![Public Service Commission logo — PSC, Custodian of Good Governance]

PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

Communication Strategy 2012/13 – 2016/17

September 2012

Effective communication is the lifeblood of an organisation. It is the medium through which an organisation's vision and goals are interpreted and understood by both its internal and external stakeholders.

1.   VISION

A champion of public administration excellence in democratic governance in South Africa.

2.   MISSION

To promote the Constitutionally enshrined democratic principles and values of the Public Service by investigation, research, monitoring, evaluating, communicating and reporting on public administration.

3.   VALUES

The Public Service Commission's values give direction to our actions and describe how we behave. We uphold the following values:

Equity, honesty, excellence, integrity, respect for human dignity, responsiveness, dedication, respect for professionalism and empathy.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. BACKGROUND

The Public Service Commission (PSC) is an independent and impartial public institution, established in terms of Section 196 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996. The PSC is tasked and empowered to, amongst others, investigate, monitor, and evaluate the organisation and administration of the Public Service. This mandate also entails the evaluation of achievements, or lack thereof of Government programmes. Linked to the afore-mentioned powers, the PSC has an obligation to also promote measures to ensure effective and efficient performance within the Public Service and to promote values and principles of public administration as set out in the Constitution throughout the Public Service.

In fulfilling its Constitutional mandate, the PSC continuously generates reports that contribute to good governance in the Public Service. These reports often draw attention to areas of concern in the Public Service and thus used at the highest level to inform Public Service strategy. This is evidenced by continues reference to the work of the PSC by stakeholders.

The PSC is accountable to the National Assembly to which it must report at least once a year. It must also report on its activities in provinces, to the Provincial Legislatures. In this regard, the PSC has to be positioned as a credible oversight institution. In this role, the PSC want to see an ethical, efficient and effective Public Service that achieves developmental goals. In essence, the oversight role demands that the PSC earns its recognition and credibility by effectively ensuring a balance between its independence and accountability.

Against this background, the PSC therefore places great value on the need to communicate effectively with its internal and external stakeholders.

This Communication Strategy is informed by the contextual environment in which the PSC operates, its philosophy and the resources allocated. The strategy is also driven by the Directorate: Communication and Information Services (D: CIS), with the support of the Office of the Public Service Commission's (OPSC) management as well as the Commission. It is also aligned to the National Communication Framework driven by the Government Communication and Information Services (GCIS). This strategy is compiled at a time when the PSC adopted a new vision and mission.

2. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this strategy are as follows:

- To profile the PSC by popularising its objectives and programmes among Public Service employees through consistent communication.

- To communicate messages that build and instill confidence in the PSC and ultimately position the organisation as a credible oversight institution that is worthy of being *Custodian of Good Governance.*

- To ensure that the mandate of the PSC and its contribution to public administration are communicated effectively to all its stakeholders.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

The PSC has a new vision and mission and is in the process of locating itself as an independent body that champion public administration excellence in democratic governance. In order to champion public administration excellence, the PSC must execute its Constitutional mandate without fear or favour. The Constitution allows the PSC to speak truth to power, without fear or prejudice. Accordingly, the PSC's products and services must respond to this expectation and must be communicated without fear or favour. In its quest to speak truth to power, the PSC must not be apologetic about its findings emanating from its research and investigations.

4. COMMUNICATION CHALLENGES

Below are some of the communication challenges that the PSC faces:

- There is still a tendency amongst the citizenry to confuse the roles of the PSC and the Department of Public Service and Administration. The PSC needs to communicate the distinct, yet complementary roles of the two organisations.

- There is a need for the PSC to be differentiated from other institutions such as the Public Protector, the Auditor-General, and the Department of Monitoring and Evaluation.

- The PSC has done a lot of work but still appears to have low visibility in the provinces. The challenge is to increase province-specific projects and vigorously promote the work of the PSC in all the nine provinces.

- The PSC needs to bolster its communication effort through targeted marketing campaigns.

5. KEY MESSAGES

The PSC's communication initiatives will contain a simple and yet consistent message of champion of public administration excellence in democratic governance in South Africa.

