed to the Head of Communications and as a first line of entry.
- 8.4.6. The Head of Communications should coordinate any information that needs to be communicated to the media by the Department in consultation with the entrusted Member of the Executive Council's Media Liaison Officer.
- 8.4.7. Comment to the media on issues pertaining to the Office of the MEC shall be directed to the MEC's spokesperson.
- 8.4.8. The Head of Communications shall comment on all issues relating to the department.
- 8.4.9. He/ She will also provide off and on record comments on issues relating to the Department and may also, in consultation with the MEC's spokesperson, comment on matters relating to the MEC.
- 8.4.10. The Sub-Branch: Communications shall provide ongoing media analysis and provide such to the Office of the MEC and Senior Management; and
- 8.4.11. Only the MEC, the Head of Department and the Head of Communication, can comment on policy statements and politically related issues.

## **8.5. DESIGNATED PERSONS TO COMMUNICATE TO THE MEDIA.**

For consistency and accountability purposes, the Public Service Regulation part II (E) of chapter 1 requires that not all employees of the Department unless delegated to do so would communicate to the media. According to the Department of Public Service Administration (DPSA) policy guidelines (pp. 64) the following persons may communicate with and/or to the media.

### **8.5.1. Member of the Executive Council (MEC)**

8.5.1.1. The MEC shall communicate all political and policy issues related to the Limpopo Department of Sport, Arts and Culture. The MEC may delegate responsibility to the HOD.

### **8.5.2. Head of Department (HOD)**

- 8.5.2.1. To be the main spokesperson for administrative and financial management matters of the Limpopo Department of Sport, Arts and Culture.
- 8.5.2.2. To communicate all financial issues that have implications on the Office of the MEC; and
- 8.5.2.3. To delegate responsibility to appropriate line functionaries in cases where, any information is required on other sections' activities.

### **8.5.3. Head of Communications (HoC)**

- 8.5.3.1. To prepare and respond to media enquiries as delegated by the MEC and the HOD.
- 8.5.3.2. To attend and advise on routine communication issues within the Department's responsibility.
- 8.5.3.3. To oversee and advise on all media liaison responsibilities of the Department.

- 8.5.3.4. To develop strategies and policies; Participate in Inter-Governmental Relations Forums (IGR), e.g., Government Communicators Forum, Heads of Communication Forum etc.
- 8.5.3.5. To ensure the monitoring of media and other sources and process the information for purposes of devising messages and strategies for the MEC;
- 8.5.3.6. To ensure that MEC's media statements are aligned to government policies are prepared and facts are verified before being released to the media.

#### **8.5.4. MEDIA LIAISON OFFICER – MLO**

- 8.5.4.1. To contribute to the determination of the MEC's diary considering the communication programme.
- 8.5.4.2. To be the main spokesperson during crisis communication.
- 8.5.4.3. To assist in the development and implementation of relevant campaigns for the MEC.
- 8.5.4.4. To co-ordinate speech writing and editing for the MEC together with the Head of Communication.
- 8.5.4.5. To co-ordinate all media enquiries to and from the Office of the MEC together with Head of Communication - HoC.
- 8.5.4.6. To ensure that accurate and informative media statements are formulated and distributed.

#### **8.5.5. SENIOR MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE**

Senior management has a responsibility and accompanying authority to handle the Department's communication activities as follows:

- 8.5.5.1. Prepare and respond to the media issues as delegated by the HOD.
- 8.5.5.2. Undertake routine communication responsibilities in the form of meetings with staff.
- 8.5.5.3. Ensure that the information about units managed is available on the website/internet; and

