



1. MUNICIPALITY BRIEF HISTORY OR PROFILE

Mkhambathini Local Municipality comprises an area of 917 square kilometres and serves a population of approximately 62 142 people in total. The community is predominantly rural in nature. Employment rates are low and poverty levels high which impacts negatively on the municipality's ability to generate income from services charges and rates. It is one of 7 local municipalities forming part of the uMgungundlovu District Municipality located in Kwa-Zulu Natal.

Vision

By the year 2020 Mkhambathini will be a sustainable developmental Municipality with improved quality of life for its entire people in areas of basic services, social, economic and environmental development.

Mission

Mkhambathini Municipality commits itself to the following

- ✓ Upholding our leadership vision;
- ✓ Working with integrity in an accountable manner towards the upliftment of the community;
- ✓ Protecting and enhancing the interest of our clients at all times
- ✓ Consistently performing our function with transparency honesty and dedication in dealing with clients;
- ✓ Responding promptly to the needs of our clients;
- ✓ Subscribing to the Batho Pele principles

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

“A thousand voices speaking without a common message and single purpose will in the end just make an indistinct noise that few will hear. We communicate in a noisy world, competing for attention with noises that have objectives that are different and often opposing. And we do so in a world made up of a vast array of interest and concerns, and a world in which everyday weigh heavily on most people”.

Communication strategy is the “what, who, why, when, where and how” of conveying a message. The strategy will assist the Mkhambathini Municipality to disseminate information in a well-planned, coordinated, structured and controlled manner. This strategy aims to deliver a proactive, responsive, integrated, effective and efficient communication approach for the Government Communication Programme. The strategy will provide an integrated framework to ensure that department manages communication in a planned and well-coordinated way and maintains the commitment to effective and timely communication. “Effective communication requires an effective communication strategy” - a coherent plan of action. This strategy will also provide for the strategic alignment with the national and provincial communication framework of government and the government priorities linked to the five-year local government electoral mandate.

The aim of this strategy is to bring about a credible voice that will reach and address/communicate with each and every ratepayer/resident/stakeholder of the Mkhambathini Municipality. It will produce an honest, succinct and cost-effective communication and using simple language and understandable messages. It will also be aligned with the Municipality Integrated Development Plan (IDP) budget and our sustainable development plan; vision 2020.

2.1 The Mandate (Legal Framework) Communication Strategy

The authorization of the communication strategy is derived from all relevant directives (pieces of legislation) which include the:-

- Municipal Structures Act, 1998 (Act 117 of 1998),
- Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (Act 32 of 2000),
- Promotion of Access to Information Act (Act 2 of 2000)
- Intergovernmental Relations Framework Act (act no.13 of 2005)
- And additionally, the Constitution of South Africa, 1996 (Act 108 of 1996) which puts emphases on a communication system with high levels of transparency, openness, participatory democracy and direct communication with the people in improving their lives.

This Communication Strategy will be reviewed annually to be relevant in dealing with issues within the environment.

2.1 Communication Responsibility

The municipality must ensure that:

1. Clear communication plans are in place for everything it does in order to maximize public information and minimize confusion.
2. It communicates clearly, openly, accurately and regularly with the public and with its professional partners in order to promote mutual understanding, and give a better service to the people of the municipality.
3. Its communication is produced in the language of the local population, written for its intended audience and be unambiguous, timely and of an appropriate quality.
4. All communication and promotional material issued by the municipality is branded and therefore clearly identifiable as having come from the municipal council, and include key contact details.
5. All communication, both internal and external, shows respect for those to whom it is addressed.
6. All communication is prepared in line with other appropriate council policies concerning freedom of information, data protection, fairness and equality, customer care and environmental sustainability.

The South African Local Government Association (SALGA) outlined the following pieces of legislation to be taken into account when practicing and dealing with Municipal communication, and give credence to the existence and functioning of local government communication

The following are key:

1. Constitution
2. Municipal Systems Act, 2000
3. Municipal Structures Act, 1998
4. Promotion of Access to Information Act, 2000.
5. Municipal Finance Management Act, 2003
6. Intergovernmental Relations (IGR) Framework Act, 2005
7. Public Finance Management Act, 1999
8. Organised Local Government Act, 1997
9. Media Development and Diversity Act, 2002.

The District Government Information Technology Officers Council (DGITOC), Government Communication Information System (GCIS) and Municipal Full Council (MFC) will be support structures for the Mkhambathini Municipality as the strategy will be aligned with their plans

to make sure that this strategy is effective. The Corporate and Administration Manager of Mkhambathini Municipality should sit in both the above mentioned communication structures (forums) to discuss and explore communication's dynamics which affect the uMgungundlovu District Municipality and Mkhambathini Municipality.

