



THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA

**MINISTRY OF INFORMATION, YOUTH,
CULTURE AND SPORTS**

**GUIDELINE FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION
OF GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATION
IN MINISTRIES, INDEPENDENT
DEPARTMENTS, EXECUTIVE AGENCIES
AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

IEC – Information, Education and Communication

GCU – Government Communication Unit

MDAs – Ministries, Independent Departments and Executive Agencies

RSs – Regional Secretariats

LGAs – Local Government Authorities

HRM – Human Resource Management

PR – Public Relations

TV- Television

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Government Communication

An approach by the government to maintain continued interaction with the people for the purpose of promoting an informed citizenry. The overall objective being to enable its citizens to be active and conscious participants in social transformation and development.

Crisis Communications

Crisis communication takes place when an unexpected event or emergency occurs and demands quick and coordinated response. A crisis can be natural disasters such as; floods, earthquake or manmade events such as; explosion, scandals, or conflicts that can threaten reputation of an organization.

Rapid Response

A mechanism through which government communicators alerts their respective Chief Executive Officers on both positive and challenging issues covered by international and domestic media. This assessment enables development of timely and robust rebuttal strategy.

Promotional Materials

Entails tools used to market and build corporate image of an institution. They include; T-shirts, caps, calendars, banners, key holders, posters, brochures etc.

New Media

A general term for different forms of communication that are made possible through the use of computer technology such as; Internet, Websites, short message services, mobile phones, social networks (face books, twitters, blogs).

PREFACE

A decade ago, the United Republic of Tanzania has decided to elevate the Government Communication functions with a view to improve transparency, accountability and good governance. As a result of these initiatives, Ministries, Independent Departments and Executive Agencies (MDAs) have established Government Communication units while RSs and LGAs have recruited information officers. These Units are performing various roles such as; create awareness on the policies, advice management on the issues related to Government communication programmes and projects, as well as enhancing a two way flow of information between the Government and its stakeholders.

Despite the mentioned functions above, there are a number of challenges that the Government Communication units are facing. They include but not limited to the following: undefined structure, misplacement of the units in some of MDAs' RSs, and LGAs' structure, misunderstanding of the roles and functions of Government Communication, misconception on roles of the GCU staff, manning of the Government Communication functions by unqualified personnel and inadequate budget

allocation. These challenges have caused MDAS, RSs and LGAs to have different patterns of communication in terms of structure, staffing and skills for performing Government Communication activities.

Based on the above challenges, the Government has put in place communication mechanism by developing Government Communication guidelines. These guidelines will harmonise Government Communication activities and make them a coordinated function.

Along those lines, I urge all MDAs, RSs and LGAs to adopt and make use of the guidelines so as to enhance effective communication between the Government and its stakeholders.

Hon. Dr. Fenella Mukangara
MINISTER OF INFORMATION, YOUTH, SPORTS AND
CULTURE

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 Introduction

1.1. Background and Rationale for MDAs' Government Communication Units

In recent years the Government has undertaken various structural and institutional reforms, reviewed its policies and strategies all aimed at improving service delivery and the general welfare of its citizens. On 18th March 2003, the President of the third phase Government launched the workshop on *Improving Public Communication of Government Policies and Enhancing Media Relations*. In his Keynote Address he emphasised that, "...Government's duty to communicate fulfils the inalienable right of the citizenry to be informed, to air their views, to be heard and to demand accountability from their government...good communication forms an essential component of good governance and that building an enhanced capacity to communicate effectively is a critical element in current public management practice".

It is on this challenge that the Government has initiated the development of a comprehensive strategy for improving public communication of its policies. The aim is to create a more open, transparent and accountable government. As a follow up to this, Government has so far established Government Communication Units (GCU) in MDAs whose main activities are to:

- Promote institution activities, programmes and policies;
- Produce various documents on sectoral and institutional reforms;
- Distribute such documents to stakeholders;
- Coordinate press briefings for the institution;
- Coordinate preparation of sectoral and ministerial papers for workshops, seminars and conferences;
- Coordinate preparation, production and distribution of sectoral and institution articles and newspapers; and
- Update sectoral and institution information in Website; and advise divisions, units, extra-ministerial departments, executive agencies and

government institutions on production of various documents.

Establishment of Government Communication Units is one of the Government initiatives in improving service delivery by enhancing communication with its citizens.

1.2. Purpose of the Guide

The Government Communication guidelines provide MDAs, RSs and LGAs with an overview of Government communication systems and quick reference relevant to their work.

The establishment of Government Communication guidelines in MDAs introduces a new approach to Government communications which encourages integration, coordination, high levels of professionalism and enhance the capacity to communicate with one voice.

The purpose of the guidelines is to:

- Clarify roles, functions, responsibilities of Government Communication Office in MDAs, RSs and LGAs as well as their needs;

- Strengthen Government Communication activities in MDAs, RSs and LGAs;
- Improve government communication systems;
- Increase awareness of the importance of Government Communication activities in MDAs, RSs and LGAs;
- Bring about uniformity, coherence and effectiveness of Government communication;
- Provide comprehensive and coherent media and liaison services;
- Enhance cooperation among MDAs', RSs and LGAs Government Communication Offices;
- Increase sharing of information among MDAs, RSs and LGAs;
- Share opportunities created by other MDAs, RSs and LGAs;
- Speak with a shared purpose and clarity of information;
- Provide efficient and effective coordination of Government communication and information; and
- Instill best Government Communication practices in MDAs, RSs and LGAs.