8.5.5.4. Prepare and respond to all media issues as delegated by the HOD via the Head of Communications.

#### **8.5.6. STAFF IN THE DIRECTORATE: COMMUNICATION**

- 8.5.6.1. Refer all media enquiries to the Head of Communications and Media Liaison Officer.
- 8.5.6.2. To attend to communication issues within their areas of responsibility as directed by the HoC.
- 8.5.6.3. To ensure that the Departmental programmes, activities, and services are communicated through print and electronic media.
- 8.5.6.4. To execute all media liaison functions as advised and recommended by the MEC, HOD and HoC.
- 8.5.6.5. To keep the Office of the MEC and the Department abreast of latest media reports/ trends pertaining to their scope of work.
- 8.5.6.6. The Deputy Director: Communication Services will render support in this regard by monitoring and developing responses for key media matters.
- 8.5.6.7. To coordinate the early warning/alert system in which reports pertaining to the functional activities of the Department are identified and brought to the attention of the MEC, HOD, HoC and Management as soon as possible after publication or broadcasting of such.
- 8.5.6.8. Reports identified in the above process that warrant priority attention, will be brought to the attention of the HOD and HoC for corrective action.
- 8.5.6.9. May write opinion pieces, letters to the editor in their official or personal capacity but in line with this strategy.

#### **8.5.7. ONLINE MEDIA NETWORKS**

- 8.5.7.1. Technological innovation is a feature of the rapidly changing communication environment. Department must be up to date with these technological innovations and be aware of how technology can benefit the public.

8.5.7.2. Communication campaigns must consider the most appropriate communication channels/methods for a particular audience. Where necessary, the department must continue to use traditional forms of media in conjunction with new media to not exclude members of the public who for various reasons might not have access to the new technology. Websites are widely used by government to publish information and engage with the public. Website content and branding should be managed through the communicator/communications division. The HoC or his/her designate must verify all content that is to be placed on the website.

#### **8.5.8. Department websites must:**

- 8.5.8.1. Provide current, factual, and official information to the public.
- 8.5.8.2. Market the department to external and internal stakeholders.
- 8.5.8.3. Conform to the Limpopo Government web content guidelines; these guidelines outline a common look-and-feel that incorporates the relevant GCIS guidelines, search functions and minimum content requirements.
- 8.5.8.4. Paid advertising, including endorsement or advertising of commercial products, is not allowed on any government websites. When government departments have a significant role to play in an event such as a conference organised by a commercial event management company, this event may be promoted, and a link provided to a website where the user can get more information or register. Organisations sponsoring departmental activities may only be acknowledged in text on the relevant page.

#### **8.5.9. THE HOC MUST:**

- 8.5.9.1. Decide whether logos of organisations sponsoring government events may be added to a website.
- 8.5.9.2. Annually review websites to ensure that they accurately reflect branding obligations, carry accurate messaging and are in line with all governmental requirements; approve website content.

- 8.5.9.3. Only information suitable for the public must be posted on the website. Classified information and/or information intended for departmental officials only must not be posted.
- 8.5.9.4. A feedback mechanism for receiving/ acknowledging citizens' inputs and/or replying to queries must be developed. The recommended response time is 24 hours to acknowledge receipt of an electronic enquiry and 48 hours to answer the query.

#### **8.5.10. SOCIAL MEDIA**

- 8.5.10.1. Social media refers to channels that can include blogs, wikis and social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, Tumblr and LinkedIn. However, there are many more and others are still evolving. This policy covers the broad spectrum of social media platforms that are currently available and will be available soon.
- 8.5.10.2. The use of social media platforms has been gaining acceptance in all spheres of government around the world. This provides an opportunity for two-way communication between government and citizens, partners and stakeholders, where the frequency and speed of engagement has increased.
- 8.5.10.3. Social media presents new challenges though as citizens' expectations need to be addressed, differences in communication culture explored, all the while navigating the line between official and personal use.

#### **8.5.11. ACCEPTABLE USE OF DEPARTMENT SOCIAL MEDIA**

- 8.5.11.1. Only the HoC or his/her designate can discuss government operations on the official social media sites. Any unauthorised communication is prohibited and will not be considered an official view.
- 8.5.11.2. Government employees recognised as official spokespersons or representatives of government by the media or in the public space, cannot comment on government activities and/or provide commentary that is contrary to the official government position on official/private social media

sites. They may, however, relay the contents of press releases, conferences, etc. on the public/their private social-media accounts.

- 8.5.11.3. Government employees using social media sites in their private capacity must be made aware of the relevant laws and regulations that apply in respect of privacy and confidentiality issues. They must declare upfront that they are writing in their personal capacity so that their comments are not interpreted as the official view of government.

