



# COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

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Overberg District Municipality | 2025 – 2026

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## **1. PURPOSE**

The purpose of a Communication Strategy (CS) for the Overberg District Municipality would be to set a strategic communication agenda and a plan that is aligned and supports the achievement of Council's Strategic Goals (SGs), as captured in the 5<sup>th</sup> Generation Integrated Development Plan (IDP) for 2022/23 – 2026/27.

The elements of this strategy come together to bring about coordinated and planned communication that strengthens the Municipality's image and integrity. Such planned communication increases confidence in the Municipality's performance and existence. It will further reflect strong leadership and management of Overberg District Municipality.

Sustainable behavioural change is a long-term proposition and involves, in addition to issues of communication, other factors such as the availability, accessibility and quality of services, the socio-cultural and political context, the level of education and the socio-economic circumstances. All of these factors are to be considered in developing a CS for the Overberg District Municipality.

The main responsibilities of the communication function are to:

- a) Coordinate communication between the Municipality, and both internal and external stakeholders.
- b) Enhance, promote, and maintain the reputation of the Municipality.
- c) Communicate ODM's strategic objectives, service delivery initiatives, achievements and corporate values to the public.

The communications function, like many other functional units, must be driven strategically to relay messages about programmes, projects, activities, and general awareness. To reach an intended purpose, communication needs to be backed by research, planning, execution, monitoring and evaluation.

This communication strategy confirms the current practice and identifies communication aims and principles for all communication.

## **2. COMMUNICATION AIMS**

The Municipality wants to ensure that it communicates in the best way possible. If the Municipality's communication is effective, it impacts on the people who receive services and the people who deliver them – improving both services and the quality of life in the Overberg region.

The aim of communications would be to:

- a) increase the public's understanding of services and through this increased understanding, to help improve satisfaction with these services.
- b) ensure that local communities and stakeholders are aware of the Municipality's vision and plans.
- c) consider the needs and views of the public in order to prioritise and develop responsive services.
- d) maintain an appropriate and positive public image.
- e) Attempt to, within available resources, reach vulnerable groups.
- f) ensure an effective, attentive and motivated workforce through effective internal communication within the Municipality.

## **3. BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION**

Poor communication and accountability relationships with communities from Municipal structures has consistently remained at the forefront of government's development challenges. The 2009

State of Local Government Report (SLGR) represents the outcomes of a country-wide assessment performed to determine the current state of Local Government. The findings of the report, in respect to public participation and communication, indicate that many municipalities have been unable to provide effective leadership in developing and communicating a common vision amongst communities and stakeholders.

Municipalities were found to practice inadequate community participation and to be ineffective in mediating expectations, mobilising and supporting communities to tap into state and non-state resources. This stems from the trend of municipalities to make limited investments in public participation strategies, structures, and processes including communication and complaint management systems.

The high frequency of service delivery protests the country has experienced clearly demonstrates the extent to which channels of communication between government and communities have broken down. The failure on the part of municipalities to adopt effective complaints-handling mechanisms and customer care strategies only further amplifies this communication and accountability problem.

Community members are more likely to respond to a municipality that is accountable to them, and that takes the time to explain why their needs and service delivery expectations are not being satisfied. In order to improve communication between Government and communities, municipalities must institutionalise communication structures, processes and systems for structured, direct and regular communication with local communities.

A CS is therefore necessary to enable the Overberg District Municipality to address the above shortcomings. A CS provides the framework for communication planning. It allows the Communication Officer to establish a framework against which on-going communication decisions are tested. A CS produces a profile that can be used to identify the right problems to solve and to prioritise areas or issues for which communication plans are to be developed. A CS determines what the Communications Unit should be doing (communicating) in support of the Municipality's overall objectives and aligned to Provincial and National Government objectives.

This strategy therefore endeavours to function as a 'Municipal Communication Blueprint' that identifies and defines the organisation's communication stakeholders and role-players, its functional communication structures and processes, challenges and the aims.