These guidelines will be used by Ministries, Independent Departments, Executive Agencies, Regional Secretariats and Local Government Authorities.

1.3 Role and Mandate of Ministry of Information, Youth, Culture and Sports

As per the Presidential Instrument issued in December, 2010 one of the mandates of the Ministry of Information, Youth, Culture and Sports is to deal with information Policy and its implementation. In relation to this mandate the following are the roles of the Ministry in relation to Government Communication functions:-

- Develop, implement and Monitor National Information Policy;
- Facilitate dissemination of information from MDAs, RSs and LGA's;
- Chief spokesperson of the Government;
- Coordinate countrywide network of information services;
- Coordinate press attaches at all strategic diplomatic missions abroad; and
- Coordinate and supervise information sector development.

1.4 Roles and Mandates of MDAs, RSs and LGAs

- Implement Government Communication functions in MDAs, RS and LGAs ;
- Prepare appropriate job list;
- Recruit skilled and professional personnel;
- Provide working facilities for Government Communication functions;
- Allocate sub-vote and adequate budget;
- Develop Government Communication strategy, implementation plan and communication policy;
- Provide office accommodation;
- Provide management support to Government Communication Unit staff;
- Involve head of Government Communication Office in all management decisions; and
- Involve Government Communication Office in all MDAs, RSs and LGAs strategic functions.

1.5 Roles and Mandates of Government Communication Unit/Office in MDAs and LGAs

- Organize press conference, handle press inquiries and setting up interviews for Government Officials with the press;

- Plan and manage media campaigns;
- Organize and prepare public awareness programmes during exhibitions, seminars, workshops, symposium and commemorations of national and international days/ events;
- Develop and coordinate implementation of Government Communication strategy
- Preparing news releases, fact sheets and other Government Communication materials;
- Website content management
- Develop and coordinate printing of educational materials, e.g. News Letters, Brochures, Booklet, Posters
- Use print, electronic and new media to disseminate information and collect feedback from the public
- Facilitate communication of top management decisions to all staff members including matters related to government policies
- Participate in speech writing;
- Media monitoring;
- Manage Documentation Centres
- Handle crisis, risk and emergency communications;
- Handling customers complaints
- Advertising and marketing;

- Create and maintain a good image of the institution; and
- Conduct impact assessment on the implementation of Government Communication strategy.

1.7 Role of the Head of Government Communication Units/Offices

The Head of MDAs, RSs and LGAs' Government Communication Units/ Offices will be responsible for the following activities:-

- Manage activities of the Government Communication Unit/ Office;
- Develop and oversee implementation of Communication Strategy;
- Spokesperson of the MDAs, RSs and LGAs;
- Prepare periodical reports;
- Coordinate institution publications;
- Advise management on matters related to Government Communication,
- Attend management meetings;
- Participate in the institution's strategic programmes;
- Advise government officials and staff on stakeholders reaction to proposed policies;

- Coordinate interviews and briefings for the press with government officials; and
- Account for the use funds allocated for Government Communication Unit.

CHAPTER TWO

2.0 ESTABLISHMENT AND OPERATIONALIZATION OF GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATION UNITS/ OFFICES IN MDA's, RSs AND LGA's

2.1 Basic Principles of Government Communication

- Ensure that the citizens are constantly informed about government business and empowered to take active part in it;
- Make efforts to continuously encounter insinuations that government work is secretive whenever and wherever they surface;
- Government communication must emanate from higher levels of the Government, i.e. the President, Ministers, Chief Executives of MDAs, RS, LGAs and their respective spokespersons;
- Communication structure must be placed in the offices of MDAs, RSs and LGAs;

- Every person working in government is indirectly a communicator and must therefore be a good representative of government. This is pertinent in every public service member's behavior, including verbal and non-verbal interaction with the people;
- The Ministry responsible for Information services must co-ordinate the formulation of the main and all encompassing communication strategies for the whole government;
- All spheres and parts of government must at all times communicate in one voice, meaning that there must be consistency in messaging; and
- Government policies and priorities are predetermined and communication is there to inform and accurately disseminate them to the public.

2.2. ESTABLISHMENT

2.2.1. Position of Government Communication Units/Offices in MDA's, RSs and LGA's

- Government Communication Units/Offices should be established in MDAs, RSs and LGAs;
- The Units/Offices must feature in the structures of all MDAs, RSs and LGAs;
- Head of the Government Communication Unit/Office will be accountable to the Chief Executive Officer of the respective Organization;
- The head will be part of management of the institution, participate in all managerial decisions and be the spokesperson of the institution; and
- The Unit will coordinate and oversee all communication functions of the organization.