6. MESSENGERS, AUDIENCES AND CHANNELS

Messengers	Audiences	Channels
• Chairperson of the PSC • Deputy Chairperson of the PSC • All Commissioners • Director-General • Deputy Directors-General • Director: Communication and Information Services	**Internal:** ▪ Commissioners and officials of the OPSC **External:** ▪ Executive (President, Ministers, Premiers, Cabinet, Members of the Executive Councils) ▪ Legislature (s) (National Assembly, National Council of Provinces, Provincial Legislatures and Committees) ▪ Governance and Administration Cluster, and other Cabinet Clusters ▪ Client Departments (National and Provincial Departments) ▪ Institutions Supporting Democracy (Public Protector, Auditor-General, Human Rights Commission, Commission for Gender Equality, Financial and Fiscal Commission, National Youth Commission) ▪ Consultative Forums (such as Forum of South African Directors-General, and National Anti-Corruption Forum) ▪ Strategic Partners (Academia, NGOs, Media, Religious sector, private sector, international organisations, donor community and professional bodies). ▪ Organised labour (PSCBC, and employee organisations).	• Media briefings • Speeches and statements • Radio interviews • Opinion pieces • Portfolio Committees briefings

The above-mentioned messengers have the authority to act as spokespersons of the Commission. Although Commissioners, Director-General, Deputy Directors-General and Director: Communication and Information Services are all spokespersons, the Chairperson will become the face of the PSC. In addition, the Commission should be proactive with regard to media relations. While the Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson and Commissioners can speak to the media on policy matters, the Director-General and Deputy Directors-General may speak on technical issues arising from the Commission's reports. The Director: Communication and Information Services will attend to general issues for public information.

NB *In order to ensure effective communication, there should be co-ordination of key messages. This will ensure that all spokespersons speak with one voice.*

7. KEY CONSIDERATIONS

In terms of the Government communication protocol, the following should be followed when communicating government policies and programmes:

- The President is the communicator-in-chief.

- Cabinet pronounces on key policies and decisions**.**

- Whenever the President is scheduled to make major pronouncements, government communications should be limited to pave way for the President's message.

8. COMMUNICATION POLICY GUIDELINES

Elements	Guidelines
Internal communication	The purpose of the internal communication strategy is to position the PSC as the employer of choice among all its internal stakeholders. As such, all internal communication activities will endeavour to keep internal stakeholders (Officials and Commissioners) informed about the PSC's programmes and activities. The PSC will make use of a variety of communication tools in order to achieve the set objectives. These include, but are not limited to, internal newsletters, special events, e-mail system and intranet. ✓ **Newsletters** Employees want to know what is happening in the organisation. Accordingly, the PSC's electronic internal newsletter, *Izwi lase OPSC*, will continue to be utilised as a platform to communicate, amongst others, organisational activities, management decisions, and policy changes. This bi-monthly electronic employee newsletter will utilise simple and understandable language. ✓ **Information and learning sessions** Address by management and Commissioners is an excellent way of engaging with employees. In this regard, information and learning sessions will be held as and when necessary to enable the members of the PSC and the Director-General respectively to address staff members on pertinent organisational developments. During these sessions, staff members will also

Elements	Guidelines
	be afforded an opportunity to voice their suggestions and concerns if any. ✓ **MyDG.gov** Staff members will be encouraged to use **MyDG.gov** as an interaction platform to post comments and/or suggestions to the Director-General aimed at helping the OPSC to improve on its services. ✓ **Intranet** A good corporate intranet offers employees with an access to a wide range of organisational information. It can also serve as a one-stop source of information and knowledge respiratory. The PSC intranet will continue to be used as a tool for sharing information through an integrated SharePoint. ✓ **E-mail** The PSC's e-mail system will be used as a quick medium to disseminate essential information to all internal stakeholders. ✓ **Information Resource Centre** The Information Resource Center (IRC) will be used as a first point of call for internal stakeholders in need of publications and other information sources relevant to the work of the PSC. The IRC will accordingly satisfy the information needs of internal clients.
External communications	As is the case with internal stakeholders, external stakeholders also need to be informed regularly about the activities and programmes of the PSC. A combination of tools will be utilised to address communication needs of external stakeholders. ✓ **Media Liaison** Media relations will be used as one of the key facets of the PSC's external communication strategy. Critical to a media strategy is to position the PSC as a knowledge-based institution on matters pertaining to good governance in the Public Service. In order to achieve this objective, the PSC must use the media to communicate its work and programmes effectively. This may be in the form of press releases, letters to the editor, interviews and media briefings, amongst others. The PSC must also be accessible to members of the media and provide swift responses to media enquiries. Spokespersons must be prepared to engage with members of the media as and when required to do so.