The core functions of ODM's Communication Strategy are to contribute towards the realisation of the following developmental objectives as captured in Council's Strategic Goals and underpinned by the principles of transparency, openness, participatory democracy and direct communication with stakeholders:

- Secure financial sustainability
- Establish managerial and human resource capacity
- Operational effectiveness and efficiency of resorts
- Corporate governance audit
- Optimise stakeholder management approach
- Operational effectiveness and efficiency of waste disposal services
- Business/customer relations plan
- Marketing and implementation of mission statement

#### 4. LEGISLATIVE BACKGROUND

This strategy is informed and guided by several policy documents, particularly those that have a direct bearing on communication, public participation, integration and coordination. Among these are the:

- Code of Conduct for Municipal Employees;
- Code of Conduct for Councillors;
- Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act No. 108 of 1996);
- Section 75 of the Local Government: Municipal Financial Management Act 56 of 2003, which requires that municipalities place key documents and information on their websites, including their Integrated Development Plan (IDP), annual budget, adjustments budgets and budget-related documents and policies;
- Regulation 30 of the Municipal Financial Management Act and the Municipal Budget and Reporting Regulations, published in Government Gazette 32141, General Notice, on 17 April 2009;
- Sections 21(a) and 21 (b) of the Municipal Systems Act, no. 32 of 2000, also oblige municipalities to convey specific documents and information to the public, displaying these files on the municipality's official website;
- Electronic Communications and Transactions Act 25 of 2002;
- Intergovernmental Relations Framework Act, 2005;
- Department of Government Communication and Information System Policy, 2018;
- ODM ICT Policies;
- ODM Language Policy;
- ODM Public Participation Policy;
- Promotion of Access to Information Act 2 of 2000;
- Promotion of Administrative Justice Act, 2000, Act 3 of 2000;
- Protection of Personal Information Act 4 of 2013; and
- Use of Official Languages Act, 2012 (Act 12 of 2012).

#### 5. OVERBERG DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY PROFILE

##### 5.1. Organisational Overview

Council was established in 1983 as a Divisional Council (DC), and on 1 July 1989 became a Regional Services Council (RSC). The Overberg District Municipality came into being on 22 September 2000.

The Overberg District Municipality is classified as a 'Category C' Municipality serving Local Municipalities in the District, viz. Cape Agulhas, Overstrand, Theewaterskloof and Swellendam, which are classified as 'Category B' Municipalities. The Overberg Region in large comprises an area of over 12,241km<sup>2</sup> with an estimated population of **326,975** (*MERO 2024/25*).

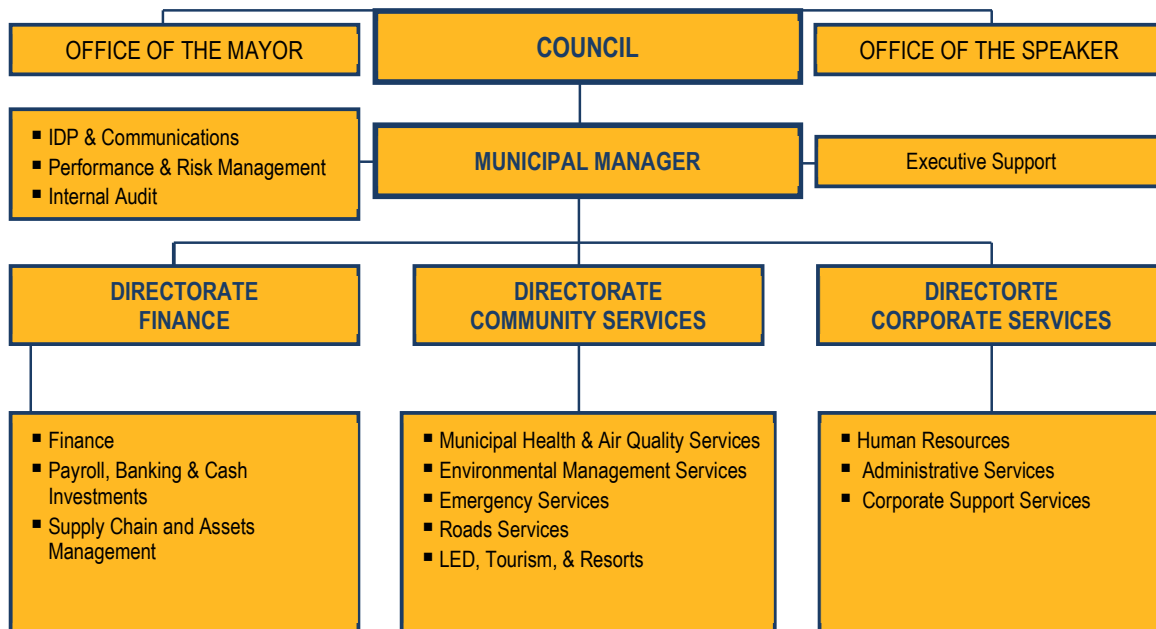
Following Local Government elections on 1 November 2021, the new Council of the Overberg District Municipality was constituted on 6 December 2021 and is represented by four (4) political parties, viz. the Democratic Alliance (DA) with twelve (12) Councillors, the African National Congress (ANC) with seven ( 8) Councillors, the Vryheidsfront Plus (VF+) with two (2) and the GOOD Party with two ( 1).

