



EASTERN CAPE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

2025 – 2030 PERIOD



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1. ABBREVIATIONS

ABBREVIATION	MEANING
AI	Artificial Intelligence
DEF	District Education Forums
ECDoE	Eastern Cape Department of Education
ECEAC	Eastern Cape Education Advisory Council
ESTM	Education Systems Transformation Plan
HoC	Head of Communications
HOD	Head of Department
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
LTSM	Learning and Teaching Support Material
MEC	Member of Executive Council
MISS	Minimum Information Security Standards
MLO	Media Liaison Officer
MTBE	Mother Tongue BASED Bilingual Education
NCSF	National Communications Strategy Framework
NDP	National Development Plan
NSC	National Senior Certificate
PAIA	Promotion of Access to Information Act
PSCBC	Public Service Co-ordinating Bargaining Council
QLTC	Quality Teaching and Learning Campaign
SGB	School Governing Body



SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
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2. INTRODUCTION

The role of government communication is to ensure that all citizens receive information that will empower them to make informed decisions and choices. The South African Constitution refers to freedom of speech and access to information. Government must ensure that important information is always provided to all people and enable effective flow of information between government and its internal and external publics with the aim of facilitating participation, service delivery and informed decision-making and to build accountability and trust in government.

The Communications and Events Management Directorate has a responsibility to: -

- a) Develop, implement and monitor the implementation of internal and external communication and media policy instruments.
- b) Develop and maintain publications and other media for communication with stakeholders.
- c) Establish and maintain relationships with the media.

The Communications strategy, therefore, is developed to ensure that the ECDoE is able to achieve or implement policy directives on Communication at all levels of government spheres.

3. LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

a. The South African Constitution of 1996

Some sections in the following Chapters of the Constitution give legal mandate to this policy:

- i) Chapter 2 Bill of Rights
- ii) Chapter 6 Provinces
- iii) Chapter 10 Public Administration
- iv) Chapter 11 Security Services
- v) Chapter 13 Finance

b. National Language Policy Framework

Eleven languages were granted official language status in South Africa in terms of Section 6 of the Constitution. This policy strongly encourages the use of indigenous languages and considers the linguistic diversity of the country.

c. Promotion of Access to Information Act, 2000 (PAIA)



The PAIA gives all South Africans the right to have access to records held by the Department. It allows for procedures for requesting this information to be put in place by the Department through its Promotion of Access to Information Manual.

d. Copyright Act, 1978 (Act No 98 of 1978)

This Act protects the Copyright of the Department in respect of any document, drawing and the like created by anyone contracted for that purpose by the Department.

e. Electronic Communications and Transactions Act, 2002 (Act No 25 of 2002)

The Act makes it an offence to interfere with electronic messages or records without authority in order to modify or destroy them. It also provides for the recognition of electronic messages as legally enforceable or as capable of being produced in evidence in legal cases and provides that the government may conduct business by electronic communications if it so wishes.

f. Electronic Communications Act, 2005 (Act No 36 of 2005)

This Act provides for the licensing of anyone who renders electronic communication network services, electronic communication services and broadcasting services.

g. Minimum Information Security Standards (MISS)

This policy document contains the security requirements to which the use of Government information must comply. It includes restrictions on access to certain classified information and the safekeeping thereof.

h. National Communication Strategy Framework (NCSF) 2025-2030

The Government Communication and Information System (GCIS), as the custodian and co-ordinator of government communications, is responsible for developing the National Communication Strategy Framework (NCSF) in consultation with other key stakeholders, informed by the Medium-Term Development Plan (MTDP). The sets the tone and direction for all spheres of government to develop their own medium-term communication strategies and plans. Considering research outcomes on public mood and perceptions, the G20 Presidency and the 30 years of freedom and democracy.

This term is important as it represents the final five years of administration leading up to the realisation of South Africa's National Development Plan (NDP), Vision 2030, which is the defining blueprint for South Africa's growth and development.

i. Integrated Provincial Communication Strategy Framework 2025 – 2030



According to the Provincial Communication Strategy Framework for the 7th administration vision by 2030, the strategy should assist the provincial government restore public confidence between citizens and government; reduce the social distance between government and citizens; reduce information inequality among citizens; improve the image of the province and take advantage of new communication methods provided through digital communication platforms.