Elements	Guidelines
	✓ **Media release** Every day, newspaper editors are inundated with media statements from different organisations. However, not all media statements issued by organisation are published in the newspapers. Media releases that catch the eye of editors and subsequently published are newsworthy and well-structured. Accordingly, media releases based on PSC reports must be concise and straight to the point. Furthermore, they must always indicate the time period that the research was done as in some instances, by the time the PSC reports are ready to be released, the moment has passed. A PSC media statement must in addition to the findings and recommendations of the research, indicate amongst others, the limitation of the research. The inclusion of such information will avoid misinterpretation of the content of the report by the members of the media. ✓ **Media interviews** It is critical to place emphasis on providing journalists with quality news angles. This usually results in quality media coverage. The PSC's spokespersons should be encouraged **to make themselves available** to be interviewed by journalists. The aim is to build a strong relationship with the media as this will ensure that the PSC has the reputation of being approachable and willing to comment to the press. ✓ **Quarterly write-ups** The PSC deals with thematic issues relating to good governance on a regular basis. Bringing such issues to the attention of the public through the media could raise discussions and open up avenues for active participation to policy- making and related processes. This could be done in a form of opinion pieces by the Commissioner or Director-General and Deputy Directors-General (DDGs). However, this needs to be coordinated, where Commissioners' contribution would have to be approved by the Chairperson and the DDGs input approved by the Director-General. It should however be noted that there is no guarantee of publication as that can only depend on the interest of the media in the subject being discussed in the write-up. ✓ **Affiliations** The PSC will be an active member of forums such as the Pretoria Press Club. ✓ **Roundtable discussions** One way of receiving feedback on organisational products is through roundtable discussions. The PSC will use roundtable discussions to engage stakeholders on its flagship projects such as the State of the Public Service

Elements	Guidelines
	Report. This platform will afford the stakeholders with an opportunity to critique PSC products and services.
	✓ **PSC Internet** The work of the PSC is aimed at adding value to the Public Service. On the other hand, members of the media, public servants, and other stakeholders have come to regard the PSC's website as an important information portal and are regularly browsing the website to get information. In this regard, the PSC will continue to make its products and services available online. The organisation will also carry on with the culture of making its information available immediately after being announced or released publicly.
	✓ **External Magazine** The organisation's external magazine, *PSC News*, will continue to be used as a tool to raise awareness around the PSC programmes and trends in the Public Service. Nonetheless, there is a need to bolster the content of the magazine through quality contributions. This will entail widening the pool of the external contributors and also keeping up to date with debates in the public domain.
	✓ **Brand Awareness** The use of promotional material such as displays, t-shirts and caps, as well as other corporate gifts, always strengthens an organisation's corporate image. The PSC will continue to systematically produce and distribute promotional material that will enhance its image.
	✓ **Roadshows** The roadshows should be used as another approach of engaging with external stakeholders. Through roadshows, members of the PSC will be afforded an opportunity to meet face to face with their stakeholders and more importantly engage them on PSC products and services.
Dissemination strategy	The D: CIS is responsible for the distribution of all the reports and materials published by the PSC. **Protocol** ✓ **Tabling of PSC Reports and communication thereof** The PSC's printed reports are tabled in Parliament and Provincial Legislatures. Once a report is tabled, it becomes a public document and journalists who are based in Parliament receive copies of the report. The journalists would in many instances write a piece/article about the report which had been tabled. In the absence of a media statement putting the content of the report into perspective, most journalists would draft their

Elements	Guidelines
	stories based on their own interpretation of the content of the report, which in many instances, results in misrepresentation of the content of the report. To prevent this from happening, the D: CIS should compile a media statement about a report to be tabled and issue it to the media on the day that a report is tabled in Parliament. In this way, the PSC will be able to influence the manner in which its reports are reported in the media and eliminate the possibility of misrepresentation of information by members of the media. ✓ **Portfolio Committee briefing session** The PSC must continue to present its work to the various Parliamentary Portfolio Committees. This approach will assist the Parliamentary Portfolio Committees with their oversight work. At a Provincial level, there should be a concerted effort to use the same approach. In this regard, Provincial SCOPA/Association of Public Accounts Committees should be engaged so that the PSC can be given a platform to present its work.

9. PHASED COMMUNICATION APPROACH

The D: CIS is of the view that the proposed activities will contribute towards raising the profile of the PSC.

Priority projects	Communication action/ milestone	Communication products and channel	Responsibility	Estimated Budget
Roundtable discussions on grievance management	Raise public awareness on grievance management through the roundtable discussions	Invite the media to the roundtable discussions and issue a media statement on the outcome of the roundtable discussions. Contribute an article to the Public Service Leadership Magazine	External Communication	Not Applicable

Priority projects	Communication action/ milestone	Communication products and channel	Responsibility	Estimated Budget
Trends analysis on grievance resolution in the Public Service and local government for the 2011/2012 financial year	Publicise grievance trends	Release the Report through a media statement. Solicit interviews from the print and electronic media to further publicise the findings of the Report. Issue opinion pieces on the grievance trends	External Communication	Not Applicable
Labour Relations Conference (LRC)	Hosting of the LRC	Pre-publicising the LRC through advertising in the newspapers and PSC, PSCBC and gov.za websites	External Communication	R200 000
National and provincial roundtable discussions on the State of Human Resource Management	Raise public awareness on the State of Human Resource Management through the roundtable discussions	Solicit interviews with community based media to cover the roundtable discussions on the State of Human Resource Management	External Communication	Not Applicable
Determining and assessing blockages in the filling of posts in the Public Service	Create public awareness on blockages in the filling of posts in the Public Service	Release the Report through a media briefing and issue a media statement. Solicit interviews in the print and electronic media to speak about blockages in the filling of posts in the Public Service. Contribute opinion pieces in the newspapers and Public Service Leadership Magazine	External Communication	Not Applicable
Assessment on the appointment of ministerial staff in national and provincial departments	Publicise the assessment on the appointment of ministerial staff in national and provincial departments	Issue a media statement on the appointment of ministerial staff in national and provincial departments. Contribute articles and opinion pieces in the	External Communication	Not Applicable