##### **The Executive Mayoral Committee:**

The Executive Mayor:	Ald A Franken
The Deputy Executive Mayor:	Ald H Coetzee
Portfolio Chairperson: Finance:	Ald J Nieuwoudt

Portfolio Chairperson: Community Services: Cllr S Fourie  
Portfolio Chairperson: Strategic Services: Ald H Coetzee  
Portfolio Chairperson: Corporate Services: Cllr T Els

Following a restructuring process, Council approved the following organisational structure on 30 June 2025:



## 5.2. Institutional Analysis

The Overberg District Municipality boasts a loyal staff with dedicated and committed officials in key positions. Many of these officials have extensive years of history with Council. Hence, it is rich in institutional knowledge and expertise. However, due to various constraints, officials are currently faced with tremendous challenges in terms of rolling out and implementing action plans in order to achieve desired strategic objectives.

These strategic objectives are captured in the Overberg District Municipality's 5<sup>th</sup> Generation Integrated Development Plan (IDP) for 2022/23 - 2026/27, which was adopted by Council on 30 May 2022. This essentially translates into Council embarking on its fifth 5-year plan towards a transformed and developmental District Municipality.

## 5.3. Operational Developments

Overberg District Municipality's development and service delivery mandate speaks to the developmental and social needs of communities. The Municipality, therefore, continually strives to successfully render services such as Emergency Services, Roads, Municipal Health Services, Environmental Management Services and Resorts facilities in the Overberg District.

Various District Forums have been established and are facilitated by the District, creating a platform to enhance and further promote interactions amongst relevant stakeholders, for the development and benefit of the entire Overberg District.

The operational part of the CS would involve developing an implementation plan. This should envisage the elements which are required for successful implementation, viz. institutional framework, production of communication material, training of human resources, strengthening of institutional capacities, monitoring and evaluation, budget and timetable.

## 5.4. Vision and Mission Statement

ODM's stated vision and mission is as follows:

### VISION

Overberg – the opportunity gateway to Africa  
through sustainable services.

### MISSION

To render sustainable, customer-directed services and to be  
the preferred Provider of Shared Services within the Overberg, by:

- Promoting social and economic development;
- Utilising all available resources economically, efficiently and effectively;
- Ensuring the provision of optimal and quality services delivery; and
- Enhancing effective stakeholder relations

## 5.5. Batho Pele Principles



The District comprehends that the achievement of SGs can only be realised by practicing the following Batho Pele principles in order to boost the transformation of service delivery.

1. **Consultation:** Citizens should be consulted about the level and quality of public services they receive and, wherever possible, should be given a choice about the services that are offered.
2. **Service Standards:** Citizens should be told what level and quality of public services they will receive so that they are aware of what to expect.
3. **Access:** All citizens should have equal access to the services to which they are entitled.
4. **Courtesy:** Citizens should be treated with courtesy and consideration.
5. **Information:** Citizens should be given full, accurate information about the public services they are entitled to receive.
6. **Openness and Transparency:** Citizens should be told how National and Provincial Departments are run, how much they cost, and who is in charge.
7. **Redress:** If the promised standard of service is not delivered, citizens should be offered an apology, a full explanation and a speedy and effective remedy; and when complaints are made, citizens should receive a sympathetic, positive response.
8. **Value for Money:** Public services should be provided economically and efficiently in order to give citizens the best possible value for money.

ODM strives to uphold the Batho Pele principles in all activities outlined in this strategy.

## 6. STRATEGIC GOALS AND STAKEHOLDERS

### 6.1. ODM's Strategic Goals

SGs flow from strategic planning, which involves the process of defining an organisation's strategy, or direction, and making decisions on allocating its resources to pursue this strategy.

A CS is a well-planned series of actions aimed at achieving certain objectives through the use of communication methods, techniques and approaches. By definition, this implies that before you embark on a CS, you need to have developed clear Strategic Goals (SGs).

In formulating SGs that would directly speak to the Vision and Mission statements of the Overberg District Municipality, discussions centred on how best to respond to the impact it would have on the District and Local Municipalities, as well as communities at large. It was also understood that SGs should be aligned with Government's Key Performance Areas (KPA's) and address Government's National Outcomes (NOs). The District's SGs:

- SG1:** To ensure the well-being of all in the Overberg District through the provision of efficient **basic services and infrastructure**.
- SG2:** To promote **regional economic development** by supporting initiatives in the District for the development of a sustainable district economy.
- SG3:** To ensure **municipal transformation and institutional development** by creating a staff structure that would adhere to the principles of employment equity and promote skills development.
- SG4:** To attain and maintain **financial viability** and sustainability by executing accounting services in accordance with National policy and guidelines.
- SG5:** To ensure **good governance practices** by providing a democratic and pro-active accountable government and ensuring **community participation** through IGR structures.

All communication activities emanating from this strategy will be in support of ODM's SGs as stated above.

## **6.2. Strategic Stakeholders**

In planning communication activities, it is important to identify the most strategic stakeholders of ODM. This process allows for careful consideration of who the communication activities and resources will be spent on. These considerations require an analysis of stakeholders' linkages to the Municipality and are described as:

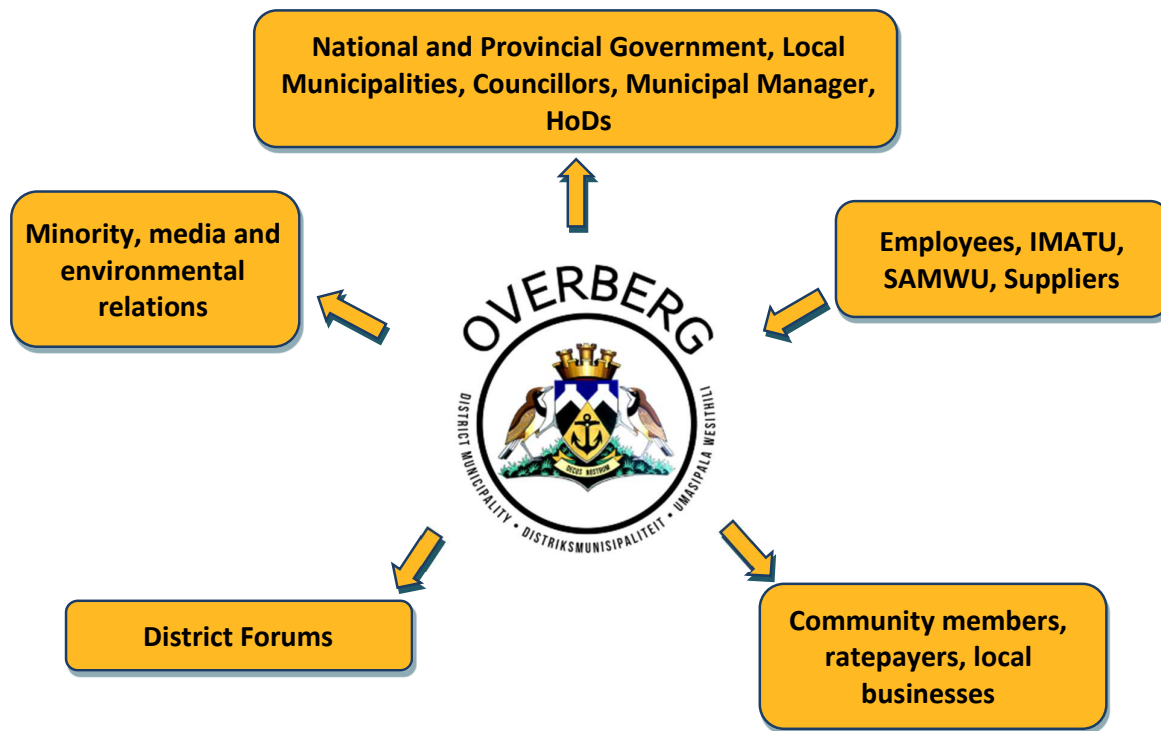
- **Enabling linkages:** groups that provide authority to the Municipality and controls its resources (e.g. Provincial and National Government, Executive Directors, Councillors, Municipal Managers, Heads of Departments, etc.).
- **Functional linkages:** groups that **provide inputs** to the Municipality (e.g. personnel, Unions, Forums, etc.) and **uses its outputs** (e.g. community members, local businesses, commercial farmers, NGOs, etc.).
- **Normative linkages:** links with professional or industry associations. These linkages provide connections to institutions that can assist in solving shared problems (e.g. Forums).
- **Diffused linkages:** connections to groupings of individuals who are not part of any organisation. Minority relations, media relations, ratepayer associations and environmental relations are attempts to manage linkages with diffused groups.

