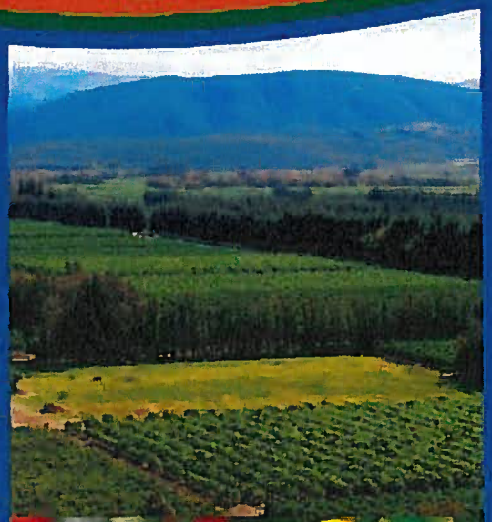
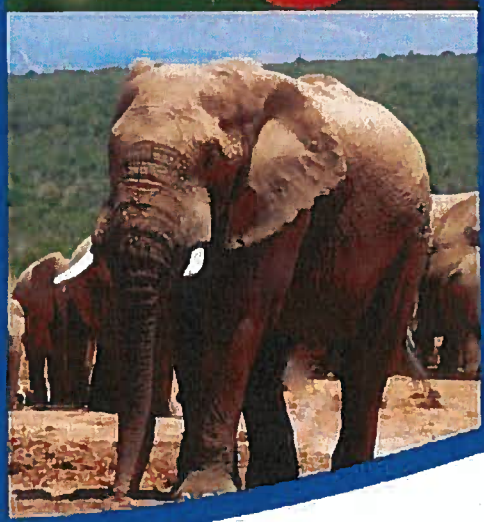
SUNDAYS RIVER VALLEY MUNICIPALITY





COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

TEL: 042 230 7700
FAX: 042 230 1799
WWW.SRVM.GOV.ZA
23 MIDDLE STREET | KIRKWOOD

HOME OF ADDO ELEPHANT PARK

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1. BACKGROUND

Sunday's River Valley Local Municipality is one of the seven municipalities in the Sarah Baartman District. It is a category B municipality with a collective executive system combined with a ward participatory system established in terms of the Local Government Municipal Structures Act 117.

The municipality was established through the amalgamation of the erstwhile municipal towns of; Addo, Kirkwood, and Paterson with many urban settlements and villages around these towns among others are; Enon - Bersheba, with Sunland, Zuney and Kinkelbos as smaller settlements.

It is approximately 50km from Coega Industrial Zone in Nelson Mandela Bay Metro. The municipality boasts its ecotourism and agricultural potential. The Addo Elephant National Park and its citrus production are two important economic drivers in the Sundays River Valley Municipality. The valley is characterized by harsh climate conditions, with summer temperatures rising in excess of 40°C.

According to Census 2011, the population of SRVM was approximately 54 503 people of whom 72% are Black African, 21% Coloured and 6% White. Between the years of 1996 and 2001, the population showed a slight decrease of 0.29% (127 of the population).

2. INTRODUCTION

Local Municipalities are the face of service delivery and the closest sphere of government to communities and because of this; municipalities have a responsibility to provide communication functions such as media liaison, marketing, advertising, branding and provide intensive and unmediated communication.

Municipalities have an obligation to provide the public with open access to information about policies, programmes, services and initiatives. For us as government to enhance democracy and promote better lives for citizens; it is very important that the communication function is seen as an integral element of governance and service delivery.

SRVM as a local government institution needs to effectively communicate both internally and externally. The communication strategy will deliver effective communication to ensure that the municipality manages its communication in a planned manner. This strategy will be a guide will provide strategic communication of key priorities of the municipality as contained in the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) and so as the achievement of the municipality. This strategy will be also be linked with the 5-year electoral cycle of the municipality (2016- 2021)

This document will provide proper alignment of the municipality's communication with the national communication framework, provincial communication framework and district communication strategy.

3. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The Sundays River Valley Municipality Communication Strategy is guided by various applicable legislation which amongst others, include the:

- **Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, Chapter 10. Section (195) (c) (e),(f),(g)** which compels public service to ensure that 'People's needs are responded to and public is encouraged to participate in policy making; promotes 'Public administration that is accountable; ensuring that 'Transparency is fostered by providing the public with timely, accessible and accurate information and Chapter 2 (Bill of rights) which gives a right to all citizens to access any information held by the state;
- **Section 18 and 21 of Municipal Systems Act, Act 32 of 2000**, stipulates that;
    a) A municipality must communicate to its community information concerning available mechanisms, processes and procedures to encourage and facilitate community participation and so as municipal governance, management and development.
    b) Section 21 states that when anything must be notified by a municipality through the media to the local community in terms of this Act or any other applicable legislation it must be done through a local newspaper or radio and must be in the official language determined by council.

- **The Municipal Finance Management Act 56 of 2003** as amended regulate the process for community consultation in respect of the annual budget and its publication documents that should be listed on the municipality's website, as well as making public the annual report, inviting public comments on the annual report and inviting community members and the Auditor-General, to Council meetings when the annual report is to be tabled.

- **The Promotion of Access to Information Act 2 of 2000**, which gives effect to the constitutional right of access to any information held by state and any information held by another person and that is required for the exercise or protection of any rights

The strategy is also guided by the prescripts of the ***National Communication Strategy***, the ***Local Government Communication System and Integrated Development Plan (IDP).***

4. CONTEXT AND SCOPE OF THE STRATEGY

4.1. Mandate

Sundays River Valley municipality takes its legislative mandate from the provisions of Section 152 of the South African Constitution which is as follows;

- ✓ To give priority to the basic needs of the local community
- ✓ To promote the development of the local community
- ✓ To ensure that all members of the local community have access to the minimum level of basic municipal services and to
- ✓ Ensure sustainability of services, municipality and settlements.

4.2. Period of the strategy

This document is valid for a period of 5 years and must be reviewed annually to ensure that it speaks to the direct needs of the people.

4.3. Vision

A people centred municipality providing effective and efficient services to communities.

4.4. Mission

To deliver effective, efficient services in an accountable and transparent manner and to create an inclusive, safe, sustainable socio-economic environment for improved quality of life

4.5. Importance of the communication to be central in key decisions

Key priorities of the municipality that need to be communicated as stipulated in the IDP include;

- ✓ Provision of infrastructure and basic services.
- ✓ Local economic development
- ✓ Community and social services
- ✓ Institutional transformation and organizational development
- ✓ Good governance and public participation
- ✓ Financial viability and management

5. COMMUNICATION ENVIRONMENT

Communication strategy and communication plan must consider the environment in which the communication takes place. It is therefore important to look at some of the issues so that appropriate communication channels of communication processes, procedures and mechanisms can be put in place.

5.1. Internal Environment:

Sundays River Valley Municipality councillors and employees are the ambassadors of local government and therefore should eloquently articulate government policies, programs, plans, achievements, and challenges. There is still a lot to be done including improving the following;

- Cascading of information for rapid response seems to be a challenge and this affects efficient and effective delivery of services especially for issues that need immediate attention such as infrastructure development, sewerage or illegal connection of electricity.
- There is a lack of coherence within the municipality
- Lack of communication of council resolutions

5.2. External Environment

- There is generally poor confidence in the ability of the municipality to meet the needs of the communities
- People have a limited understanding of the difference in the roles of municipality and other spheres of government.
- Information days do not involve other sector departments.

5.3. Media environment

There is limited media coverage in the area, this is because there are no media houses in this region. Media relations still need to be strengthened as there was no communication personnel for a long time. SRVM residents listen mostly to Umhlobo Wenene FM (national) and KQ FM and we are utilizing these two platforms to communicate.

6. OBJECTIVES

- To aggressively communicate municipal programme of action as contained in the IDP.
- To improve the brand re-positioning of the municipality
- Framing internal communication system
- To enhance co-ordination of communication activities among the three spheres of government.
- To enhance Intergovernmental Relations and integrate programmes and projects within the three spheres of government. To align communication with the Integrated Development Plan in terms of the cycle for local government. To communicate municipality roles and functions.
- To strengthen and improve an effective internal and external communication system
- To strengthen and sustain media relations and communicate proactively with the media.
- To encourage involvement of communities and community organizations in matters of government/ municipality.