Priority projects	Communication action/ milestone	Communication products and channel	Responsibility	Estimated Budget
		newspapers and Public Service Leadership Magazine		
State of the Public Service (SOPS) Report	Bring the findings of the SOPS Report to the public domain	Call a media briefing and issue a media statement about the findings of the SOPS Report. Solicit interviews in the print and electronic media about the findings of the SOPS Report. Contribute opinion pieces in the newspapers and Public Service Leadership Magazine	External Communication	Not Applicable
Evaluation of the management and distribution of medical supplies by medical depots	Raise public awareness on evaluation of the management and distribution of medical supplies by medical depots	Organise a joint media briefing with the Department of Health. Issue a media statement in the print and electronic media about the management and distribution of medical supplies by medical depots	External Communication	Not Applicable
Conduct Inspections on access to Education by Rural Children	Mobilise public support for the Inspections on access to Education by Rural Children	Issue a media statement in the print and electronic media about the Inspections on access to Education by Rural Children	External Communication	Not Applicable
Public hearings conducted with relevant stakeholders on compliance with government's 30 day payment period to service providers	Create public awareness on public hearings conducted with relevant stakeholders on compliance with government's 30 day payment period to service providers	Invite print and electronic media to the public hearings. Issue a media statement to the members of the media and solicit interviews to talk about the findings of the report	External Communication	Not Applicable

Priority projects	Communication action/ milestone	Communication products and channel	Responsibility	Estimated Budget
Evaluating the role of outsourcing in the Public Sector	Inform and educate the public about the role of outsourcing in the Public Sector	Organise a media briefing and issue a media statement about the role of outsourcing in Public Sector. Contribute articles, opinion pieces and solicit interviews about evaluating the role of outsourcing in Public Sector	External Communication	Not Applicable
Fact Sheet on Financial Misconduct for the 2011/12 financial year	Publicise the findings of the Fact Sheet on Financial Misconduct for the 2011/12 financial year	Organise a media briefing, issue a media statement and contribute opinion pieces in the print and electronic media about the Fact Sheet	External Communication	Not Applicable
Fact Sheet on the Compliance with the submission of Financial Disclosure Forms	Raise public awareness on Fact Sheet on the Compliance with the submission of Financial Disclosure Forms	Organise a media briefing and issue a media statement on the Fact Sheet	External Communication	Not Applicable
Fact Sheet on actions taken by Executive Authorities (EAs) on identified cases of potential conflicts of interest and compliance with the Financial Disclosure Forms produced	Communicate the findings of Fact Sheet on actions taken by Executive Authorities (EAs) on identified cases of potential conflicts of interest and compliance with the Financial Disclosure Forms	Arrange a media briefing and issue a media statement on compliance with identified cases of potential conflicts of interest	External Communication	Not Applicable
National Anti-Corruption Hotline (NACH)/ Surprise visits to selected departments	Market and publicise the NACH/ Surprise visits to selected departments in the print and electronic media	Invite the print and electronic media to the NACH / Surprise visits to selected departments	External Communication	Not Applicable
Integrity Barometer Instrument applied in the selected	Create public awareness on the Integrity Barometer Instrument applied in the	Organise a media briefing and issue a media statement to the	External Communication	Not Applicable

Priority projects	Communication action/ milestone	Communication products and channel	Responsibility	Estimated Budget
departments	selected departments to raise the profile of the PSC	print and electronic media		
Engagement with the editors	Raise the profile of the PSC to the editors	Arrange a meeting with the editors to solicit support requiring the work of the PSC	External Communication	R50 000
Improved awareness of the PSC brand	Strengthen and create awareness about the work of the PSC	Arrange media briefings, issue media statement, coordinate radio interviews, opinion pieces, Portfolio Committees briefings, meeting with the editors, exhibitions, etc	External Communication	R100 000

10. CONCLUSION

The Directorate: Communication and Information Services is committed to enhancing communication within and outside the Commission by promoting a professional environment characterised by efficiency, effectiveness and one that is responsive to the needs of the organisation and its stakeholders. Along with this environment, the Directorate commits itself to promoting the PSC as custodian of good governance. Ultimately, the Directorate sees the Communication Strategy as a living document.

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