Government of Uganda Communication Strategy: An Overview

A presentation at the Retreat of Hon. Ministers
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3rd August 2021
Hotel Africana, Kampala

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Access to Information (ATI)

The need to access information

▶ It encourages participatory development-citizens contribute to the development process.

▶ Enables citizens to make informed decisions.

▶ Access to information strengthens democracy by ensuring an informed constituency.

▶ Etc.

Legal instruments on ATI

International

▶ Universal Declaration of Human Rights-Article 19

▶ African Charter on Human and People's Rights-Article 9

▶ Other treaties and instruments of which Uganda is signatory.

National

▶ Constitution of the Republic of Uganda 1995-Article 41

▶ Access to Information Act (ATIA) 2005; operationalised by the Access to Information Regulations 2011.

Understanding a communication strategy

▶ Gives direction of where we are now to where we want to move.

▶ It can be developed for a government, an organisation, programme or intervention.

▶ Developing a communication strategy starts with a situation analysis.

Government of Uganda Communication Strategy: Background

▶ Communication needs assessment (CNA) was conducted in 2009. It established among others;

▶ Poor information flow within and outside Government.

▶ Limited public knowledge on Government policies, programmes and initiatives.

▶ Slow response by Government to emerging issues

▶ Multiplicity of responsibility centres.

Background cont'd

- Government was more engaged in rebuttals and fire fighting resulting from negative media publicity, as opposed to proactive dissemination of information.
- Limited engagement of the public in the development process.
- The findings saw the need for the development of communication structures, and a functional accountability mechanism.

What it is

- A framework for effective communication across Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs), and Local Governments (LGs) aimed at advancing socio-economic transformation.
- Approved by Cabinet in May 2012.
- Launched by the Rt. Hon. Prime Minister of the Republic of Uganda in June 2013.

Purpose

- Proactive communication within and outside Government.
- A coordinated communication approach.
- Establishment of structures within Government to communicate its policies and programmes in a strategic and effective way.
- Engage citizens in national development.

Strategic objectives

- To bring order, discipline and harmony in the Government communication function.
- To meet the information needs of the Nation.
- To promote a positive image of the Government and the Country at large within and internationally.

Institutional Communication Structures

- Ministry of ICT & National Guidance (Coordination Point)
- The strategy establishes communication units in all MDAs and LGs at the level of: Principal Communication Officer (PCO), Senior Communication Officer (SCO), Communication Officer (CO) .
- This structure has been mainstreamed into the Uganda public service staff structure.
- The communications units are to provide communication services to all the departments of the MDAs and LGs.

Resources and furnishing of the Communication Units

▶The strategy proposes allocation of at least 8% of the funds of all Government projects and programmes to publicity, information dissemination and advocacy.

Integration of communication into the policy development process

▶ The strategy establishes a Cabinet policy submission process requiring all Government policies, programmes and projects to integrate a communication strategy that will guide the dissemination of information to the public and other stakeholders.

▶ Emphasizes that communication should be embedded into policy formulation and implementation and not merely added as an afterthought.

Issues management

▶ Media monitoring

▶ Assessing issues emerging from the media landscape to guide message development.

▶ Deal with issues as they occur other than reacting to symptoms of the problem (proactive approach).

Crisis management

- ▶ To educate, restore confidence, guide and be accountable to stakeholders and the general public during a disaster/crisis.
- ▶ Government stays in control of the situation, allays fears of the public and works towards resolving the problem.
- ▶ MoICT&NG to develop a crisis management plan in consultation with key stakeholders.

Key priority areas

- ▶ Priorities are derived from the National Development Plans and other policy documents. Areas include among others;
- ▶ Economic management-private sector investment, Infrastructure;
- ▶ Production, competitiveness and enhancing income.
- ▶ Good governance ,health, education, etc.;

Key priority areas cont'd

- ▶ Security, conflict resolution and disaster management;
- ▶ Good governance-democracy, human rights;
- ▶ Human development –health, education, WATSAN;
- ▶ Social development sector-social protection, national values, etc.

What is expected of MDAs/LGs

MDAs/LGs are expected to among others;
- ▶ Establish Communication Units .
- ▶ Develop communication strategies in line with the National Strategy.
- ▶ Provide adequate financial, human and logistical support for effective delivery of the communication function.
- ▶ Maintain a website and intranet & social media platforms.
- ▶ Maintain an internal newsletter .

What is expected of MDAs/LGs

► Inform the Ministry of ICT & National Guidance of Access to Information requests and release of information.

► Provide recordings of their activities both soft and hard copies to Ministry of ICT & National Guidance for documenting, publicizing and archiving.

What is expected of MDAs/LGs

► Establish local content resource centres, data banks and archives access with clear platforms and sharable channels as coordinated by MoICT&NG.

Progress of implementation of the Strategy

▶ Streamlining of the communication sector by Government.

▶ Approval of the communication cadre under supervision of the Ministry of ICT & National Guidance (February 2021).

Monitoring & Evaluation

▶ A performance measurement framework (PMF) was developed with focus on consistency of MDAs' communication strategies with the National Strategy. Some of the indicators include:

▶ %age of MDAs/LGs with communication strategies.

▶ %age of MDAs/LGs with communication strategies consistent with the overall national strategy.

Monitoring & Evaluation cont'd

▶ %age of budget allocated to the communication function by the MDA/LG.

▶ %age of money budgeted which is utilised on communications function.

▶ The strategy is to be reviewed periodically to keep it relevant to the communication needs of Government and the public.

▶ *It is currently undergoing a review process*; *the first of its kind*.

Status of Communication at the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Cooperatives

▶ No communication strategy.

▶ Communication unit (Public Relations & IT) in place.

MTIC communication channels/tools

▶ Conventional media, i.e. print, broadcast (articles, media briefings, advertorials, media interviews, press releases, media coverage of events/field visits, etc.)

▶ Meetings/stakeholder engagements

MTIC Access to Information Channels/Tools

- ▶ Memos
- ▶ Notice boards
- ▶ Letters
- ▶ Emails
- ▶ Ministry Website
- ▶ Social media platforms
- ▶ Trade Information Portal
- ▶ Respective offices/official telephone lines/toll free lines

Recommendations

- ▶ Develop an integrated communication strategy for the Ministry.
- ▶ Ensure a fully constituted Communication Unit to effectively handle the vast communication needs of the population.

Conclusion

▶ A well designed communication strategy is essential for effective communication because it gives clear direction for attainment of respective MDAs/LGs visions and the national vision.

▶ Communication audit can only be undertaken on a well planned strategy , which will further inform decision making and guide the development process.

The End!

Thank you!