## **9. SOCIAL MEDIA PRIVACY POLICY**

- 9.1. Any personal social media accounts or accounts unrelated to the government that currently exist or will be created in future, may not be registered using a government issued email address. This applies to any social media platform that requires an email account to register. These accounts must use private email addresses and contact details.
- 9.2. Public servants cannot use government-related usernames or handles when setting up their personal accounts. e.g., DSAC\_SURNAME.
- 9.3. Once an employee or contractor leaves Government service, such employee/contractor must update all social media accounts to reflect that they are no longer in the employ of Government.

## **10. SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT**

- 10.1. All social media content published by department must adhere to the Government Online Content Guidelines as defined by the GCIS.
- 10.2. Government resources should not be used to access or post any material that is fraudulent, harassing, threatening, bullying, embarrassing, sexually explicit, profane, obscene, racist, sexist, intimidating, defamatory or otherwise inappropriate or unlawful. The Constitution provides that everyone has the right to freedom of expression. This right does not extend to speech that constitutes: propaganda for war; incitement of imminent violence; or advocacy of hatred that is based on race, ethnicity, gender or religion and that constitutes incitement to cause harm.



- 10.3. Do not disclose any information pertaining to Government's physical or information security practices and procedures or any other information which may be used to breach either physical or information security procedures in place. The Information Security Manager must keep abreast of new and emerging information security threats arising from social media use.
- 10.4. All content posted must reflect government values and be professional – whether on personal or official sites. Content that is copyright protected may not be published.

## **11. DEPARTMENT EMPLOYEES ON SOCIAL MEDIA**

**11.1.** When engaging in social media activity government employees must adhere to these fundamental principles:

The use of social media must consider the needs of society, and not be primarily used as an agenda-setting communication tool.

- Information provided on social media platforms must be relevant, timeous and helpful.
- The interaction on social media must demonstrate an awareness of Government's responsibility to be understanding and empathetic to requests and consultation.
- To promote transparency in Government operations and decisions, requests for the sharing of various types of information must be timeously dealt with.

### **11.2. The department is:**

- responsible for ensuring that content on all social media platforms is always current and relevant, and that derogatory comments are removed where possible.
- expected to respond to positive or negative engagement via their social media accounts.
- expected to ensure that these campaigns are supported through other media channels.
- required to manage their own content on the various social media accounts.

## **12. SOCIAL MEDIA SECURITY CONTROL**

- 12.1. The Department must change the password to their social media accounts at least twice a year. Where users access social media accounts via their personal accounts, users must be removed from the account when they are no longer part of the operational team. It is recommended that this password complies with the organizational IT security policy. The policy suggests that the password used has at least one special character and one number along with plain text.

## **13. LEGAL ISSUE**

- 13.1. The Department through their social media account managers are mandated to keep a record of all information posted online. While most social networks do not provide this functionality, third party services allow for the implementation of this requirement.
- 13.2. Any content that is removed must be retained, including the time, date and identity of the poster in accordance with the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa's Records Management Policy.

## **14. CITIZEN CONDUCT**

- 14.1. The Department must make citizens aware of their social media policy when interacting with government. Social media commentary by citizens will be removed if it:
- is used to defame, insult, abuse, harass, threaten, or attack anyone.
  - includes the use of language that is obscene and/ or offensive.
  - goes against the principles of the Constitution and discriminates against any race, gender, sexual preference, religion, etc.
  - advertises or promotes commercial interests.
  - promotes illegal or unethical activities.

**15. DEFAULT**

Failure to comply with the provisions of this policy shall be dealt with in terms of the Public Service Disciplinary Code and Procedures, as amended.

**16. INCEPTION DATE**

The policy shall come into effect on the first date of the month following the month which the Executing Authority approved it.


**17. TERMINATION AND REVIEW CONDITIONS**

This policy shall be amended, after three years (3) or when there are major policy changes in government and will follow the initial policy development processes.

**18. ENQUIRIES**

Enquiries regarding any issues regarding this policy should be directed to the Chief Director Corporate Services.

~~Recommended/Not Recommended~~

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
HEAD OF DEPARTMENT  
N. N. Tsebe

26/03/2021  
\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE

Approved /~~Not Approved~~:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
MEMBER OF EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

26/03/2021  
\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE