



2025-26 FY MBHASHE COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

THEME:

“Back to Basics by putting our people first and engaging with our communities, to build better and sustainable communities”

APPROVED BY:

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DATE: 19/06/2025

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DATE: 19/06/2025

1. INTRODUCTION

Communication is a strategic tool for any institution that provides the public with timely, accurate and clear information about its policies, procedures, programmes and services. Our democratic government is committed to the principle of Batho Pele (People must come first). The National Communication Strategy Framework (NCSF) promotes an informed citizenry for the creation of enabling environment within which better and sustainable communities can be built. The Integrated Development Plan (IDP) of Mbashe Local Municipality also promotes effective communication of the institution's business to its stakeholders by 2026. This strategy also promotes regular interaction with citizens at all times to reduce the level of frustration and anger among people who demand service delivery. When there is a delay, they should be informed.

The strategy framework as per its alignment to the District Development Model (DDM) calls for proactive, accelerated, heightened, and aligned integrated communication across the three spheres of government. The NCSF strategy alignment to the DDM further promotes two way interaction, education, raising awareness and understanding of the new district communication framework approach as per adoption at the national government. Additional to this, with the new DDM Communication Framework, the strategy will embrace an all-inclusive three-tier government developmental communication approach, with intentional focus on managing and communicating the key messages and content aligned thereto.

Therefore, the National Development Plan (NDP) emphasises on the need for a more inclusive, dynamic, diverse and equitable economy, which is able to bridge the economic gap that continues to create inequality in our communities. Therefore promotion access to information as enshrined on number of legislative framework should be fostered and fulfilled.

BACKGROUND

Developmental communication is one of the ways of communicating to local communities, as local government is the corner stone of service delivery and the sphere of government that is closest to communities. It is therefore critical that municipalities develop and sustain adequate communication structures that will give them an effective platform for engaging them in a proactive basis with citizens.

Mbashe Municipality (EC 121) a category C municipality falls within the Amathole District Municipality (ADM) and consists of 32 wards, 63 Councillors and 02 Traditional Leaders in

Council. The municipality is strategically allocated in the South Eastern part of the Eastern Cape Province, and is bound by the Qhora River in the south to Mncwasa River in the north along the Indian Ocean. Mbhashe occupies a strategic geographic position within the Amathole District municipality and covers approximately 3200 km² in extent (after the last national elections). It is estimated that the new additions of few villages from Intsika Yethu and Mnquma could be estimated to about 200 square kilometres of land. There are three main urban centres, namely Idutywa, Willowvale (Gatyana) and Elliotdale(Xhora). Idutywa is the administrative head centre of the municipality.

2. GUIDING FRAMEWORK

The local communication strategy will be reviewed by utilizing the Legislative guidelines outlined in the Constitution of South Africa:

- Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996 Section 32 gives a right to everyone to access any information held by state.
- Local Government: Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000, as amended in Chapter 4, which requires public participation of community members and stakeholders
- Promotion of Access to Information Act No.14 of 2000 which indicates how communities can access information. This strategy is also guided by the prescripts of the Local Government Communication System, the National Communication Strategy; the Back to Basics Programme, municipal Integrated Development Plan (IDP) and SALGA National Communications Conference Resolutions (May 2006)
- Section 75 of the Local Government Municipal Finance Management Act 56 of 2003 which stipulates the documents that must be placed published on the municipal website.

Why strategize for Communication?

A thousand voices speaking without a common message and single purpose will in the end just make an indistinct noise that few will hear. We communicate in a noisy world, competing for attention with voices that have objectives that are different and often opposing and we do so in a world made up of a vast array of interests and concerns, and a world in which everyday concerns weigh heavily on most people. Government considers communication to be a strategic element of service delivery.

3. COMMUNICATION OBJECTIVES

- To promote and preserve the corporate identity of Mbhashe LM.

- To encourage community participation within the Mbashe Local municipality to partake in government programmes.
- Promote understanding of Mbashe municipal policies and raise awareness of the achievements of municipality, future plans and programmes.
- Communicate IDP processes, Budget and Performance management system of the municipality.
- To strengthen and improve internal and external communication systems.
- To strengthen relations between Mbashe and its stakeholders (internal and external)
- To create and maintain sound relations with the media, community media in particular.
- To ensure maximum use of war rooms to bridge information gap.
- To communicate successes and challenges in service delivery.

4. INTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

Mbashe Local Municipality councillors and employees are the ambassadors of the local municipality and therefore they should be able to articulate all government programs, plans, achievements, challenges and policies. Internal Communication has improved as there are monthly and quarterly staff meetings as well as a calendar of events that is circulated weekly amongst staff. Introduction of intranet is also envisaged to bridge information gap.

5. EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

5.1. Community Environment

- Understanding community environment within the Mbashe Local Municipality is imperative so as to be conversant with current atmosphere and be able to structure communication in a more relevant manner. Environmental assessment is based on IDP and Budget Road Shows, door to door programmes, Environmental assessment reports, and Surveys, (GCIS), Presidential Hotline, Public and Media enquiries. Further assessment will be done through war rooms. Generally public mood has positive attitude about Mbashe Municipality, but they feel that service delivery is slow in terms of Roads infrastructure and electrification historical backlog, especially in Elliotdale.
- They have mixed feelings about the maintenance of provincial and municipal roads within Mbashe and general infrastructure development.
- lack of jobs and substance abuse contributes to crime and despondency about the future.

- Outcomes and achievements of government are not properly profiled, properly communicated and understood by communities due to the limited budget in Communications Unit.

6. Media

Media is segmented into three categories viz. National, Regional and Local, each of them has a different agenda.

a) Local Media (Mthatha Express, Isolezwe Lesixhosa, UCR FM and Vukani FM etc.)

Local media is more supportive of government programs but is not maximally used due to limited budget allocation. Under Mphashe jurisdiction there are three accessible local radio stations (Vukani FM, UCR FM and Engcobo FM) each covers a certain portion of the municipal area which therefore implies that, media slots should be secured on all three of the stations, respectively to ensure that all communities are covered.

b) Regional Media (Daily Dispatch)

Tends to set the agenda by reporting what they think is important as they fail to see the comprehensiveness of government programmes, instead of highlighting achievements of local government they only capitalize on challenges experienced.

Regional print media only publishes in English whilst the majority of communities reading the paper speak IsiXhosa.

b) National Media (SABC)

- They are not developmental in nature as they set the agenda on the message that they want to convey about local government and the revenue that they want to make. The national broadcaster SABC is selective in covering local government issues.
- They cover service delivery programmes when paid for.
- Their advantage is that they cover the entire Mphashe jurisdiction.

7. COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

Councillors and ward committees need to be empowered in terms of their roles as communication agents; regular training of these stakeholders on importance of communication could greatly benefit communities and the municipality.

8. MESSAGES AND THEMES

- Together we move South Africa forward.

- Together we move Mphashe Municipality forward
- Good governance and Accountability, Teamwork, Public Participation
- Making democracy work through community involvement.
- This is my government-be the eyes and Ears
- Your feedback is important to us –Talk to your Government through War rooms, IDP Budget, Facebook, Ward meetings

9. MESSENGERS

9.1. Primary Messengers

- **Executive Mayor:** is the principal communicator
- **Municipal Manager:** The Accounting Officer of the institution is the Information Officer in Terms of Promotion of Access to Information Act (PAIA) (Act 2 of 2000). He/she is responsible for any area of municipal administration including all media enquiries and any matter that related to the running of the municipality.
- **Communications Manager:** He/she is the official spokesperson as delegated by the Municipal Manager. He/she is a point of entry/exit for all public and media enquiries excluding requests for information in terms of the PAIA which prescribes that the Municipal Manager is the Information and Accounting Officer. He/she is responsible for coordination of media communication, media briefings, press conferences and media statements. The Official Spokesperson responds to all media enquiries subject to approval by Municipal Manager or designee.
- **Senior Managers on delegation by the Municipal Manager:** are responsible for all aspects of their service areas. Queries from journalists will be referred to HoDs/Managers for comment / clarification / information. All responses to media queries are coordinated by the Communications Manager and approved by Municipal Manager.
- **Council Speaker:** He/she is the Chairperson of council speaks on all the decisions, processes and rules of the legislature.
- **Executive Committee members ONLY** speak on delegation by the Honourable Executive Mayor
- **Ward Councillors:** ONLY speak in media through consultation and approval by the office of the Executive Mayor prior any media engagement regarding matters of the

