

**eThekwini Municipality
Communications Unit**

Communications Policy

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1. INTRODUCTION

The eThekweni Municipality is committed to two-way communication, building relationships with its internal and external stakeholders and to form partnerships with the public and private sector. The purpose of this policy is to provide clear principles and guidelines for communication in the Municipality. The different roles and responsibilities within the Municipality's communication are made clear, what is communicated, and by whom. This policy will ensure that communication takes place in a coordinated and uniform way.

2. GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF THIS DOCUMENT

This Communication Policy seeks to ensure that the eThekweni Municipality acknowledges the importance of communications as a strategic management function and as an integral part of its daily functioning. It demonstrates that the Municipality is committed to a transparent and effective relationship with its internal and external stakeholders and will do so by a process of consultation and information dissemination. The Municipality 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.

The Communication Unit has the responsibility to ensure 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-coordinated and recommended by the Unit.

3. POLICY STATEMENT

It is the policy of the eThekweni Municipality to provide information to its internal and external stakeholders about Municipality 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 it is visible, accessible and answerable to the public it serves;

All communications must reflect Council Units' communication programmes, as well as the communication priorities of government.

4. COMMUNICATION ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

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

4.1 Mayor

The Mayor is the Chief Communicator (spokesperson) for the Municipality. He / she can delegate these responsibilities to the Deputy Mayor or City Manager whenever required. The Mayor together with the City Manager and Head of Communication Unit will be responsible for defining the annual communication priorities, objectives and requirements. This is done in consultation with the Strategic Management Team.

4.2 City Manager (CM)

The City Manager is the spokesperson for the City on strategic and operational issues. He ensures that the annual communications strategy is in line with Municipality communication objectives and reflects the Municipality's priorities. The CM ensures the integration of the communications function within the Municipality's decision-making processes and the integration of strategic communication planning in the overall planning of the City.

4.3 Heads of Units (HoU)

Heads of Units are responsible for:

- Ensuring compliance with the Municipality's Communication Policy and Procedures;
- Attending to media inquiries through communication Unit;
- Ensuring that key communication issues and priorities are identified annually in line with the Municipality communication strategy and
- That their programmes have a communication action plans, this must be done in consultation with the Communication Unit.

4.4 Head of Communication

The Head of Communication Unit serves as the Municipality authority on communication issues. He/she is responsible for co-coordinating all communications activities including the procurement of communication products and services. This includes the appointment of communication service providers, consultants and communication activities of the various Clusters of the Municipality. All these activities must be either approved or recommended by him / her. He/she ensures that the Communication Policy and Procedures are communicated to staff and adhered to. He/she provides communication advice and counsel to the Mayor and City Manager.

4.5 Municipal Spokesperson

The Municipal Spokesperson serves as the Council's spokesperson. He/She is responsible for co-ordinating liaison with the media, arranging media conferences, the issuing of media statements and handling media queries. He/she is responsible for both Mayor and Municipal media liaison. He/She is responsible for writing Mayor and other Office Bearer's speeches.

4.6 Communications Unit

Communications Unit is responsible for co-coordinating all communications activities in the Municipality. In this regard the Communications Unit, shall support and co-ordinate all communication efforts with the main aim of enabling the Mayor and City Manager to perform their function as Chief Communicators; shall provide strategic advice and counsel with regard to communication policy development, programme planning and programme implementation; develop and implement communication plans and produce publications for information dissemination.

Dedicated Communication Officers exist for each of the cluster functional areas. These officers are responsible for all the communication requirements of clusters in the Municipality that deal with these functional areas - this includes identifying communication issues, developing communication strategies, implementing and managing communication actions such as: campaigns, events, advertising, design and printing of communication materials, audio-visual and still communication, marketing and communication research.

4.7 Communication's Forum

Communicator's Forum for all Council's Communication's staff exists and meetings are held quarterly. The Forum is a strategic platform for information sharing and coordination.

5. PROCEDURES AND REGULATIONS

The following Procedures and Regulations are the rules that govern the implementation of the Communication Policy.

5.1 Media Relations

Communications Unit is the Municipality'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: It is advisable that before responding to media queries, Communications Unit be consulted. In a situation where this is not possible, the response must be signed off by the relevant Head of Unit and copied to Head Communications.

All media queries must be referred to the Communications Unit who will then engage with the relevant line functionaries for an adequate response. The Communication Unit should ideally at all times coordinate interactions with the media, such as media conferences, briefings, letters to the media and advertising. The Communications Unit is responsible for media evaluation and monitoring. A media monitoring service is available from the Communications Unit. Items of importance will be circulated to those impacted upon, either for information purposes or for a draft response. 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. Inquires 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.

5.2 Internal Communication

The main purpose of internal communications is to facilitate and manage the flow of information within the Municipality in order to create an informed workforce. Internal communications involves information about Municipality programmes, relevant human resource information, 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, Posters, Notice Boards, Intranet, Workshops, Staff meetings

Toilet notice boards, SMS and Pay slips.