The Communications (forums) meetings are strategic meetings of the government and are usually aligned with **Inter Governmental Relations (IGR)** political structures.

2.2 Communications Cycle

The communication cycle of municipalities begin on February after the **State of the Nation Address (SONA) and the State of the Province Address (SOPA)** and to end in February of the following year. Its (Communication Strategy) implementation begins **July** and ends at the end of **June** the following Year.

2.3 Community participation

This is a communication activity and communicators should play a strategic role in this regard. Communicators should popularize and promote community (public) participation programmes as they interact with all stakeholders and key role players for the success of the programme. Communication should be involved in all stages of public participation (pre, during and post). Communication Development workers, ward committees, councillors and traditional leaders must be made aware of the importance of communication and its strategic role in service delivery, brief for them to understand the rest of the communication environment. These people are key in driving government and local government communication.

2.4 Capacity Building

Municipalities should ensure that they make provision for ensuring that there is a training budget for Communicators. CDW's and ward committee members along with Councillors (especially ward councillors & Members of Mayoral Committee) should be trained on basic communication skills. As they deal with media quite frequently, the Mayor and her/his Mayoral Committee should be equipped with media handling and public speaking skills. The leadership and council must know that they are never "off-record"; the media considers every piece of information it gets from them as newsworthy.

3. Communication Environments

This defines the terrain in which Mkhambathini Municipality chooses to communicate. It is imperative for communication practitioners to be abreast of the environment in which they or will be communicating on. Understanding issues such as the community/public mood, the media agenda, concerns and attitudes of varying sectors and forces, potential for improving environment is very critical. Knowing your audience and knowing your medium – to be used on that “particular” programme/campaign is the key to sending messages which will reach your audience and for them to understand it and send the appropriate feedback. This means, when we are sending a message to a community who is in deep remote rural areas of our municipality and a community who resides in town, we can't use the same mechanisms. The majority of Mkhambathini Municipality people reside in rural areas and a lesser who reside in the urban areas. The Municipality has to have a recorded database of such demographics so it can tailor-make the messages it (Municipality) sends to these different people.

3.1 Internal Environment

The internal environment needs to be conducive for effective communication to take.

- 3.1.1 Staff Loyalty needs to be improved. The lack of team spirit, and working together between departments/directorates leads to the Municipality sending different messages to the same audience.
- 3.1.2 The Municipality needs to inform or remind employees of the reason they are part of Municipality – **SERVICE DELIVERY** – to better the lives of the people.
- 3.1.3 Channels of communication need to be improved if exists at all and IF NOT they need to be put in place.
- 3.1.4 If the staff doesn't understand the aims and objectives of the Council- there is a gap.
- 3.1.5 Involvement of staff on political issues may negatively affect productivity.

3.2 External Environment

The external environment is very diverse and broad, includes the community, media, stakeholders and municipality partners.

3.2.1 Media agenda

1. Currently the Municipality is enjoying negative coverage from the media particularly main stream media. Media reports are biased towards negative stories and less if at all covered about the successes of the municipality.
2. This calls for proactive Media engagement plan seeking to improve the current unhealthy relations.
3. Focus should be also on massively using local community media that is easily accessible to the majority of Mkhambathini Municipality community.

3.2.2 Public Mood

4. Public participation is at its lowest and people are losing confidence in the government
5. Residents in some areas feel they are not given the same amount of support and attention given some areas considered to be important and thus information is not communicated to them.
6. The public does not often receive information sent by the Municipality

3.2.3 Political Environment

Political environment has improved immensely, with political parties working together to attain outcome number nine of 12 government outcomes approach. Outcome number nine says, a responsive, accountable, effective and efficient local government system. This could only be achieved if there is political tolerance and sound political leadership. Currently, Mkhambathini municipality enjoys that kind of political environment.

4. Key objectives of Communication Strategy

This Communication Strategy will detail with the structure of information flow, the message, the correct audience to address, potential and effective vehicles to carry the message, resources required to fulfil, and feedback mechanisms to learn and gain information from the whole exercise.

- To promote good governance taking into consideration principles of transparency, openness, participatory democracy, developmental and direct communication.
- Encourage and enhance internal communication.
- Promote maximum public participation by knowing the needs of the people.
- Promote information flow.
- Influence public attitude and change any existent negative perceptions.
- To communicate service delivery plans along with service delivery successes.
- To coordinate internal and external communication
- Build excellent relations with traditional leaders, NGO's, And Other Civil bodies.
- To ensure compliance to communication policy and protocol
- To publicise, brand and market the Municipality
- To build, manage and maintain good relations with the media.