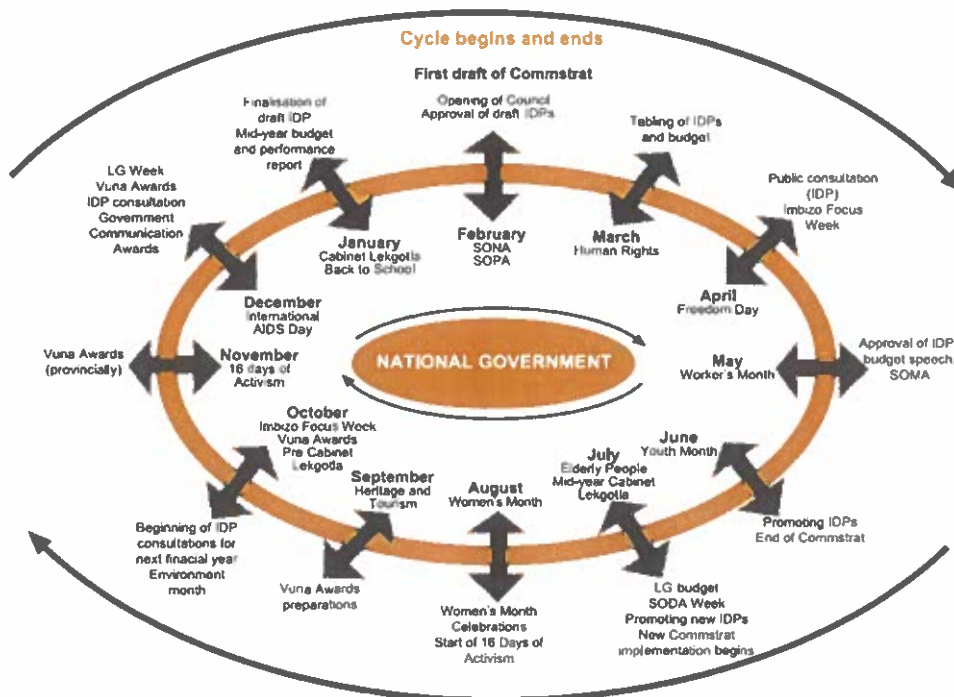
communication between government and citizens, partners and stakeholders thereby increasing the frequency and speed of engagement.

Social media includes platforms that can be used by the general public using highly accessible digital technologies such as Facebook, twitter, Blogs, Podcasts, wikis, micro-blogs, WhatsApp, and message boards. The following are some benefits to the municipality for using social media:

- Increasing government's access to its audiences
- Improving the accessibility of government communication;
- Allowing government to adjust or refocus communications quickly, where necessary;
- Improving the long-term cost effectiveness of government communication;
- Increasing the speed of constituent feedback and input;
- Rapid response to service delivery complaints/queries;
- Reaching specific audiences on specific issues;
- Reducing government's dependence on traditional media channels to communicate with constituents.

In terms of the Department of Communications (Government Communications and Information Systems, GCIS) has prescribed acceptable social media guidelines as a control for this exercise. All Social Media platforms will be used within prescripts of Mbhashe approved IT, Communications and Social media Policies.

22. COMMUNICATIONS CYCLE



23. STRUCTURES AND PROCESSES

The development of a coherent, coordinated and integrated Local Government Communication System, structures and processes needs to exist. These must respond to Communication challenges and needs of communities within Mbashe Local Municipality. This strategy will be tabled to Council for adoption, the Communications Manager will ensure the implementation of the strategy. This is a five- year Communication Strategy, with its Action Plan to be reviewed annually.

24. CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Municipality is aligning its events with the National calendar of events; as a result, each Month has key government campaigns.

MONTH	FOCUS AREA	EVENT
January	Education Month	Back to School Programmes
February	Policy pronouncements HIV and Aids	State of the Nation Address (SONA) State of the Provincial Address (SOPA) Provincial Budget Speech Condom Week
March	Human Rights Month Draft IDP/Budget	Human Rights Day Library Week National Water Week Tabling of draft IDP/Budget for the municipality
April	Freedom Month IDP/Budget Outreaches	Freedom Day IDP/Budget Community engagement – presentation for the community
May	Public Participation Adoption of IDP/Budget	Workers Day Open Council Day Adoption of IDP and budget
June	Youth Month Media Briefing	Youth Day Children's Protection Week
July	Mandela Month	National Arts Festival Mandela Day (67 Minutes)
August	Women's Month	Women's Day
September	Heritage Month	National Labour Week

	Situational analysis for IDP	Heritage Day IDP Outreach – Needs analysis (Sep –Nov period)
October	Social Development Month	Elderly Week World Mental Health.
November	16 Days of Activism	Children's Rights 16 Days of Activism International Day of Persons with disabilities
December	World AIDS Day	World AIDS Day

25. CONCLUSION

A communication action plan will be developed to implement the communication strategy and it will be reviewed in annual basis to reflect and improve on identified gaps.

26. COMMUNICATION ACTION PLAN ANNEXURE

FIVE- YEAR COMMUNICATION ACTION PLAN 2022/2027

Province: Eastern Cape

Communication Action Plan for Mbhashe Local Municipality 2022/2027

Responsible Communicator- Communications Manager

Communication Activity	Responsible person	Target Audience	Channel	Time Frame	Budget	Outcome
Stakeholder Engagement Plan (Internal)						
Staff engagement on policy pronouncements, Awareness sessions and progress on the implementation of Municipal Programme of Action.	Executive Mayor, Mayoral Committee, Chief Whip, Municipal Manager and Manager Corporate Services	Staff	Face to Face interaction Staff e-mails	On going	Nil	To have motivated staff.
Support on major Municipal Events (Music Festivals, Tenza Beach Festival, Makhanda Arts Festival Mbhashe Heritage, Human Rights Month and Africa Day)	Municipal Manager, Communications Unit, Developmental Planning- LED	Staff and community	Face to Face interactions	Annually	R	To profile "Brand Mbhashe"
Communication Activity	Responsible person	Target Audience	Channel	Time Frame	Budget	Outcome
Stakeholders Engagement Plan (Good Governance)						

Stakeholders Engagements: Traditional Leaders Business Sector Faith Based Organisations Rate Payers	Executive Mayor, MAYORAL COMMITTEE, Speaker, Chief Whip, MM and General Managers	External Stakeholders	Face to Face interactions	Bi-Annually		Communications of Government plans and Progress on the Implementation of Municipal Programme Of Action.
Operation Masiphathisane	Executive Mayor, Mayoral Committee, Speaker, Chief Whip, Ward Councillors, MM, General Managers, CDWs and Ward Committees	External Stakeholders and community	Face to Face interactions	Bi-Annually		Communications of Government plans and Progress on the Implementation of Municipal Programme Of Action.
Programmes for Designated groups (Youth, Women, Children, Elderly and People living with Disability), Religious Based Organisations, Moral regeneration movement	Executive Mayor, Mayoral Committee, Chief Whip, MM	External Stakeholders	Face to Face interactions	By June		Informed and participative communities about Government's programme of action

Media Engagement plan						
Communication Activity	Responsible person	Target Audience	Channel	Time Frame	Budget	Outcome
Structured media engagement sessions	Executive Mayor, Mayoral Committee, MM	Media	Face to Face interactions	Quarterly		Strengthening working relations