The Overberg District Municipality would have to manage **Enabling** and **Functional linkages** first, as they could create consequences for the Municipality. SGs cannot be pursued without these stakeholders. When **Diffused linkages** organise or mobilise, such as environmental pressure groups, they create consequences for the Municipality and, therefore, have to be managed.

It is the function of the Communication Manager to select the most strategic stakeholders relevant to the Overberg District Municipality. The study or selection of strategic stakeholders is crucial



since the goal is to facilitate a change in behaviour in order to achieve SGs. A strategic stakeholder map for Overberg District could be illustrated as:



## 7. INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

Communications are inherently central to the IDP process as citizens are defined by law to be part of the municipality and to actively participate in municipal planning, budgeting, policy drafting and performance monitoring – all of which entails extensive communication between all the stakeholders.

The IDP process therefore requires strong and clear channels of communication, with particular emphasis on quality feedback mechanisms from residents, in order to develop an IDP that is credible in both the drafting process and its content. Accordingly, the municipality has a duty to facilitate public involvement by providing meaningful opportunities for participation and to take measures to ensure that people have the ability to take advantage of such opportunities.

As such, the CS will address the communication needs of Public Participation and IDP processes so as to prioritise and organise its communication activities, to market it and make it available to the public with the aim of communicating more widely the priorities and activities of the IDP process – many of which are typically internally focused and therefore “invisible” to the public and the rest of the municipality’s stakeholders.

The IDP is not only a strategic framework that guides performance and development but also a vehicle for communication and a yardstick for political accountability – the development and monitoring of the IDP serves as both a basis for engagement between state and citizen as well as an instrument against which citizens can hold the council accountable.

## **8. ROLE OF COMMUNICATION IN PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Public Participation through communication is the ongoing, planned, structured and organised use of communication in the promotion of development, working towards changing the attitudes and/or behaviours of the public, through the dissemination of reliable information and through encouraging the active and conscious participation of the broad public in the process.

There is an intricate interrelatedness between communication and participation, whereby communication is both a prerequisite for effective participation and an ongoing, parallel process.

Most often, public participation implies broad-based communication, the provision of accurate and reliable information to the public. The effectiveness of any participation process is fundamentally linked to the institutional capacity of the Municipality to maintain an effective communication system. Successful participation is dependent on good communication.

## **9. COMMUNICATION STRATEGY**

### **9.1. Messages / Themes**

Messages and themes will flow from the Municipality's Vision, Mission and Strategic Goals, in accord with the Integrated Development Plan. Messages and themes will also be in line with National and Provincial Government. The message of Batho Pele will also be made a reality so that the community can see that they come first.

