**Analysis of the Department of Communications and Department: Government Communications and Information System Annual Performance Plan 2017/18 – 2019/20**

1. **INTRODUCTION**

*A popular government without popular information or the means of acquiring it, is but a Prologue to a Farce or a Tragedy or perhaps both. Knowledge will forever govern ignorance, and a people who mean to be their own Governors, must arm themselves with the power which knowledge gives* - James Madison

This famous quote from James Madison articulates the popular belief that a democracy can’t function independent of an informed and engaged citizenry; thus making access to information vital. In democracies, citizen trust in government is necessary for political leaders to make binding decisions and commit resources to attain societal goals.

Progress has been since 1994 in uniting the country, yet society remains extremely polarised. Inequality and inequity continue; opportunity continues to be defined by race, gender, geographic location, class and linguistic background. Through creating an enabling environment for provision of inclusive communication services to all in a manner that promotes socio-economic development and investment through broadcasting, new media, print media and other new media technologies; the Department of Communications has a role in “forging a new overarching identity”.

The purpose of the paper is to give Members of the Portfolio Committee on Communications an overview of what is contained in the Annual Performance Plan of both the Department of Communications and the Department: Government Communications and Information Systems for the financial year 2017/18.

1. **BACKGROUND**

An Annual Performance Plan (APP) sets out what the institution intends doing in the upcoming financial year and during the Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) to implement its Strategic Plan. The document sets out performance indicators and targets for budget programmes, and sub-programmes where relevant, to facilitate the institution realising its goals and objectives set out in the Strategic Plan. Where appropriate, the plan should include a quarterly breakdown of performance targets for the upcoming financial year. Figure 1 below gives an overview of the structure and content of Annual Performance Plans.[[1]](#footnote-1)

**Figure 1: Structure and content of Annual Performance Plans**

 

Programme performance information focuses on information that is collected by government institutions in the course of fulfilling their mandates and implementing government policies. This information is vital in enhancing transparency, accountability and oversight.

National and provincial treasuries make use of programme performance information for assessing the value-for-money of government activities. Their responsibilities include ensuring that institutions have programme performance-information plans for gathering performance data that can inform management decisions. Institutions are advised to establish a central point for recording institutional performance against core indicators for easy access by all role-players and encouraging the standardisation of performance information within sectors. The Framework for Managing Programme Performance Information provides further guidance.

The SMART principle becomes an important criterion when setting out programme performance information. SMART goal setting brings structure and trackability into your goals and objectives. Instead of vague resolutions, SMART goal setting creates verifiable trajectories towards a certain objective, with clear milestones and an estimation of the goal's attainability. Every goal or objective, from intermediary step to overarching objective, can be made S.M.A.R.T. and as such, brought closer to reality.[[2]](#footnote-2)

In order for goals or objectives to be clear and reachable, each one should be:

* **S**pecific (simple, sensible, significant).
* **M**easurable (meaningful, motivating).
* **A**chievable (agreed, attainable).
* **R**elevant (reasonable, realistic and resourced, results-based).
* **T**ime bound (time-based, time limited, time/cost limited, timely, time-sensitive).

**2.1 Relationship between legislation, plans and budgets**

When developing Strategic Plans and Annual Performance Plans it is also useful to conduct a situational analysis on the sectors or spheres of responsibility that fall within the institution’s mandate, the present delivery environment and the state of the institution itself, taking into account relevant government policies and long term plans. Strategic Plans and Annual Performance Plans should include a description of how institutions give effect to their statutory obligations, powers and responsibilities. In this regard the hierarchy of the different legal instruments should be noted (see figure 2).

The Constitution of South Africa, 1996 is the highest law of our country, and applies to all institutions. The Constitution prevails over any other legislation, regulations and directives. Following the Constitution, departments are then required to comply with other legislation, Money Bills, regulations; as well as directives and agreements issued in terms of the legislation. Further, if there are any specific court rulings that have a significant ongoing impact on operations or service delivery obligations, the Executive is under obligation to give effect to these.

In addition, some departments’ activities may be subject to a regulatory body. A regulatory body is a public authority or government agency responsible for exercising autonomous authority over and monitoring some area of government activity in a regulatory or supervisory capacity.

**Figure 2: Links to planning frameworks and other plans**



1. **ANALYSIS**

**3.1 Department of Communications**

The Department of Communications (DoC) derives its mandate from the President’s pronouncement when establishing the department, and these are:

* Develop an overarching communications and broadcasting policy and strategy.
* Provide information dissemination and publicity to promote an informed citizenry.
* Brand South Africa abroad to assist the country promote investments, economic growth and job creation.

The DoC has set itself the following strategic goals and strategic objectives which will be achieved when implementing the mandates:

* Effective and efficient strategic leadership, governance and administration.
* A responsive communications policy regulatory environment and improved country branding.
* Transformed communications sector.

**3.1.1 Situational Analysis**

This section focuses on three areas, Digital Migration, Broadcasting Amendment Bill and Transformation of the communications sector.

**3.1.1.1 Digital Migration**

In 2015 the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) resolved at the World Radio Conference (WRC-15) held in Geneva, Switzerland that the spectrum that will be freed up by the analogue transmissions will be allocated for mobile telecommunications. The protection of analogue television transmissions ceased as of 17 June 2015, as per the International ITU resolutions, of which South Africa is a signatory.

The implementation South Africa’s Digital Migration project got off to a slow start and this resulted in South Africa missing the 17 June 2015 international deadline.

December 2005 saw the commencement of extensive distributions and installations of Digital Terrestrial Television (DTT) Set –Top Boxes (STBs) and related services. The South African Post Office (SAPO) started generating statistics for registrations, distributions and installations of devices to consumers. Monitoring visits were conducted in Keimoes and Kakamas in the Northern Cape to monitor the functionality of the devices, followed by focused Consumer and Public Awareness campaigns to improve the registration uptake by consumers.

The monitoring visits identified that the registration and uptake had been running below projections during that period, mainly attributed to (a) the impact of TV licence as a requirement for registration, (b) unavailability of smartcards for the Direct to Home (DTH) Satellite STBs and (c) lack of DTT education and awareness campaign. As a result of the Minister’s intervention, the TV licence was delinked from the registration process.

Through a proactive and aggressive door-to-door registration and installation campaign, progress has been realised and as such the department aims to institutionalise it as the de-facto approach for the national STB roll-out programme.

The lack of funding for public awareness and contact centre still remains a huge challenge. There is a need to train qualified installers in under serviced areas to service their communities post the DTT and DTH STBs installation period, as this will help create job opportunities in economically depressed areas. The main objective is to train artisans and customer care to support the government programme of switching over from the current analogue TV to digital broadcast.

Litigation by eTV and civil society organisations on the coutry’s Broadcast Digital Migration Policy (BDM Policy) risk these significant achievements being watered down and the country missing the new deadline for migration which was set for 2018 by the previous Minister of Communications Faith Muthambi.

eTV challenged to the High Court a decision which was granted in favour of the Minister of Communications. The Supreme Court of Appeals (SCA) subsequently ruled in favour of Etv and declared the department’s BDM Policy was unlawful and invalid and was accordingly set aside.

The matter revolved around the use of unencrypted set-top boxes for when the country finally migrates from analogue to digital television viewing. The successful implementation of digital migration by 2018 hangs in the balance pending the decision of the Constitutional Court where the Minister is appealing the SCA decision. Furthermore, the allegations of flawed procurement processes for the production of set top boxes also poses significant risk (financial and litigation) to the rolling out of the programme.

**3.1.1.2 Broadcasting Amendment Bill**

The South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) has over the past 23 years committed itself to being a broadcast service that provides a full and accurate information to all South Africans. Issues of poor governance over the years have however made the broadcaster famous not for its quality public programming; and this has made it extremely difficult for those employed by broadcaster to assist in ensuring that the SABC effectively carries out its mandate. The en masse resignation of board members and the suspension of CEOs highlight concerns on the effective corporate governance of SOEs. This was further highlighted by the Report of the Adhoc Committee on SABC Board Inquiry held between November 2016 and February 2017.

The Broadcasting Amendment Bill [B39 – 2015] (The Bill) was referred to the Portfolio Committee on Communication on 4 December 2015 and was subsequently introduced to the Committee by the Department of Communications on 8 March 2016. The Bill seeks to amend the Broadcasting Act 4 of 1999 so as to develop and implement a stable corporate governance model that ensures long-term stability and sustainability of the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC). The Bill does a good job in highlighting the challenges caused by multiple reporting lines, accountabilities as well as overlapping roles and responsibilities as a result of founding legislation and provisions of the Companies Act however has great implications on how to guarantee that SABC board members are public servants accountable to the public; essentially putting the SABC firmly under the control of the Minister.