5. Communication Challenges

- Absence of an integrated and coordinated communication plan. (Communication strategy)
- Absence of Local Communicators Forum.
- Failure to respond to communication and information needs of Mkhambathini Municipality community.
- Building good relations with all critical stakeholders. (Traditional leadership, CDW'S, Civil Structures etc.)
- Improving media coverage and media content
- Inadequate or absence of communication budget.
- Absence of Local Newspaper and local radio station
- Sustain positive public mood and maintaining the momentum in ensuring that people see the benefits from the implementation of municipality programme of action.

6. Message and Themes

6.1 National core message: Working together we can do more

6.2 Mkhambathini Municipality Core message: For the community

6.3 Themes:

- Speed up service delivery to build better communities
- Sustainable developmental Municipality for improved quality of life for its entire people.
- Working towards the attainment of vision 2020

7. Messengers

The following institutions/ councillors and officials have distinctive roles to play in ensuring that every opportunity is provided for the community to become involved in the affairs of the municipality. The allocation of roles and responsibilities will differ from municipality to municipality but it is important that the responsibilities be carried out in terms of a community participation plan are clearly spelt out.

7.1 Political Messenger

1. The Mayor
2. The Speaker
3. All councillors

7.2 Municipality messengers

4. The Municipal Manager
5. The IDP Manager/Coordinator
6. Heads of Department
7. The Chief Financial Officer
8. Communications Officer
9. Public Participation officer
10. Customer care officer

7.3 Other messengers

1. Traditional leaders
2. C D W s
3. Ward committees
4. Home based care workers

5. Official from sector departments
6. Community leaders
7. Religious leaders

8. Communication channels/medium

8.1 Internal

- Notice_boards
- Internet
- Internal news letter
- Meetings
- Plasma screens
- CD-ROMS
- Promotional material

8.2 External

- Internet
- Print and electronic Media
- **Community Development Workers (CDW's)**
- Billboards and electronic banners
- Loud hailers
- External Newsletter and brochures
- Web page
- New Social media platforms
- Workshops
- Seminars
- Summit
- Public participation programmes
- Mayoral outreach programmes

9 Stakeholder Segmentation

To know and understand your stakeholders/partners is important and a stakeholder map becomes necessary.

9.1 Internal Stakeholders

- Municipal Staff
- **Trade unions**
- Councillors

9.2 External Stakeholders

- 9.2.1 Ratepayers
- 9.2.2 communities
- 9.2.3 Private sector
- 9.2.4 Traditional Leaders
- 9.2.5 SALGA
- 9.2.6 Media
- 9.2.7 Municipalities
- 9.2.8 Government Departments
- 9.2.9 Faith-Based Organizations
- 9.2.10 Non-Governmental Organisations
- 9.2.11 Civil Society
- 9.2.12 Youth formations
- 9.2.13 Women's organisations
- 9.2.14 People with disability/ physical challenged

10 Types of Events/Campaigns

Some of the key phases and types of events/campaigns were identified to assist the communications planning process. All departments will be expected to add their events and campaigns to this strategy to build a strong and integrated_Municipal Calendar of events: -

These are the types of events the municipality will be embarking on:

- 10.1 State of the municipality address
- 10.2 IDP/ BUDGET
- 10.3 Special Programmes / HIV/AIDS/16 days of activism (women & child abuse
- 10.4 ID Campaign
- 10.5 Local Economic Development programmes
- 10.6 Cleaning campaigns/Community Services Campaign

- 10.7 Mayoral Imbizos
- 10.8 Public Safety Campaigns
- 10.9 National events
- 10.10 Service delivery projects and events/Poverty alleviation programmes
- 10.11 Public meetings

9.3 Stakeholder Engagement Plan
(Format for stakeholder engagement)

| Priority issue | Desired outcome | Target audience | Key message | Tools | Budget |
|--|---|---|--|-----------------------------|-----------------|
| Increasing stakeholder participation during IDP review session | Create awareness about comprehensive and credible IDP document | All government departments NGO'S Traditional leaders Faith based organisation Sectoral groups | Working towards developing a credible IDP | IDP REP FORUM meetings | R450 000 |
| Establishment of local communicators Forum | Proper function forum responding to community information and communication needs | Departments CDW's Ward committees NGO's | Promoting integrated communication | Quarterly Forum meetings | None |
| Effective IGR | Promote an integrated approach to speed up service delivery | Government departments and other key partners/stakeholders | Effective and efficient public service geared to fast track services | Quarterly IGR forum meeting | R60 000 |