National: "Working Together We Can Do More"

Provincial: "Better Together"

ODM: "*Decus Nostrum*" – Our Pride – Our Overberg"

## 9.2. Messengers

Messengers are Municipal Representatives authorised to represent the Municipality and/or a particular project. The following Messengers will be used as they relate to respective projects and/or events:

<b>Executive Mayor</b>	All aspects of Council policy and programmes. Matters of policy yet to be adopted / enacted. Key person for all public participation, unless delegated otherwise.
<b>Speaker</b>	All comments relating to Council Rules of Order must come from the Speaker.
<b>Councillors</b>	May be delegated to speak on specific issues.
<b>Municipal Manager</b>	Any matters relating to the administration and the running of the Municipality as a whole, except for matters that are policy still to be adopted / enacted. All media enquiries unless delegated otherwise.
<b>Heads of Departments (HODs)</b>	On all aspects of their service areas. Media queries will be referred to HODs for comment/clarification/information. Comment will then go out in the name of the Director/Municipal Manager unless indicated otherwise.
<b>Communication Officer</b>	Responsible for the co-ordination of media communication, media conferences, media statements and media queries.

## 9.3. Communication Objectives

Communication objectives (COs) should be based on **SMART** principles, i.e. objectives should be **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**ealistic and **T**ime-framed. Having SMART COs makes it easier to clearly define what you are supposed to achieve, hence facilitating the monitoring and evaluation process.

In order to ensure the successful and effective implementation of strategies and objectives, the District would have to utilise various platforms and mechanisms, the most important being communication. In the absence of continuous and effective communication, the District would be challenged in achieving desired outcomes. Communication, therefore, would play a fundamental role in effectively realising the District's SGs. Upon annual revision of the Integrated Development Plan (IDP), the CS should also be reviewed to ensure communication objectives are aligned to ODM's strategic objectives.

The following table depicts examples of how communication is envisaged to assist the District in achieving desired outcomes.

Strategic Objective	Communication Strategy	Communication Objective
1. Ensuring that the ODM meets the basic service and infrastructure needs of the district.	This implies that an environment is created, support is provided and systems built to accelerate quality service delivery within the District.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Utilise awareness campaigns to ensure communities are aware of what municipal services are available to them and how to access them.</li> <li>▪ Ensure an effective complaints handling system and customer friendly service centre is available to citizens.</li> <li>▪ Ensure feedback mechanisms for all stakeholders.</li> </ul>
2. Support and promote tourism and regional economic development.	Ensure that communities and other development partners are mobilised to partner with municipalities in service delivery and development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ensure informative, professional, and regular communication is directed and sustained with civic structures, organisations and social development partners.</li> <li>▪ Develop communication activities aimed at investors and local business in the area.</li> <li>▪ Raise awareness of: ODM's Tourism and RED initiatives; upgrading of resorts and EPWP programmes.</li> </ul>
3. Ensure municipal transformation and institutional development.	Ensure internal communication flows in a structured and traceable process with measurable timelines indicated for feedback.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Raise awareness and encourage staff to utilise communication platforms.</li> <li>▪ Ensure regular internal communication regarding projects, programmes and the affairs of ODM.</li> <li>▪ Promoting Vision, Mission and Batho Pele principles.</li> </ul>
4. Attain and maintain financial stability.	Ensure regular communication regarding the financial affairs of ODM to relevant stakeholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Marketing and implementation of Mission statement.</li> <li>▪ Ensure communication regarding progress in implementation of MFIP to relevant stakeholders.</li> <li>▪ Communicate outcomes of MFMA CSC and MPAC meetings.</li> </ul>
5. Ensure good governance and encourage community participation.	Create platforms for greater public participation, sharing information and obtaining feedback about ODM's IDP priorities, challenges and remedial actions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Communicate the plans and services of ODM.</li> <li>▪ Raise awareness of public participation platforms.</li> <li>▪ Ensure proactive media relations.</li> <li>▪ Enhance and promote IGR and ensure alignment between IDPs of the District and Local Municipalities.</li> <li>▪ Support and strengthen communication capacity of all Local Municipalities under ODM's area of jurisdiction.</li> </ul>

#### 9.4. Media Analysis & Communication Channels

Research has an essential role to play at each critical step of the process of planning, implementation and evaluation of a Communication Action Plan. During the planning phase, research could provide necessary strategic information. Research could also be used during the implementation phase for developing messages and materials appropriate to the Municipality's target audience, and eventually for resolving unexpected challenges. Research is both useful and essential in monitoring and evaluating an activity.