7. COMMUNICATION CHALLENGES

The following challenges need to be addressed during the implementation of this communication strategy and subsequent plans and programs to ensure that the targeted audiences are effectively reached:

- ❖ Limited funds for communication
- ❖ Strategic importance of communication is sometimes overlooked.
- ❖ Overcoming negative perceptions about performance of the municipality.
- ❖ Convincing communities that local government is everyone's business.
- ❖ Improving inter-departmental Communications
- ❖ Improve on customer relations by managing expectations on what people know the municipality is capable of and its limitations
- ❖ Reaching all population groups
- ❖ There is often Lack of integration of programmes and projects within our units or directorates.

8. CRISIS COMMUNICATION

A crisis is any situation that threatens the integrity or reputation and the ability to deliver better services in a safe way to communities. These types of situations usually bring on to the municipality negative media attention which would lead to negative perception from both internal staff and the public. Effective communication management before, during and after a crisis is imperative to:

- ❖ Prevent injury or loss of life.
- ❖ Help limit damage to the municipal property.
- ❖ Maintain order and stability,
- ❖ Limit or avoid inconvenience to other parties,
- ❖ Deal with barriers to communication, and
- ❖ Help maintain or restore the public's confidence in government to handle the situation and deliver quality and sustainable services.

9. KEY MESSAGE

- ❖ *Together we provide effective and efficient services.*

10. MESSENGERS

- **Primary Messengers: Mayor** - Key person who must communicate all aspects of Council Policies and Programmes
- **Speaker-** For all comments relating to Council rules of order and public participation.
- **Municipal Manager-** Any area of municipal administration, all media enquiries unless delegated otherwise, any matter that relates to the running of the municipality.

  Directors - on all aspects of their service areas. Queries from journalists will be referred to Directors / Managers for comment / clarification / information. All comments to the media are approved by Municipal Manager
- **Communications officer**- is the point of entry / exit for all municipal communication to / with the outside world, she responsible for coordination of media communication, media conferences, media statements. She responds to media enquiries subject to approval by Municipal manager as per the Communication and Media Policy.
- **Secondary Messengers:** Councillors, CDWs, war room coordinators, head of departments, project managers, steering committees, community leaders, etc.

10.1. Targeted groups

It is important to identify various groups for our communication focus and relevance;

10.1.1. Internal

- ✓ Employees
- ✓ Councillors
- ✓ Organized labour

10.1.2. External

- ✓ Media
- ✓ Faith based organisations
- ✓ Farmers' associations
- ✓ Sector government departments
- ✓ Civil Society organisations
- ✓ General public
- ✓ Business organisations,
- ✓ Youth organisations

11. CHANNELS

10.2.1 Internal

- ✓ Emails
- ✓ Noticeboards
- ✓ Internal newsflash
- ✓ Staff meetings

10.2.2. External

- ✓ Media
- ✓ Social media
- ✓ Website
- ✓ Radio (Umhlobo Wenene, Nkqubela FM and Algoa)
- ✓ External newsletter

10.2.3. Social Media

- ✓ Facebook,
- ✓ Twitter

The Communications Unit has developed a Social Media Policy which guides how employees of SRVM should interact on the social media space. All employees and councillors are encouraged to create social media pages.

10.2. Branding

Municipal branding must be used cautiously. Any product that is branded must be approved by the Communications Unit to avoid incorrect representation. These products include; clothing items, promotional items, documents etc.

10. STRUCTURE AND PROCESS PLAN

Steps to the approval of the communication strategy

- ✓ Senior Management
- ✓ Communication workshop for senior management and councillors
- ✓ Table it to council

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

For this document to be effectively implemented there should be mechanisms for measuring its effectiveness and impact of what it strives to achieve.

The key measure would be the annual reporting on its implementation and the annual review of the strategy there of.

Version	**1**
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Developed by	**Communication Officer**
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Approved by Council	**22 September 2021**
Signature Speaker	**S H Rune**