

# HOW GOVERNMENT INTERFACES WITH THE MEDIA:

PROTOCOLS AND PROCEDURES

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# INTRODUCTION

The Name of the Ministry:

THE MINISTRY OF THE INFORMATION AND  
COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY

It was created in April 2016

# INTRODUCTION

The Ministry has two arms:

- THE COMMUNICATIONS ARM
- THE TECHNOLOGY(IES) ARM

# INTRODUCTION

- The Communication functions of the Ministry are carried out by the DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION
- The Technology functions of the Ministry are carried out by the DEPARTMENT OF E-GOVERNMENT

# FUNCTIONS

The DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION has two main functions:

- **Providing strategic leadership for Government Communication**
- **Coordination of a Government Communication system**

# FUNCTIONS

## STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP FOR GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATION

means:

- All Government Communication should speak to Government strategic goals
- The Ministry of Information should see to it that in terms of Communication the strategic goals are safeguarded at all times

# FUNCTIONS

COORDINATING A GOVERNMENT  
COMMUNICATION SYSTEM means

- Government should communicate in a systematic way
- The Ministry should ensure that in terms of Communication the system of Communication is always adhered to



# TOOLS

To perform the two main functions the Department is supported by the following policies:

- **Communication policy of 1998**
- **ICT policy of 2013**
- **Malawi Digital Broadcasting Policy of 2013**
- **Access to Information policy of 2014**
- **Malawi Growth and Development Strategy II**

# TOOLS

To perform the two main functions the Department is supported by tools:

- **The Central Office of Information,**
- **Government Information Communication Unit,**
- **Malawi Government online services,**
- **MANA website,**
- **Publications (Magazines, newspapers)**
- **Audio-visual services**
- **Placement of Public Relations Officers in ministries and parastatal organisations.**

# GAPS

The **COMMUNICATION POLICY** of 1998:

- **Outlines the national policy for the development of the country's Communications Sector, covering broadcasting (both radio and television), telecommunications and postal services.**
- **Focuses on the need to restructure existing institutions in the sector in order to meet challenges that lie ahead.**
- **Establishes an independent regulatory authority to regulate telecommunications, posts, broadcasting and the radio frequency spectrum.**

# GAPS

## **THE ICT POLICY of 2013:**

This ICT Policy covers Information Technology (IT), Telecommunications, Broadcasting and Postal services.

The ICT Policy aims at guiding:

- **The provision of ICT services in the rural areas and to the vulnerable groups;**
- **The investment in priority ICT areas;**
- **The Public Sector in the planning for the national development and utilization of ICT; and**
- **The formulation of an appropriate regulatory and legal framework aimed at safeguarding fundamental human rights, protecting privacy, promoting electronic services, and promoting competition in the ICT sector.**

# GAPS

## **The MALAWI DIGITAL BROADCASTING POLICY**

The objectives of the Policy are:

- **To create an enabling environment for smooth transition from analogue to digital broadcasting;**
- **To ensure equitable and quality universal broadcasting services to the public;**
- **To ensure efficient use of spectrum;**

# GAPS

## **THE ACCESS TO INFORMATION POLICY**

The objectives of the Policy are:

- **To facilitate provision of public information by Government and other institutions;**
- **To ensure statutory and regulatory compliance of the relevant sections of the Constitution; and**
- **To provide a framework for developing the Access to Information Legislation.**

# GAPS

## **The Malawi Growth and Development Strategy II**

- Highlights the role of the ICT under Theme 4 as vital in the enhancement of “production, transportation and provision of information to the general public for human development as well as for making informed decisions”; and
- Recognises Media and Communication as an important tool in promoting popular participation in decision making as well as in developmental processes.

# POLICY GAPS

- **No specific policy on Communication**
- **No specific media policy**

*Information policies deal more with the hardware and software of a society's 'info structure', related to the implications of the ICTs and the 'information highway' for the processing of 'factual' material and its storage and transmission as knowledge.*

*Communication is more social process oriented, concerned with interactions among individuals and groups and also the development and use of mass media. Obviously the two concepts intersect massively, and from a policy standpoint, they need to be taken together.*



# CONSEQUENCES

Consequently, there are no clear guidelines to facilitate:

- **Setting Communication goals**
- **Setting Communication structure**
- **Defining target audiences**
- **Coordination**

# IMPACT

## **Information reach**

Both methods of communication and targeted audiences are not defined. Consequently, it is possible that information does not reach people who do not use some of methods of communication.

## **Uniformity of information**

Different people sometimes give different, conflicting messages on important issues. These messages cause confusion and distrust among the end users.

# IMPACT

## **Flow of information**

Information may not get to the right people when and where they need it. Without vital information at the right time and in the right place, the decision-making process is hampered. This delay impacts negatively on outcomes.

## **Sharing of information**

In some cases, critical information is not shared. This oversight hampers feedback at all the levels.

# IMPACT

## **Clarity of expectations are not clear**

The existing structures that are designed to establish effective information sharing and ownership have not yet produced the desired impact with respect to harmonizing expectations. The structures have not been utilized optimally to benefit users.

# IMPACT

## **Sequencing and systematizing of information**

- Creates the problem of what pattern and content of communication should be created, and what information should be directed to place/audience.
- Leads to failure to determine the limits to the amount and nature of information that can be received, processed and effectively handled by a particular audience.
- This results in unduly large amounts of information being channeled to an audience at once, resulting in information overload.

# IMPACT

## **Uptake of communication technologies**

- Use of different communication technologies such as data-based reporting systems, e-mail, voice mail, intranet, bulletin boards, websites, and video conferencing are not leveraged.

# SOLUTIONS

Currently work is in progress to:

- **Review the existing policies and close existing gaps**
- **Develop a Communication plan**
- **Develop a Communication strategy**

# EXPECTED OUTCOMES

The Communication Policy will be an instrument for supporting the systematic planning and development and use of a Government communication system, and its resources and possibilities, and for ensuring that they function efficiently in enhancing national development.



# EXPECTED OUTCOMES

The Communication Plan and Communication strategy will be instruments for:

- **Defined communication priorities**
- **Evidence based communication interventions**
- **Monitoring and evaluation mechanism**
- **Financing mechanisms**
- **Coordination**
- **Pro-activity**
- **etc**

THANK YOU