Upon introduction of the Bill; civil society organisations Support Pubic Broadcasting Coalition: SOS and Media Monitoring Africa were challenging the Amendment Bill.

**3.1.1.3 Transformation of the communications sector**

In the 2017 Sate of the Nation Address (SONA) the president mapped out what radical socio-economic transformation would look like in South Africa. The president defined radical socio-economic transformation as the “fundamental change in the structure, systems, institutions and patterns of ownership, management and control of the economy in favour of all South Africans, especially the poor, the majority of whom are African and female, as defined by the governing party which makes policy for the democratic government[[3]](#footnote-3).” The president further emphasised the importance of stimulating growth and creating jobs; as well as the need to empower Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs) to accelerate their growth. Access to high-quality, innovative business support can dramatically improve the success rate of new ventures. In the spirit of doing things differently…meaningful and targeted Small Micro Medium Enterprises (SMMEs) can be a game changer provided the required support is afforded. In addition, youth unemployment is sitting stubbornly just below half (47.60 percent)[[4]](#footnote-4) of the entire youth populace and this scenario is normally referred to by scholars as ‘the elephant in the room’. This clearly indicates that few jobs are available for youth and that small business development aimed at youth should be one of South Africa’s most pressing priorities for the Department.

Transforming the sector particularly the print media sector remains at the top of the Department’s priorities for the 2017/18 financial year. Transformation of society is multi-faceted; complex and requires change at every level. New policy and procedures must be approved and institutions redesigned to support this. Post-1994, the newly elected government engaged wide ranging discussions to establish the principles, develop the policies, and introduce the structures that would reflect the ideals of a non-racial and democratic society. All sectors of society were to be transformed in line with the democratic ideals of: openness; accountability; and non-discrimination based on race, gender, religion etcetera. These ideals have guided the transformation of the South African society over the past 20 years. Twenty years later the print media sector remains largely untransformed with undue concentration of media ownership in the hands of a few industry players this having a significant impact on media and transformation. Though the main concern has been ownership and management control of the publishing of print media, this has to be considered across the entire media value chain as similar patterns are reflected throughout thus stifling the emergence of new owners into the market.

Government also identified a need to review some of the policy in areas where there has not been effective change/transformation towards a more democratic order for an example print media ownership patterns remain largely untransformed and alternative voices, more especially of the poor and most disadvantaged still remain largely unheard in the media environment.

The DoC/GCIS held a two-day Print Media Transformation, Accountability and Diversity Colloquium on 25 and 26 August 2016 at Freedom Park, Pretoria.

The purpose of the Colloquium was: to bring together a broad range of stakeholders to contribute positively to a debate on media transformation and diversity; It also interrogated issues within the media environment to effect positive change; inform the media transformation and diversity policy process and Secure diversity and plurality of content and media ownership in a free and democratic constitutional state.

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| **Issues for the Committee to Consider** **In the event that the Constitutional Court found in favour of eTV, what was the Department’s plan to mitigate the implications of that ruling on BDM Policy and roll out of digital migration?** **What was the current status of the investigation into the procurement process of set top boxes?****How much was need for the full implementation of the digital migration programme?****What was the status of litigation by SOS Coalition on the Broadcasting Amendment Bill?** **What is the department’s plan in ensuring that the recommendations of the Adhoc Committee on SABC Board Inquiry are implemented?** **The delay in full implantation of digital migration programme is impacting on the availability of spectrum and as a result community media, particularly broadcast community media were being affected. This poses profound impact on the department’s transformation agenda and universal access to broadcasting services.**  |

1. **Programmes and Strategic Objectives**

**4.1 Programme 1: Administration**

The purpose of this programme is to provide strategic leadership, management and support services to the department. Under this programme the department has ten sub programmes and 21 programme indicators.

The sub-programmes were Human Resource Management and Development (HRM&D), Information and Technology management (IMT), Facilities and Security management services; Communications, Legal Services, Strategic planning and Performance Monitoring, Financial management, Accounting and Administration; Supply Chain Management, Risk Management and Internal Audit.

The department’s budget was categorised into five broad sub-programmes. The graph below presents the expenditure trends and estimates by sub-programme

**Graph 1**

A significant portion (R30 537 000) of the appropriation goes to Departmental Management. This Figure will steadily increase in the medium term.