4. BACKGROUND

The ECDoE Communications Strategy is anchored on the National Communication Strategic Framework 2025 - 30 as well as the EC Integrated Provincial Communication Strategy Framework 2025 – 2030

Secondly, the strategy has been developed in line with the Five-Year Strategic Plan (2025 – 2030) that sets out targets to be implemented by the (Eastern Cape Department of Education) ECDoE.

Thirdly, the Systems Transformation Plan 2024 - 2029 as one of the strategic documents in the Department has been considered. The document considers the five pillars i.e. capacity building; economic drive; 5th Industrial Revolution and Inclusive Education & Social Cohesion and Infrastructure Development.

The mandate of the ECDoE is derived from the section 9 of the South African Constitution which summarily states that everyone has a right to basic education. The department, in ensuring that this right is protected, has a responsibility of providing quality basic education for all learners in the Eastern Cape Province and ensure that education is transformed and democratized in accordance with the values of human dignity, equality, human rights and freedom, non-racism and non-sexism.

The central recipients of the information from the ECDoE are the schools and the communities that they find themselves in. It can become a norm that the central recipients of information would be the media, but this is not the case. The media has been the dominant traditional information vehicle thus far but with the evolution of the communication fraternity from rapidly changing technology, more ways to disseminate information to stakeholders have been availed and we intend to take advantage of these. The provincial communication policy puts the citizenry at the heart of its policy. Thus, at the heart of our strategy as a department, are the learners, schools and communities.

Communication must also allow for residents to act on the information that they are receiving. The interaction that we want from communities and schools will also assist us in establishing whether our communication is achieving its intended goals and is an important tool to collect feedback from stakeholders on the work of the department.

Communication is also for the purpose of protecting the reputation of the ECDoE and management of its brand, as well as the dissemination of information around the ECDoE's programs. Effective communication is also multifaceted and layered, to speak to academics, schools and communities, analysts and other interested parties simultaneously.



5. AIM OF STRATEGY

- i) To inform the work of the Communications Unit within the ECDoE, inclusive of Events, Public Relations & Marketing, Digital Media, Photo-Videography, Writing, Publications and any other relevant sections.
- ii) To align the work of the unit with the broader departmental strategic goals outlined in this document.
- iii) To develop a plan of action aligned to the strategic priority areas, in order to counter the negative narratives and plant new positive narratives in the minds of Eastern Cape community and the country as a whole.
- iv) To provide the unit with guidance on how to strategically tap into the opportunities being presented by emerging technologies to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of ECDoE's communication efforts.
- v) To align our work as a department with the broader communications drive of the Eastern Cape Provincial Government.

6. TARGET AUDIENCE

- a) Communication practitioners in the ECDoE and all other contributors towards communication materials
- b) Senior Leadership of the Department
- c) Learners
- d) Educators
- e) School Governing Bodies (SGBs)
- f) Education Stakeholders/ Role Players/Partners

7. KEY PRIORITY AREAS (ECDoE STRATEGIC PLAN 2025 – 2030 AND EDUCATION SYSTEMS TRANSFORMATION PLAN 2024 – 2029)

Through combining ECDoE Strategic Plan 2025 – 2030 and Education Systems Transformation Plan 2024 2029, the Department has identified the following performance indicators against which to measure its work:

ECDoE Strategic Plan 2025 – 2030	Education Systems Transformation Plan 2024 2029
Outcome 1: Improved education outcomes and skills	Pillar 1: Capacity Building – monitor and evaluate implementation of Learner Attainment Improvement Strategy.
Outcome 2: Improved Social Cohesion and Nation-Building	Pillar 4: Inclusivity and Social Cohesion - Promote a paradigm of inclusivity in all schools, equity, Redress and Access.
Outcome 3: Increased access to skills development programmes contributing to economic growth	Pillar 2: Economic drive – Implement Three Streams Model.