Structured radio programmes on Government achievements and service delivery progress	Communications Unit	Community	Electronic media	Quarterly		Profiling of Government programme of action.
Talk to your Portfolio Head Radio Programme	Mayoral Committee Members and Senior Managers	Community	Radio Slots	Bi-Annually		To encourage public participation and communicating government programmes
Mbhashe Hour Radio Programme	Mayoral Committee Members & Managers	Community	Radio Slots	Weekly		To encourage public participation and communicating government programmes
Media Tour	Executive Mayor, Mayoral Committee, Speaker and Chief Whip	Media Houses		Quarterly		To popularise service delivery initiatives and progress and its impact to communities.
Communication Activity	Responsible person	Target Audience	Channel	Time Frame	Budget	Outcome
Public Participation Communication Plan (Basic service delivery)						
Talk to your Executive Mayor	Executive Mayors and MM	Community	Radio Slots	Quarterly		To encourage public participation and communicating government programmes
Mayoral Committee Outreaches	Executive Mayor, Mayoral Committee, Speaker and Chief Whip	Community	Face to Face interactions	Quarterly		To encourage public participation and communicating government programmes



State of the Ward Address	Executive Mayor, Mayoral Committee, Speaker Chief Whip and Ward Councillors	Community	Face to Face interactions	Quarterly		To encourage public participation and communicating government programmes
State of the Municipality Address (Open Council Day)	Executive Mayor, Speaker, Chief Whip and Management	Community	Face to Face interactions, Live transmission, print, publications and website	Once a year		To encourage public participation and communicating government programmes
Ward community engagement	Executive Mayor, Mayoral Committee, Ward councillor, Speaker, Chief Whip, ADM, Sector Departments, Public Participation	Community	Face to Face interactions	Quarterly		Provide feedback to the community on service delivery
Executive Mayor / Mayoral Committee Outreaches	Executive Mayor, Mayoral Committee, Speaker and Chief Whip	Community	Face to Face interactions	Quarterly		To encourage public participation and communicating government programmes
Project launches / sod turning	Executive Mayor, Mayoral Committee, Chief Whip, Management and Communications Unit	Community	Face to face	As the need arise		Profiling government projects
Project handovers / adopt a project campaign	Executive Mayor, Mayoral Committee, Chief Whip, Speaker, Management and Communications Unit	Community	Face to face	Quarterly		Profiling government projects

Project Walkabouts	Executive Mayor, Mayoral Committee, Chief Whip, Speaker, Management and Communications Unit	Community	Face to face	As the need arise		Profiling government projects
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Communication Activity	Responsible person	Target Audience	Channel	Time Frame	Budget	Outcome
Development Communication Capacity Building Plan (Institutional capacity)						
Media Training / Public speaking	Communications Unit	All councillors	Workshop	Bi – annually		Well capacitated political principals on media management & public speaking
Protocol Training	Communications Unit	All councillors	Workshop	Annually		Well capacitated political principals on state protocol services
Training of SMMEs & Cooperatives on Financial, Business & Project Management	Local Economic Development Unit & Communications Unit	SMMEs & Cooperatives	Training workshop	3 times a year		Capacitate local businesses to manage their systems properly
Agricultural Support LED	Local Economic Development Unit & Communications Unit	Agricultural Farmers and Cooperatives	Information Days and Roadshows	Annually		To capacitate Farmers on food security and animal farming programs
Communication Research						
Conducting communication environmental assessment	Communications Unit and members of LCF	Community	Face to face interactions	on-going		Identification of hotspots and development of rapid response approach
Media Monitoring	Communications Unit	Media	Print and electronic media	Print and electronic media		Proper analysis on media coverage
New Media						
Social Media Monitoring	Communications Unit	New media platforms	Social media platforms	On-going		Proper analysis on social media platforms
Graphic design						
Product development for all platforms	Communications Unit					
Uploading products	Communications Unit					
Videography	Communications Unit					
Communication Activity	Responsible person	Target Audience	Channel	Time Frame	Budget	Outcome