2.2.2 Raising Awareness to the MDAs, RSs and LGAs on the Guideline

- Conduct awareness training to Chief Executives, Management, Government Communication Officers and other staff of MDAs, RSs and LGAs through various platforms;
- Print and distribute the guideline to MDAs, RSs and LGAs.

2.2.3. Budget and Financing

- The Unit/Office should have its own independent budget allocated in the Institution's Financial budget
- It should have a sub-vote
- The Unit should have adequate funding
- The Unit may solicit funds from sources other than institution's own budget after getting consent of the Accounting Officer.

2.2.4 Staffing

- It must have adequate staff based on the job list;
- Must have qualified staff in the communication profession; and
- The Unit should have staff with appropriate and specialized skills in the field of communication.

2.2.5. Capacity Building

- Provide Government Communication Unit's human resource requirements and training needs to the office responsible for HRM;
- Ensure allocation of adequate resources to facilitate Government Communication Units/Offices capacity building initiatives (training and development, study visits and exchange programmes);
- Participate in relevant National and International forums;

- Ensure availability of Government Communication working tools (video & still cameras, computers, scanners, projectors, video and audio editing suites, faxes, printers, TV & radio, internet connectivity and phones);
- Coordinate and facilitate exchange programmes to its staff; and
- Coordinate and facilitate in-house training, orientation and induction courses on communication matters.

2.2.6

Office Accommodation and working tools

- The Government Communication Unit/Office must have adequate office space
- The Government Communication Unit/Office must have conducive working space and environment
- The Government Communication Unit/Office must have adequate and modern professional working tools

2.3 RULE OF ENGAGEMENT

2.3.1 General conduct of work

- Adherence to standards of Government communications. The relevant Government Communication unit standards are as follows;

- Apply communication processes, and assess communication effects for public relations programme;
- Formulate and coordinate public relations communications;
- Formulate and produce communication strategies for public relations programmes and activities;
- Review and evaluate government communication programmes and services;
- Identify and advocate news for publication or broadcast;
- Research print and electronic sources for journalism;
- Demonstrate knowledge of media ethics;
- Analyse and apply principles of communication process theory;
- Identify the role and functions of the Tanzania Communications;
- Establish social, ethical, legal and regulatory parameters for government communication activities;
- Plan and manage government communication programmes;

- Establish, develop and manage public relations media relationships;
- Direct and coordinate research of government communication issues and activities;
- Facilitate a group and/or team to gather ideas and information;
- Collaborate in a group to deliver an oral presentation;
- Present information orally to an audience
 - Adherence to public service code of conduct (MDAs, RSs, LGAs);
 - Adherence to regulations, policies, laws and guidelines which guide the communication function;
 - Be professional , creative, efficient and enthusiastic;
 - Should be able to work in a diverse media environment;
 - Should be presentable, accessible with good PR skills; and
 - Should represent a credible public face of the Government.

2.3.2. Understanding Government Policy, Law, Regulation and Orders

- A government communication person should have a firm grasp of

Government policies, laws, regulations and orders to be able to articulate Governments position confidently and explain how it impacts on the lives of its people; and

- To have a clear understanding of the day to day business of the respective MDAs, RSs and LGAs.

2.3.3 Understanding needs of different stakeholders

- Know the stakeholders of the institution;
- Know their communication needs and concerns; and
- Tailor the communications needs of the stakeholders into the institution's communication strategy.

2.3.4 Avoid Adversarial relationships with stakeholders

- Be prompt in information dissemination and responding to stakeholders' enquiries;
- Have cordial and professional relationship with the stakeholders; and
- Have a proper system of handling complaints.

2.3.5 Accessibility

- Be accessible to stakeholders and share information timely;
- Facilitate availability of Chief Executives Officers and other Government officials to share information with stakeholders.

2.4. Handling Communication Crisis

The Government Communication Units/Offices must have a communication crisis plan which will be tailored to organization's functions.

2.5. Media Monitoring and Rapid Response

Each institution's communication strategy should have media monitoring and rapid response mechanism.

2.6. Use of Various Media Tools and Promotional Materials

Each institution's communication strategy must make use of diverse media tools and promotional materials

3.0 MONITORING, REVIEWS AND REPORTING

3.1 Monitoring and Evaluation

- Government Communication Units/Offices should monitor implementation of its plans and evaluate its impact towards achieving the overall organizational objective; and
- Conduct evaluation studies on the implementation of the guideline and disseminate its findings to various levels of the Government for action.

3.2 Reporting

- Government Communication Units/Offices are required to prepare and submit quarterly and annual performance reports to the Chief Executive Officers.
- Government Communication Units/Offices should also submit quarterly and annual performance reports to the Prime Minister's Office, Regional Administration and Local Government Authority and Ministry of Information, Youth, Culture and Sports.
- The Ministry of Information, Youth, Culture and Sports should prepare a consolidated report of all the MDAs,

RS's and LGAs on the performance of Government Communication Units for institutional memory and accountability.

3.3 Reviewing the Guidelines

- It should be reviewed after every Five years or when the need arises; and
- Revisit best practices from other countries and internal challenges to review the guideline.