Outcome 4: Improved good governance, for quality basic education.	Pillar 3: Fourth and Fifth Industrial Revolution – implement productivity enhancements, Digital Reengineering of all systems within the Department.
Outcome 5: Adequate school infrastructure and an environment that inspires learners to learn and educators to teach.	Pillar 5: Infrastructure Development – Maintenance, Fencing and Security, New and Replacement Classrooms, ECD Centres and Grade R Physical Resource Support.
Outcome 6: Improved quality basic education through integration of ICT solutions.	Pillar 3: Fourth and Fifth Industrial Revolution – upscale e-Learning.
Outcome 7: Improved access to education for learners with barriers to learning.	Pillar 4: Inclusivity and Social Cohesion - Promote a paradigm of inclusivity in all schools, equity, Redress and Access.
Outcome 8: Effective social protection and creation of a safe school environment conducive to learning.	Pillar 5: Infrastructure Development – basic services, Maintenance, Fencing and Security.

7. SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

The province has over 4976 schools, located in 12 District, 49 CMCs and 218 circuits with 1,791 learners in the system. Over the last decade the Eastern Cape Department of Education has made remarkable strides in undoing legacy challenges emanating from its historical socio-economic disadvantage e.g. how the department turned itself around from underachieving in NSC results to be amongst the most improving provinces, breaking records in the country.

The expansion of the province’s School Nutrition Program and success of its project implementation, timeous delivery of LTSM, educator and administrator capacity building, improvements in inclusive education, filling of vacancies, improvements in Post Provisioning Norms etc are amongst the good stories that the department boasts about. The department’s infrastructure development program has been steadily delivering state of the art schools particularly to the rural communities, together with the Department of Basic Education has managed to deal with the eradication of pit toilets around the province. The discussion around school infrastructure backlogs, which has been an easy go area for the media and department’s naysayers, is beginning shape up well i.e. bringing into discussion systemic challenges and legacy but a lot of work still needs to be done to allow for thoroughly thoughtful dialogue.

Further to that, the communication fraternity is going through rapid evolution where traditional channels of communications are being outpaced by emerging communication platforms like social media, proliferation of electronic communication platforms which continue to shape dialogue, facilitate fast-paced information sharing, frame narratives and shape legacies.



The emerging platforms pose significant opportunity for improved communication within the department and its communities at large and maintain positive brand reputation. It is imperative that as a sector we put down a strategic and poignant communication strategy that will mitigate the threats posed by media hostility, technological evolution and threats inherent to the political aspect of the Public Sector.

8. ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

The public's access to Artificial Intelligence and its adoption in the broad private and public communications fraternity requires the department to tap into the opportunities AI presents. The Unit intends to optimise AI to fit its various audiences e.g. use of indigenous languages/the four official provincial languages so as to limit the risk of AI tools expounding the frustrations of stakeholders when they want to engage the department. However, there is a need for the unit to educate its stakeholders not only on the benefits of AI but also its shortcomings.

9. KEY PRIORITY AREAS - COMMUNICATION IMPERATIVES (IN LINE WITH THE OVERALL DEPARTMENTAL STRATEGIES)

Adopted from the Education Systems Transformation Plan 2024 – 2029 and ECDoE Strategic Plan 2025 – 2030.

COMMUNICATION IMPERATIVE	EDUCATION SYSTEMS TRANSFORMATION PLAN 2024 - 2029	ECDoE TRATEGIC PLAN 2025 2030
NSC results	Pillar 1: Economic Drive	Outcome 1: Improved education outcomes and skills
School Nutrition	Pillar 4: Inclusivity and Social Cohesion	Outcome 7: Improved access to education for learners with barriers to learning.
LTSM	Pillar 1: Capacity Building	Outcome 1: Improved education outcomes and skills
School Infrastructure	Pillar 5: Infrastructure Development	Outcome 8: Effective social protection and creation of a safe school environment conducive to learning.
Inclusive Education	Pillar 4: Inclusivity and Social Cohesion	Outcome 7: Improved access to education for learners with barriers to learning.



Early Childhood Development	Pillar 2: Economic Drive	Outcome 3: Increased access to skills development programmes contributing to economic growth
Implementation of the Three Streams Model	Pillar 2: Economic Drive	Outcome 3: Increased access to skills development programmes contributing to economic growth
E-Learning	Pillar 3: 4th and 5th Industrial Revolution	Outcome 6: Improved quality basic education through integration of ICT solutions.
Implementation of the Service Delivery Model	Pillar 1 Capacity Building.	Outcome 1: Improved education outcomes and skills
Digital re-engineering of the department's systems	Pillar 3: 4th and 5th Industrial Revolution.	Outcome 6: Improved quality basic education through integration of ICT solutions.