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| **Issues for the Committee to Consider****It must be highlighted that the Sub-Programme: Risk Management must factor in how the sharing of office space poses a significant risk to documents management. The availability or non-availability of space is a security risk as protecting classified information could be compromised.**  |

**4.2 Programme 2: Communications Policy, Research and Development**

The purpose of this programme is to conduct research and develop communications and broadcasting policies. The programme is has three sub-programmes with ten performance indicators. The three sub-programmes are Broadcasting Policy, Media Policy and Technology and Engineering Level.

The department’s budget is presented according to three sub-programmes. The budget is presented in the graph below:

**Graph 2**

In line with the department’s plan to overhaul the country’s broadcasting and media policy in order to meet the needs of a sector operating in a highly advanced technological environment and meeting the communication needs of citizens; R6 168 000 of the budget is allocated to broadcasting policy.

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| **Issues for the Committee to Consider** **It is important that the SMART becomes the pinnacle of setting out programme performance information. Indicators must be well defined and avoid ambiguity.** **The following indicators were included:*** **Audio-Visual and Digital Act implemented**
* **Regulatory Policy framework of the national public broadcasting service corporation**

**The indicator “number of community radio stations provided with broadcasting infrastructure and Media Development and Diversity mandate” was put on hold pending the finalisation of the Audio-Visual White Paper.** |

**4.3 Programme 3: Industry and Capacity Development**

The purpose of this programme is to manage enterprise development, digital migration, and industry research and analysis. Furthermore, it’s to ensure the implementation of a structured programme of engagement with stakeholders in support of the department’s programmes and projects. This programme has four sub-programmes with a total of 11 performance indicators.

The department’s budget is presented according to four sub-programmes. The budget is presented in the graph below:

**Graph 3**

Broadcast Digital Migration is the department’s flagship project and the majority of the budget allocated under this programme is allocated to Broadcast Digital Migration. The amount of R14 383 000 has been allocated for the 2017/18 financial year.

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| **Issues for the Committee to Consider** **Issues of budget constraints pose a significant challenge in the medium term; particularly in ensuring that the department forges ahead with its proactive and robust DTT campaigns.** **Litigation and financial constraints could negatively impact meeting the 2019 deadline of full digital migration.****It is important that the SMART becomes the pinnacle of setting out programme performance information. Indicators must be well defined and avoid ambiguity****Analogue signal switched off included as a new indicator**  |

**4.4 Programme 4: Entity Oversight**

The purpose of this programme is to monitor the implementation of policies by SOEs and regulatory institutions, and provide guidance and oversight on their governance matters. There are four sub-programmes under this programme with 15 performance indicators.

The department’s budget is presented according to five sub-programmes. The budget is presented in the graph below:

**Graph 4**

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| **Issues for the Committee to Consider** **Under the strategic objective ensuring viability and sustainability of SOEs by 2019, it is important that the department pays particular attention to the SABC and MDDA. There is a serious need to ensuring that vacancies are filled with competent personnel; and there is need to ensure that there is a need for stable leadership with these organisations.**  |

1. **Department: Government Communications and Information System**

**5.1 Situational Analysis**

The Government Communications and Information System(GCIS) operates under a difficult fiscal and socio-political environment. Government’s austerity measures and budget cuts will in the medium term pose a challenge GCIS competently responding in a volatile, complex and increasingly ambiguous communication environment.

The GCIS facilitated the development of a five year communications strategy, which focuses on the Nine-Point Plan to grow and transform the economy, create jobs and attract investment. Plans on the Nine-Point Plan for 2017 include the development of a booklet (mid-term progress report) and a leaflet (narrative with nine priority interventions), and the creation of a micro-portal (a repository of information products, statements, speeches, photos videos, etc.).

The Cabinet-endorsed NCSF calls for the need to improve our footprint by enhancing existing platforms and introducing new ones. We should sustain and improve our relations with the media. The GCIS should be on the forefront of outlining latest developments pertaining to the nine key priorities, namely: employment; health; education; the fight against crime and corruption, rural development and land reform; access to housing and basic services, building a developmental and capable state; social cohesion, and a better Africa and a better world.

