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ANALYSIS of DoC STRATEGIC PLAN 2016/2020 and APP 2016/2017

1. INTRODUCTION

This paper is a brief analysis of the Departments of Communication's (DoC) Strategic Plan 2016/2020 and the Annual Performance Plan 2016/2017. In the 2015/16 Medium Term Strategic Plan the Department of Communications has set out four strategic goals over the five year period. These are meant to assist the Department to realise its vision and also to ensure the attainment of government's Outcome 14, which is Nation Building and Social Cohesion. The Department's strategic goals are:

- Developing a responsive communications policy and regulatory environment
- Achieving improved government communications and country branding
- Improved government capacity to deliver
- Achieving a transformed communications sector

1.1 DoC VISION

A vibrant and sustainable communication services for an informed citizenry and positive image of South Africa.

1.2 DoC MISSION

Create an enabling environment for the provision of inclusive communication services to all South Africans in a manner that promotes socio-economic development and investment through broadcasting, new media, print media and other new technologies and brand the country locally and internationally.

1.3 DoC VALUES

- Certainty of the policy environment
- People centred
- Quality standards of products and services
- Integrity
- Responsiveness
- Innovation.

2. TECHNICAL QUALITY ANALYSIS

The Department's Strategic Plan document is well set and provides a clear guide on what the Department seeks to achieve in the next five years. The Annual performance plan is also precise and give clear targets, deliverables and timeframes for each programme. Both documents are within the prescribed format and thus determining the achievement of targets



in the annual report should not be complicated or subjective to the Department own interpretation.

3. PROGRAMME ANALYSIS

In terms of the Annual Performance Plan, the Department comprises four (4) programmes, which share a total of 26 indicators with an equal number of corresponding annual planned deliverables broken into quarterly targets. The four programmes are Administration, Communications Policy, Research and Development, Industry Research and Analysis; and Entity Oversight. It should also be noted at this point that the Department achieved only 63 per cent of its set targets, which is 45 out of 72 set targets, whilst 6 per cent of their targets, were partially achieved in the year 2015/2016, meaning that 32 per cent of their targets were not achieved.

Programme 1: Administration

Purpose: To improve processes and systems to facilitate effective planning and performance monitoring within the organisation.

The Department has commenced with building its own capacity and key strategic positions are being filled. According to the Report, the Departmental establishment was approved with 374 posts, however, only 100 of these posts are funded. Thirty-five of the funded posts are vacant resulting in a vacancy rate of 38.8%. The majority of vacancies are in Corporate Services as this chief directorate is still being established. The recent submission for staffing needs to National Treasury indicates that additional capacity is required to enable the department to effectively deliver on its mandate. However, no additional budget is provided for unfunded posts and this has placed the department in a very precarious position, resulting in other employees being overworked and the department having to rely on contract employees to implement some of its critical programmes.

Programme 2: Communications Policy, Research and Development

Purpose: To Conduct research and develop communications and broadcasting policies.

This Unit is tasked with researching and developing broadcasting policies for the communications cluster (the department, the GCIS, SABC, Brand South Africa, ICASA, FPB and MDDA). In the 2015/2016 year (previous financial year), under its sub-programme on Broadcasting Policy, the Department drafted the Broadcasting Amendment Bill which was approved by Cabinet and submitted to Parliament. The films and media classification system review was also conducted and is now being addressed as part of the Films and Publications Board Amendment Bill which was approved by Cabinet and is now in Parliament. Furthermore, in 2015/2015, under the same programme, three community radio stations were provided with broadcasting infrastructure but not specific as what kind of infrastructure therefore makes it difficult to assess the extent to which the Department partially achieved its target. It is important that there is enough detail to avoid ambiguity.



Programme 3: Industry Research and Analysis

Purpose: The main task of this programme is to manage enterprise development, the BDM and conduct industry research and analysis. In the previous financial year, i.e. 2015/16, under this programme the Department reached a target of 75 per cent or nine targets achieved and three targets not achieved. Registering of qualifying TV Owning households commenced in October 2015 in the Northern Cape and 300 set of devices were supplied by the end of the quarter. A report looking into the extent to which South Africans were receiving local content on SABC1, 2 and 3 platforms was also produced.

Programme 4: Entity Oversight

Purpose: To provide oversight on the implementation of policies by the SOEs and regulatory instructions to provide guidance and oversight on their governance matters. The Department is committed to providing guidance in and oversight of the governance matters of SOEs on an ongoing basis. Through an entity's oversight unit, the department analyses funding requests and ensures that transferred funds are properly used. Accountability instruments include quarterly and annual reports, monthly and quarterly accountability forums, and shareholder compacts. In the previous financial year, the Department stated that compilation of a report on the review of the six entities shareholder compact/accountability arrangements and six implementation monitoring was not achieved. However, all the accountability instruments were completed and submitted to the Entities for finalisation and signing. The budget allocation for all the above programmes, excluding transfers to public entities and the GCIS amounts to R75 Million, with a larger chunk of it going to the Administration programme. Programme 2 is allocated R8 million, whilst Programme 3 and Programme 4 are allocated R10.8 million each.

4. PROVINCIAL FOCUS

The Department also intend to have a specific focus on provinces in terms of some of their targets and deliverables. Some of the deliverables as contained in the Strategic Plan are:

- 5 Community Radio Stations will be provided with broadcasting infrastructure.
- 10 DTT awareness programmes will be coordinated in all 9 provinces.
- Analogue signal switched-off in all provinces.
- DoC Entities will also be implementing various deliverables in the provincial space.

5. ISSUES FOR THE COMMITTEE

- How effectively does the Department contribute to the delivery of government objectives, as reflected in its mandate?



- How useful are the performance targets in driving continuous improvement and does the Department have (enough) measures to manage service delivery risks?
- One of the strategic objectives under the Goal 4 (transforming the communications sector) talks about managing digital broadcasting migration. What is the status of digital migration at the moment?
- How well do the performance targets measure the delivery of outputs and the achievement of outcomes (where relevant)?
- Where could the Department develop further joint-working arrangements with other bodies to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery?
- The Department has been taken to court by three organisations, namely Support Public Broadcasting Coalition: SOS, Media Monitoring Africa and Freedom of Expression Institute over the legality of Broadcasting Amendment Bill; what is the status of that case?
- How effective have the relationships with other entities or spheres of government operating in the same or related areas been? Is there scope for improving these relationships and so ensure more effective service delivery?
- How well are the objectives and performance targets linked into the government's overall aims and furthermore, has the Department set targets for preferential procurement?
- Has the Department complied with employing people with disabilities at the Senior Management Service level during the period under review?
- ETV challenged to the High Court, a decision of the Minister to enact certain amendments to the BDM Policy for South Africa on the basis that her action was irrational and unlawful. The ruling was granted in favour of the Minister. However, ETV appealed the High Court's judgment to the Supreme Court of Appeal. Can the Department update the Committee on this matter and any other pending cases?

6. CONCLUSION

Overall the Department continues to do well, considering the nature of its operations and the fact that there is no disjuncture between the set goals based on its past and recent Strategic Reports. Furthermore, it seems to be doing well, given the shortage of staff and a limited budget.



REFERENCES

- Department of Communications, 2015. Strategic Plan 2015/16 – 2019/20
- Department of Communications, 2015. Annual Performance Plan 2015/16
- Department of Communications 2015/16. 3rd Quarter Organisational Performance and Financial Report