10. IDENTIFIED OPPORTUNITIES TO TELL POSITIVE STORIES

- Inspirational stories of MEC Excellence Awards recipients
- Economic transformation from the Department's grant expenditures
- The social impact of the department's nutrition program.
- Roll-out of the MTBEE program particularly the thought behind the program
- Telling the stories of learners who are excelling in their communities, beyond the classroom.

11. KEY RISKS AND MITIGATION

- Hostile mainstream media** – mainstream media has grown a tendency of harvesting headlines and insisting on a negative image against the work of the department.

Maintain media accessibility of Media Liaison Officers to respond to media enquiries promptly and through established media relations, engage in a professional manner on the attitude of the media against the department. Improve the information collection capacity within the department and fast-track the finalization of press statement in order to be able to promptly respond to hostile media manifestations.

- Social media** – the public's growing reliance on social media as a place of dialogue and information sharing together with the rapidness with which unverified

Communications Strategy 2025 - 2030

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information is allowed to spread virally on such platforms has the ability to distort narratives against the work of the department

Through thorough Social Media Monitoring maintain a vigilant Social Media presence through official department accounts and make them the public's preferred information source on the work of the department.

- c. **The growing authority of information of "Media Influencers"** – these individuals are increasingly becoming recruited into nefarious agendas against the work of the public sector as a whole.

Assess and identify personal media platforms that seem to be in constant criticism of the department and seek them to clarify their position.

- d. **Artificial Intelligence** - the fabrication of electronic media by using AI can be used to spread inaccuracies, fake news and support false narratives against the department.

Identify and challenge sources of fake news, where necessary report to appropriate regulatory authorities, with a careful balance not to give them credence from engagement.

- e. **Political instability** – the contest for political positions may spill into the work of the department and its assessment thereof.

Maintain a depoliticized assessment and communication of both the department's successes and challenges.

- f. Court cases not going in favor of the department, leaving negative publicity in the media, with no recourse in some instances.

Maintain a timeous communication of court proceedings and with the assistance of legal experts properly unpack the facts of the matter and the department's legal position.

- g. Reduced budgets for the communications imperative/mandate in the department – underfunding the unit has the potential to undermine the efficiency and effectiveness of our information sharing.

Continue our efforts to lobby department's finance department for improved budget allocation and put a case for its need.



12. BUDGET ALLOCATION

In terms of the GCIS Communication Strategy 2025 – 30, Communication Strategies funded in line with the provision in the GCP, which states that 1% to 5% of the budget must be allocated to communications. This should be based on the strategic plan and the size of the Department. The budget must be ring-fenced for this purpose.

13. STRATEGY SUCCESS METRICS

It will be clear that the strategy is fully operational and achieves its intended aims if the following occur:

- i. Synchronized and consistent communication across various platforms on all issues that the department has identified as key priority areas.
- ii. Full utilization of digital communications, available technologies and skills within the unit.
- iii. Sufficiently equip the MEC and HOD with adequate information to fulfill their duties as spokesperson and champion of communication strategy respectively.
- iv. Harmonization of the various units and the work of the Communications Unit in a more consistent way, to include communications work as an integral part of most, if not all SOPs in the department.
- v. Achieve full adherence of internal communication to the Communication policy prescripts.
- vi. Smooth running of the departmental Communications Forum, with its weekly meeting to enable information sharing and planning.
- vii. Seamless coordination amongst the unit of responsibilities and leveraging co-operation to achieve even greater impact and interaction with people of the province.
- viii. All stakeholders being the champions for the programs of the department through being well informed by internal communication.

14. STRATEGY SHORTCOMING INDICATORS

- i. Inadequate coverage of the Strategy's key policy areas leading to proliferation of fake news, inaccuracies and false narrative against the department's brand and reputation
- ii. Undercovering of the department's events and programs by the unit leading to underwhelming brand visibility.
- iii. Inefficient allocation of duties within the unit leads to duplication of duties and improper sharing of tasks which might cause the unit to underutilize the skills at its disposal.
- iv. Insufficient internal sharing of information leading to internal stakeholders e.g. staff and learners being part of department's naysayers.
- v. Disregard for communication policy leading to inconsistencies and failure to observe respective protocols.



