

ABAQULUSI LOCAL MUNICIPALITY



INTERNAL COMMUNICATION POLICY

2021 – 2026

(Reviewed annually)

1. CONTEXT

1.1 A key part of our communication approach since the beginning of 2006, adopted by Cabinet, is the intensification of communication within the Public Service about government programmes, motivated by the need for public servants to have a good grasp of government's Program of Action (PoA) if they are to do their job well.

1.2 GCIS, with its responsibility for strengthening and maintaining the government communication system, is leading efforts to build internal communication in government, in particular communication of government's PoA to public servants.

1.3 The inaugural Government Internal Communicators' Forum met on 29 November 2006. It brought together all the internal communicators within the Public Service to plan and prepare for the implementation of an integrated communication program within the Public Service. Once it is established at national level, attention will be given to extending it beyond.

1.4 Though government has made great strides in communicating with the public, in particular around its PoA, it is clear that there is a need to complement public communication with improved internal communication to inform and mobilise public servants in all spheres to play their part in implementation.

1.5 Mobilisation for implementation requires communication of government's vision and program, both to the public and to the Public Service so that all can play their part in efforts to intensify the struggle against poverty and underdevelopment.

1.6 Against this background, internal communication should be seen within the context of broader efforts to build a better performing state. This places particular weight on communication within the Public Service to promote success of the Second Economy interventions and broadly popularising the PoA of government with emphasis on implementation.

2. PRINCIPLES FOR INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

2.1 Internal communication in the Public Service is underpinned by the following principles:

2.2 In designing internal communication programs, experience has shown that there is a need to supplement communication on the ethics of the public service with more communication that builds an understanding of the content of departmental programs.

2.3 There is a need to move beyond circulars and workshops as products and platforms for internal communication in the Public Service, because these alone cannot be sufficient to mobilise for implementation of government's mandate. Therefore, careful thought should be given to media, products and platforms that will effectively reach public servants in a manner that mobilises them for implementation.

3. CORE FUNCTIONS OF INTERNAL COMMUNICATION UNITS IN DEPARTMENTS

3.1 Development and implement of an internal communication plan (informed by the departmental communication strategy) with key milestones, combining both departmental activities and government's PoA.

3.2 Develop content for various products and establish and maintain platforms to effectively reach out to public servants in the department (internal publications, intranet, notice boards, news flashes, etc.)

3.3 Distribute material in the department, including provincial departments and/or offices.

3.4 Conduct, on a regular basis, quantitative or qualitative research on platforms, media, products and language preferences to deepen public servants' understanding of departmental programmes and government's PoA.

3.5 Organise internal departmental events, including celebrations of national commemorative days; director-general and deputy/minister's staff addresses, etc. Motivate staff members to become ambassadors of the government brand and ensure that all work towards strengthening the partnership to escalate service delivery.

3.6 Facilitate the communication of top management decisions to all staff members, including matters related to ethics in the Public Service and departmental and government policies.

3.7 An internal communicator is expected to implement a strategic information and communication management system. Monitor critical issues related to the internal work environment and advise management on necessary actions to be taken.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES OF INTERNAL COMMUNICATORS

4.1 For government to communicate effectively with its employees, it needs a well-structured and managed internal communication unit that seeks to continually inform staff members of all the programmes and projects carried out in government and departments.

4.2 Allow staff to see the link between their daily functions and the services the department provides to its clients and how each staff member plays an important role in helping the department to deliver an efficient service.

4.3 Ensure that public servants are empowered with government information to become true communicators, ambassadors, and champions of government message/s to the public.

4.4 Ensure that communication material is written in plain language. Plain language is in clear communication that is clearly understood by the intended audience. Using plain language does not mean 'dumping down' your message or making it less precise. Everyone must clearly understand what you mean.

4.5 Departments will decide which additional communication mediums are to be explored, over and above existing ones, in communicating government messages to staff members.

5. COMMUNICATION ROLES WITHIN ABAQULUSI MUNICIPALITY

5.1 All correspondence which will be shared with the external stakeholders shall be approved by the Municipal Manager

5.2 All Municipal Staff shall not communicate directly with the media. The Mayor, Municipal Manager and the Communications Section shall communicate with the media. Only when

authorized by the Mayor or Municipal Manager that a Political Office Bearer/Councillors or Head of Department can communicate with media.

5.3 The content pertaining to the Municipal matters on social media shall be communicated by the Mayor, Municipal Manager and the Communications Section.

5.4 A Municipal logo, letterhead or any corporate identity material can only be shared by the Communication Section with the external stakeholders.

6. INTERNAL COMMUNICATION PLATFORMS

6.1 Platforms can include but not limited to notice/bulletin boards, newsletters/magazines, letter/circulars, videos, emails and intranet, presentations, team-building, group meetings, employee-attitude surveys, focus groups, face-to-face meeting with managers, social events, audio recordings, social media, general staff meetings.

7. INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS STRUCTURES

7.1 An internal communicator must manage the internal communications division by:

- a) Ensuring that there is two-way communication between employees and management on policy, programs and issues affecting day-to-day implementation of the program of action
- b) Ensuring that all staff members understand the mandate, vision, mission, values and the strategic plan of the institution
- c) Engaging politicians, senior management and line managers so that policies and program are communicated to staff