5.3 External Communication

The main purpose of external communications is to inform stakeholders of services and programmes of the Municipality. Different communication tools and mediums are used to communicate with stakeholders:

Billboards, Radio, Television, eZasegagasini Metro, Metro beat, Road shows Exhibitions, Conferences, Summits, Workshops, Internet and Newspapers.

All external communication campaigns must be approved by the Communication Unit.

5.4 Production of Communication Materials

The communication Unit must be consulted on communications material that is produced on behalf of the municipality. Decisions to outsource such activity or part thereof must carry the approval of the Head of Communication.

5.5 Advertising

Communication Unit is responsible for co-coordinating all advertising activities. The Communication Unit must approve all advertising or procurement of advertising services. No contract or payment can be signed without the approval of the Head of Communications or his/her representative. In all instances the correct procurement procedures should be followed. Heads of Units must compliment the budget.

5.6 Corporate Image

Communication Unit is responsible for the corporate image of the Municipality. This responsibility includes the following:

The look and feel of the Municipality's office buildings; The type of communication material to be used by the Municipality i.e. folders, letterheads, business cards etc; the way communication material is used and produced i.e. the font, use of logo's, corporate identity, etc. The dome is the official Municipal logo with the name of the Municipality written in full underneath white. Logo shall be used as prescribed in the Corporate Identity Manual.

5.7 Branding and Promotional Material

Promotional material using the corporate identity of the Municipality may only be used for official purposes. The production of such material must be authorised by the Communication Unit. Branded merchandise is an integral part of the Municipality branding strategy and as such cannot be developed without the approval of the Communication Unit.

The use of the municipality logo on projects not initiated by the Municipality has to be approved by the Communication Unit. Strict adherence to the corporate identity is a given with the development of any branded material.

5.8 Procurement of communication materials

Communication materials include any type of publication, newsletter, magazine, brochure, audiovisual material and any other material intended to convey to the public information. Communication Unit has the responsibility of ensuring that communication products and services, including that of consultants, or services are acquired in a fair and equitable manner. The Communications Unit must be consulted on procurement processes for communication. It is advisable to make use of the Communication Unit's in-house service, depending on the type of project, the time frames, capacity available and budgets.

5.9 Website

The Municipality's Internet site serves as its window to the public and as such the Communications Unit has the following responsibility: The Head of Communication Unit or a delegated official has the sole responsibility of placing and removing material from the Municipality website. Information will be placed on the site only after the approval of a Unit Head or a delegated official not lower than the rank of Manager. It is the responsibility of individual Units to provide information for their web pages. The creation of links on the Municipality website and or acceptance of a link of the Municipality website to another website will only be done after the approval of the Head of Communication Unit.

An E Communications Forum made up of IT, Communications officials and cluster reps is responsible for approving all IT related projects.

5.10 Language Policy and Translations

The eThekweni Municipality language policy is based on the Constitution and the Municipal Systems Act, in this regard, it takes into account the language usage and preferences of the residents when communicating. English and isiZulu are business languages for the Municipality and all official notes and advertisements issued for general public information must be published in English and isiZulu (eThekweni Municipality Language Policy).

5.11 Copyright

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

5.12 Exhibitions

Communications Unit is responsible for Branding and Corporate Identity of the Municipality (5.7), thus, the Unit must be consulted when departments are taking part in fairs and exhibitions on behalf of the Municipality.

5.13 Events

Events shall be organised as prescribed in the Council's Events Policy, and Communication Unit shall take full responsibility for media, publicity and branding.

5.14 Training and Development

The Communication Unit shall identify communication-training courses for Council officials who interact with media and public. Communications consultants engaged by Council should work closely with officials so that skills can be transferred.

5.15 Communication in crisis situation

A crisis is every organisation's worst nightmare. However it is important that a framework for such a situation exist. In the event of a crisis the following should be adhered to: The Manager in whose area of responsibility is involved should inform his/her Unit Head; The Head of communications is to be copied the information. A Crisis Committee will consist of the CM or relevant Deputy City Managers, Head of Communication and relevant officials. The Mayor is to be informed immediately. A plan of action is to be drafted; The Crisis Committee will manage the issue, communication thereof and release the necessary statements with the involvement of the Mayor. The Mayor and CM will act as spokespersons. No media statement or interview is allowed from any other officials; Staff members will be kept informed of the situation.

6. Procedures and compliance

This policy is intended to ensure that the Municipality engages in a co-coordinated manner with regard to communications and communicates in a standardised manner with unified messages. Adherence to the policy will result in a coherent image for the Municipality. This communication policy and its procedures are applicable to every staff member in the Municipality. The communication policy falls within the scope of internal communications and it will be communicated accordingly.