In conducting a media analysis, one has to research which channels stakeholders prefer to use, e.g. sms, website, newsletters, loud hailing, etc. What is convenient or most cost-effective for the organisation is impractical and should not be an option. Research could be conducted either formally or informally, i.e.

☑☒ **Formal research:** can be conducted by using surveys to test stakeholders' preferences for particular channels.

☹☒ **Informal research:** can be conducted through general conversations and based on personal experience within the Municipality.

In the absence of formal research, informal research revealed that the Overberg District Municipality currently has access to the following **communication channels**:

- e-Mail - to reach District stakeholders
- Internal and external meetings - Departmental, Managerial, Steering Committees
- Press releases - as required by the Executive Mayor and/or Municipal Manager
- Municipal website - to reach all stakeholders
- Meetings/talks with community - regarding campaigns or events in the District
- Events/talks at schools regarding beach safety, drug abuse, etc. - targeted at youth
- Various fora - District Task Teams, IDP stakeholders, Working Groups, etc.
- Electronic Billboard (if / when available)
- Internal Newsletter (*ODM Newsflash*) - internal staff news shared two months per quarter
- External Newsletter (*Decus Nostrum*) - developed to communicate key messages from the Municipality and shared once per quarter
- Social Media - tools for information sharing – particularly to reach the youth

The above communication channels will be used in the implementation of communication activities emanating from this strategy.

#### 10. COMMUNICATION POLICY

Council adopted a Communication Policy for the Overberg District Municipality on 24 February 2014. The Communication Policy (CP) is the communication protocol, guiding institutional arrangements regarding internal and external communication. The CP primarily covers the division of responsibilities and general guidelines for communicating with various target groups. The CP also provides guidelines with regard to who can act as a spokesperson for the Municipality.

It would be the responsibility of the Communication Manager to identify and guide the spokesperson as to what is to be communicated, how it is to be communicated, and who the target audience would be. Communication platforms and how these are to be informed or guided are also to be identified.

## 11. COMMUNICATION ACTION PLAN

A Communication Action Plan (CAP) is the master plan for *how to do it*. The CAP implements the CS. It serves as the framework from which communication programmes and campaigns are developed, i.e. communication projects. Communication is not simply a matter of using the organised (mass-) media, however powerful they may be. Communication makes use of other formal and informal channels of communication, including inter-personal channels.

The CAP should contain objectives that are realistic, precise, measurable, and be expressed in a clear, simple, specific, easy-to-understand timetable. The Municipality is to ensure alignment of such objectives with Council's SGs, as captured in the IDP.

It would be the responsibility of the Communication Officer to decide which channels are appropriate for the intended audience, message and specific communication objective as outlined below:

- Behaviour / objective of communication  
What change in behaviour is required, what needs to be communicated
- Audience  
Who needs to be reached
- Messages  
What messages will be appropriate
- Channels  
Which channels of communication will be most effective in reaching the intended audience
- Evaluation  
How will the success/failure of the Communication Plan be measured

These elements are outlined in the 2025/2026 Action Plan of this Strategy which has been aligned with the 5<sup>th</sup> Generation Integrated Development Plan (IDP) for 2022/23 - 2026/27.

Planning ahead of time for these communication activities ensure that the required information and resources are identified and sufficient time is allocated to sourcing the necessary information, developing the communication products, and coordinating any related logistics.

It should be noted that it is important to integrate the gender approach at all levels of design, planning and implementation of a CAP activity. The concerns and effective participation of both sexes should always be considered, along with respect for the balance or equity of the sexes, and a rejection of any sexist stereotypes.

## 12. REVIEW OF STRATEGY

The Communication Strategy shall be reviewed annually to consider changes in legislation and trends in communication.