LGSC						
Communication Action Plan reviews	Communications Unit and Municipal Manager	Municipality	Workshops	Annually		Development of a clear communication action plan
Coordination of Communication structures (Local Communicators' Forum (LCF), District Core team, Local Government Communicator's Forum (LGCF))	Communication Unit	Municipality	LCF and DCF meetings	Quarterly		Functional communication structures
Communication Assessment/Audit	DCF core team	Municipality	DCF meetings	Quarterly		Assessment of implementation of the LGSC

Government Publications						
Newspaper column	Communications Unit	Community	Print media	Twice per Quarter		Profiling Municipal and government programmes and interventions
Newsletters	Communication Unit	Community	Print	Quarterly		Profiling Municipal programmes and interventions
Ward based service delivery	Communications Unit	Community	Print	As the need arise		Profiling Government programmes
Service Delivery Booklet	Communications Unit	Community	Print	Within 5-year period		Profile progress on municipal programmes
Booklets/ brochures (Destination Marketing)	LED & Communication Unit	Community	Print	Annually		Profile and market the municipality as the investment of choice

Municipal Projects: Basic Services creating decent living conditions (Project Handovers, Launches)						
Communication Activity	Responsible person	Target Audience	Channel	Time Frame	Budget	Outcome
Electricity	Executive Mayor, Speaker, Chief Whip, Mayoral Committee, Councillors and Management	Community	Community engagements/ Imbizo	Quarterly		Direct interaction between government and communities
Human Settlements (Housing Projects)	Executive Mayor, Speaker, Chief Whip, Mayoral Committee, Councillors and Management	Community	Community engagements/ Imbizo	Quarterly		Direct interaction between government and communities
Waste Management, Environment, Animal and Stock Control	Executive Mayor, Speaker, Chief Whip, Mayoral Committee, Councillors and Management	Community	Awareness Campaign	Quarterly		Well informed communities about waste management issues

Roads Projects	Executive Mayor, Speaker, Chief Whip, Mayoral Committee, Councillors and Management	Community	Project visits and project handovers	Quarterly		Direct interaction between government and communities
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National Calendar Days (Older persons month, 16 days of activism, women's month, World Aids Day, June 16, Child Protection Week)	Awareness Campaigns Programs	Executive Mayor, Speaker, Chief Whip, Mayoral Committee ,	Roadshow, Information Days Community Media, Roadshows, Taxi Rank Activations Website	Communities , Business Sector and civil society partners.	Ongoing		
Elderly Programmes	Awareness Campaigns Programs	Executive Mayor, Councillors, Youth Councils, Traditional Councils, Civil Society, Business Sector.	Roadshow, Information Days Community Media, Roadshows, Taxi Rank Activations Website	Communities and civil society partners.	Ongoing		
Children's Awareness Programmes	Awareness Campaigns Programs	Executive Mayor, Speaker, Chief Whip, Mayoral Committee, Councillors, Youth Councils, Traditional Councils, Civil Society, Business Sector.	Roadshow, Information Days Community Media, Roadshows, Taxi Rank Activations Website	Communities , Civil Society Partners	Ongoing		
Disability and HIV Programmes	Awareness Campaigns Programs	Executive Mayor, Speaker, Chief Whip, Mayoral Committee , Councillors, Youth Councils, Traditional Councils, Traditional Healers, Community Health Workers,	Roadshow, Information Days Community Media, Roadshows, Taxi Rank Activations Website	Communities , Civil Society Partners	Ongoing		

		Civil Society, Business Sector.				
Gender Programmes (Men & Women)	Awareness Campaigns Programs	Mayor, Speaker, Chief Whip, Mayoral Committee, Councillors, Youth Councils, Traditional Councils, Traditional Healers, Community Health Workers, Civil Society, Business Sector.	Roadshow, Information Days Community Media, Roadshows, Taxi Rank Activations Website	Communities , Civil society Partners	Ongoing	