The GCIS has since August 2015 explored another funding model to expand the reach of the newspaper by carrying paid for government recruitment advertising with intentions to generate revenue which will be used to increase the print run of the newspaper for the coming period. Another challenge is persuading government departments to support this government media platform to carry their recruitment advertising – the take up is currently low but improving. In June 2016, *Vuk’uzenzele* celebrated its 100th edition with a total 165 million copies distributed since its first edition in 2005. More people would be reached in the frequency and print run are increased.

The GCIS has also embraced technology and the communication dividend it can provide. The android and iOS app offers a new entry point to www.gov.za, home of government’s public information. The app allows users to view the latest available jobs in the Public Service; tender bulletins; news and radio bulletins; information on services such as renewing your driver’s licence or renewing your car licence disk. The app gives users quick access to government leaders, events, speeches and other government information. It has contact details of all government departments across all spheres of government. It lives alongside the Vuk’uzenzele newspaper app which allows users to download and read the government newspaper that is distributed nationwide. This app extends the reach of the newspaper beyond the printed copy to mobile users.

The GCIS constantly strives to empower community media both with content and advertising as part of the overall transformation of the media landscape and promoting the diversity of content. As such, on a daily basis the GCIS provides news bulletins to all community radio stations for their free consumption and use. In addition, the news agency, SAnews provides ongoing written content for community press on a daily basis.

The GCIS continues to fulfil its mandate of communicating government programmes, projects and plans to the public. The organisation has begun to take a leading role in supporting departments with their communication. Most notably in the form of drafting communication strategies, media engagement services, key messages, fact sheets, opinion pieces and Question and Answer documents and production of communication products intended for citizens.

1. **Programmes and strategic objectives**

The GCIS implements its mandate, goals and objectives through the following three programmes, each headed by a Deputy Director-General. The three programmes are Administration, Content Processing and Dissemination; and Intergovernmental Coordination and Stakeholder Management.

**6.1 Programme 1: Administration**

The purpose of the programme is to provide strategic leadership, management and support services to the department. There are six sub-programmes under this programme; they are departmental management, strategic management, human resources, information management and technology, financial administration and internal audit. Furthermore, the programme has 11 performance indicators.

The programme’s budget is broadly presented according to five sub-programmes. The budget is presented in the graph below:

**Graph 5**

The majority of the budget under this programme is spread between Corporate services (R52 884 000) and office accommodation (R51 826 000) respectively for the 2017/18 financial year.

**6.2 Programme 2: Content Processing and Dissemination**

The purpose of this programme is to provide strategic leadership in government communication to ensure coherence, coordination, consistency, quality, impact and responsiveness of government communication. There are three sub-programmes which are products and platforms, policy and research and communications services agency. There is a total of 47 performance indicators under the programme

The programme’s budget is broadly presented according to four sub-programmes. The budget is presented in the graph below:

**Graph 6**

In line with its strategic objective of sharing government messages; Communication Service Agency received the most funding; R52 854 000 for the 2017/18 financial year and set to increase in the medium term.

**6.3 Programme 3: Intergovernmental Coordination and Stakeholder Management**

Purpose of this programme is to implement development communication through mediated and unmediated communication channels and foster sound stakeholder relations and partnerships.

There are three sub-programmes under this programmes with 31 programme indicators. The three sub-programmes are media engagement, cluster communications and provincial and local liaison.

The programme’s budget is broadly presented according to five sub-programmes. The budget is presented in the graph below:

**Graph 7**

The amount of R77 061 000 was allocated for the function of provincial and Local Liaison for the 2017/18 financial year

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| **Issues for the Committee to Consider** **No coherent community media framework to promote the participation of all communities in the national discourse.****Lack of coherent, unified government communication through all spheres of government serving all citizens. This was demonstrated by different messages shared by government department and presidency during the SASSA debacle.** **Lack of confidence by citizens on government which poses a challenge for government communication. Communication needs to be met with service delivery.****Falling advertising revenues has impacted on the quality of media newsrooms and media associations/lobby groups**  |

**END**

1. National Treasury. (2010). *National Framework For Strategic Plans and Annual Performance Plans*  [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Doran, G. T. (1981). *There’s a S.M.A.R.T way to Write Management’s Goals and Objectives, Management Review, Vol. 70, Issue 11, pp. 35-36* [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. President JG Zuma. State of the Nation Address by President Jacob Zuma, Parliament, Cape Town. 09 February 2017 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Trading Economics. South African Youth Unemployment. Available on the World Wide Web:www.tradingeconomics.com/youth-unemployment-rate [↑](#footnote-ref-4)