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|------------------|----------------------|--------------|---------------------------------------|----------|--|
| Cluster meetings | Integration of plans | All clusters | Effective planning and implementation | Meetings | |
|------------------|----------------------|--------------|---------------------------------------|----------|--|

11. Communication action plan

| MTAS/DP priority | Key communication campaign | Communication activity | Messengers | Target audience | Channel | Time frame | Cost /budget |
|------------------|----------------------------|---|--|-----------------|-----------------------------------|------------|--------------|
| | Mayoral outreach campaign | 1. Community feedback on progress made in the implementation of municipal programme of action. 2. Presentation of Draft IDP/budget | Mayor Speaker HOD Councilors CDW's Communication officer Municipal manager Managers Public participation officer | All | Community meetings | Quarterly | R 30 000 |
| | Information and awareness | 1. Inform communities about | Mayor Speaker HOD | All | Workshops Community engagement | R | |

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|--|--|---|--|--|---|----------------|--|
| | campaigns on government policies, programmes and municipality bylaws | government policies, key programmes and municipality bylaws. | Councillors CDW's Communication officer Municipal manager Managers Public participation officer | | meetings Information material News letter Brochures | | |
| | Marketing and branding | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop marketing and communication plan for the municipality 2. Develop brand manual 3. Erect sign post at the entrance/ exit areas of the municipality 4. | Tourism officer supported by Politicians and management | Communities Tourist Potential investors | Bill boards Adverts Flyers Newsletter Website Use promotional material | R100000 | |
| | Career information | Conduct career guidance day | Educators Communic | Matriculates and | Annual Career | R50000 | |

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|--|----------------------------------|--|--|-----------------------------|--|--------------------|--|
| | day | | ation officer Skills developme nt officer/man ager Community service manager/of ficer Political principals Teacher unions | grade 09- 12 learners | information day Community radio Brochures | | |
| | HCT campaign | | | | | | |
| | Crime prevention camapigns | Conduct crime prevention awareness | SAPS Community service portfolio head/mana ger Councilors CDW's Ward committee s Councilors CPF's Traditional leaders and other | All | Community meetings Community radio Sports against crime Visit to schools Leaflets Posters Bill boards | R30 000 | |

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|--|---|--|--|---|--|------------|--|
| | | | key people | | | | |
| | LED development and information programme | Conduct Smme summit/seminars Create awareness on cooperatives development | LED portfolio LED manager LED officer Councilors Cdw's Ward committees Communication officer | Smme's Communities Sectoral groups | Workshops Meetings Seminars Summit Information products News letter Print papers | R50 000 | |
| | Back to school campaign | Political principals visit to communicate with identified schools and learners | Mayor Speaker Councillors CDW's Communication officer Municipal manager Managers Public participation officer Teacher unions SGB's LRC | EDUCATORS LEARNERS PARENTS TEACHERS UNIONS Department of education | School visit meetings Media | R10 000 | |
| | State of the municipality | Develop communication | Mayor Speaker | All | Community media | R50 000 | |

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|--|---------|----------------|--|--|---|--|--|
| | Address | and media plan | MMC Councillors CDW's Communic ation officer Municipal manager Managers Public participatio n officer | | News letter Posters New media platforms Website | | |
|--|---------|----------------|--|--|---|--|--|

12. Structures and Processes

This draft Communication strategy will be submitted to relevant bodies for recommendations. As a support structure to the Mkhambathini Municipality Communication's Unit, the District Communicators Forum will be given a copy of this strategy to make inputs and additions where necessary. During this process the Communication Task Team will have to be hands on and assist in interpreting everything that may need to be afforded with such an opportunity. Afterwards it will then be forwarded to the Mayoral Committee who will give a directive if it must be taken to council or not. It will also be given to Government Communication Information systems (GCIS) for noting. The strategy will be implemented after being formally adopted by the council.

13. Monitoring and Evaluation

The monitoring and evaluation of the strategy will be done by the Communication's portfolio head and communication's unit reporting to the Municipal Manager. IGR will also be used as a tool to monitor the implementation and effectiveness of the strategy. The strategy will be an important part of everything the Municipality does: IDP, Imbizos etc.

Other methods of monitoring and evaluation will be:

13.1 Conduct community media survey (stakeholder survey)

- 13.2 Imbizos, IDP, meetings feedback
- 13.3 Feedback and auditing of communication tools: website, media campaigns, media releases etc.
- 13.4 Target market reached
- 13.5 Information delivered: brochures, newsletters, radio shows/broadcasts