15. CORE COMMUNICATION PLAN

January

- Release of NSC Results
- Back to School (SNP, Scholar transport; Infrastructure provisioning, LTSM)

February

- World Read Aloud Day (Reading Strategy), School Sport
- Budget and Policy Speech

March

- School Sport, Human Rights Month

April

- Budget and Policy Speech
- Teacher Awards
- Cultural Activities
- Freedom Month

May

- Teacher Development
- Capacity Building Programs
- Teacher Awards

June

- Half-Year Examinations, Youth Month

July

- Learner Excellence
- Principal Recognition
- Nelson Mandela Day

August

Celebration of Women in Education

September

- Heritage Month
- Language Policy Implementation



- Trial Examinations

October

- Celebration of Teacher's Month
- Scholar Transport

November

- 16 Days of Activism
- Disability Week
- Writing of Final Examinations (Grade 12)

December - Highlights for the year

- Marking
- Back to School
- (SNP, Scholar Transport; Infrastructure provisioning, LTSM)
- Teacher Awards
- Cultural Activities
- Teacher Development
- Capacity Building Programs
- Teacher Awards
- Half-Year Examinations
- Youth Month
- Learner Excellence
- Principal Recognition
- Nelson Mandela Day
- Celebration of Women in Education
- Heritage Month
- Language Policy Implementation
- Trial Examinations
- Celebration of Teacher's Month
- Scholar Transport
- 16 Days of Activism
- Disability Week
- Writing of Final Examinations (Grade 12)

14. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

14.1 STRATEGIC ROLE: MEMBER OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL (MEC)

- i. The MEC serves as one of the government-appointed spokespersons for the department and its programs. This role should be engaged with at the level of achievements and identification of opportunities. At a strategic level, the MEC is the bringer of good news while the Head of Department (HoD) is "straightener of crooked facts"



- ii. The MEC will be expected to give political covering to the communications strategy and the unit as it implements the said strategy. The MEC ensures alignment to the provincial political goals that form part of the MEC's performance agreements.
- iii. The MEC must be supported by the Communications Unit to enable fact sheets, talking points to be developed on any issue within the ECDoE purview.

14.2 STRATEGIC ROLE: HEAD OF DEPARTMENT (HoD)

- i. Champion of Communications Strategy and chief overseer of its implementation.
- ii. The HoD would be expected to guide the drafting of the thematic focus areas and the key priority area project plans and capacitate the Communications Unit to enable work to be done.
- iii. The Head of Department also serves as one of the government-appointed spokespersons for the department and its programs. This role should be engaged at the level of implementation of projects and troubleshooting, where necessary.
- iv. The Head of Department must be supported by the Communications Unit to enable fact sheets, talking points, to be developed on any issue within the ECDoE purview.

14.3 STRATEGIC ROLE: HEAD OF COMMUNICATIONS (HoC)

- i. Chief Implementation Agent of the communications strategy, also noting that upon adoption, the Head of Communications will also be responsible for the division of tasks in order to operationalize the strategy.
- ii. The Head of Communications leads the drafting of the thematic focus areas and the key priority area project plans and capacitates the Communications Unit to enable work to be done.
- iii. The Head of Communications will also be expected to lead the development of crisis communication strategy to quell any untoward publicity.
- iv. The Head of Communications also serves as the final strategic authority on all material that the department produces, whether visual, written or otherwise.
- v. The Head of Communications also serves as one of the government-appointed spokespersons for the department and its programs. This role should be engaged at the level of implementation of projects and troubleshooting, where necessary. The Head of Comms must be supported by the Communications Unit to enable fact sheets, talking points, to be developed on any issue within the ECDoE purview.

14.4 STRATEGIC ROLE: MEDIA LIAISON OFFICER (MLO)



- i. Champion of the synergy between political terrain and the communication needed to traverse that space, in the education sector. Advisor to the MEC on communication matters and a key bridge between the MEC's Office and the departmental Communications Unit.
- ii. Co-Chair of the Communications Forum, in order to give marching orders from MEC's Office, in conjunction with HoD's Office on communication imperatives for the week or month or thematic time.
- iii. Chief implementor of the crisis communications plans that are drafted, in consultation with critical stakeholders to enable smooth engagement.
- iv. Main support structure for the MEC, in terms of communication needs that may arise.

15. OVERARCHING PRINCIPLES

- i. Strong Communication.
- ii. Access to information
- iii. Accountability
- iv. Performance Management
- v. Improved Audit Outcomes
- vi. Freedom of Expression

16. STRATEGIC DIRECTION

- i. We do not intend to confront hostile media but to persuade them through existing relations to be fair in their assessment of the department's work and attempt to furnish them with adequate information that will allow them to arrive at fair opinions on the work of the department.
- ii. The agreement and synergy between the ECDoE and the Premier's Office are critical tools to be utilized for dissemination of information to ensure at a strategic level there is policy synchronization of work of the department within the province. The Office of the Premier is also a critical pivoting center to combine the work of the department with other departments.

16.1 STRATEGIC DIRECTION: DIGITAL MEDIA

The presence of the ECDoE on various digital platforms serves a strategic positive communications purpose and is used in that way, through the action plans that will be drafted emanating from this strategy. Digital Media is:

- i. A strategic tool, to be used in the dissemination of opinions, information and countering of incorrect narratives in the media space.
- ii. An immediate and effective means to communicate the priority or message of the department in real time on any topic.



- iii. A tool to showcase the development of our learners and educators, as well as our officials, in the quest to build an army of capable and dedicated residents of the Eastern Cape.

Synchronicity, not sameness, is required for the platforms, as the ECDoE navigates which audiences prioritize on which platform and at which time.

16.2 STRATEGIC DIRECTION: BROADCASTING

The relationship that exists between the ECDoE as well as various broadcast houses, is necessary for healthy journalism. The strategic direction that will be taken on broadcasting includes:

- i. The prioritization of community media at all events and programs of the ECDoE. This is to encourage this media type's growth and standing in the broader society. This also serves as a primary method to engage with different communities where they are in the province.
- ii. Local community broadcasters have the edge against public broadcasters as they have an intimate historical knowledge of the community and employ indigenous languages.
- iii. The public broadcaster will also be utilized on certain occasions to reach wider audiences, along with private broadcasters.

16.3 STRATEGIC DIRECTION: NEWSPAPERS

- i. The consistent barrage of attack on the ECDoE that emanates from commercial newspapers has been a source of concern for the department. However, freedom of press is one of the principles enshrined in the Constitution.
- ii. Community media will be prioritized when it comes to ads spent in newspapers, as this will allow us to communicate our points clearly, without dilution in the same newspapers.
- iii. We also take note of the challenges being faced by print newspaper, as witnessed by one of the largest Sunday Newspapers going digital and abandoning print copies. We need to be cognizant of the future of mainstream print media.

16.4 STRATEGIC DIRECTION: INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

- i. The communication between top management and educators, learners, other officials, is crucial to the success of this communications strategy. Priority has got to be given to the creation or resuscitation of internal communication platforms. This will speed up getting all internal stakeholders on track.



- ii. A critical SOP in this regard is to ensure that before there is any press briefing that educators, learners, and officials know what the content of the briefing is, to facilitate word of mouth interaction and further dissemination.
- iii. The internal communications platform is also to be used as a tool to further the objectives of the department's HR – at a strategic level. Critical information can be shared on this tool, as well as enabling the department's key imperatives of improved ICT infrastructure for the establishment of e-Administration capacity.

17. OUTREACH PROGRAMMES

- i. The Unit in conjunction with the Political Office and Stakeholder Management will continue to pursue the agenda of stakeholder engagement to advocate various programmes and policy changes within the Department. This will be done through recognized Departmental structures at all levels viz. District Education Forums (DEF), Quality Learning and Teaching Campaign (QLTC) Committees and the Eastern Cape Education Advisory Council (ECEAC).

18. MONITORING

The HoC has a responsibility of ensuring -

- i. Establishment of the Communications Forum for planning and regular meetings.
- ii. Constant updates on all Departmental Programmes to the public.
- iii. Constant updates of our communication platforms.
- iv. Utilization of all communication platforms for optimum publicity.

End!!!!