



**MASIBAMBANE
WATER SERVICES SECTOR
SUPPORT PROGRAMME**

**CIVIL SOCIETY ADVOCACY
AND COMMUNICATION
STRATEGY—
ACTION AND
IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

December 2005 –FINAL DRAFT

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Civil Society Advocacy and Communication Strategy of the Masibambane Water Services Sector Support Programme is aimed at **creating meaningful dialogue and advocacy as well as informing all sector stakeholders about the necessity for and value of civil society participation, thereby promoting the meaningful involvement of civil society in the water services sector.**

As defined in the Civil Society Strategy of November 2004, “**Civil Society**”, in the context of the water services sector, is comprised of NGOs and CBOs, which are defined as follows:

Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) are organisations within civil society that are autonomous from government and do not operate for profit. As with civil society, NGOs are not homogenous. They range from charity organisations, those who are concerned with more narrow interests, to those who are concerned with the development process in our country.

This Strategy focuses on NGOs that work in the field of development and that work with people to help them improve their social and economic situation and prospects, and who display the following key characteristics:

- Not for profit / Not self-serving
- Do not have shareholders and whose Board of Directors is a body with purely governance functions
- Independent
- Value-based
- Support government's service delivery and social development programmes
- Promote active community participation in development
- Are registered as Non Profit Organisations with the Department of Social Development.

A community-based organisation (CBO) is a not-for-profit organisation within a specific community, with community representatives, that provides a service to that community with the community's mandate or is representing the overall interests of the community. The office bearers or staff of a CBO are generally people who live in the community and were elected or appointed by the community or sections of the community, to perform certain functions.

This Strategy focuses on CBOs that aim to represent and organise communities to engage and/or work with municipalities in water and sanitation related projects, activities and issues, from planning to operating and maintaining facilities.

Ward Committees are not CBOs, although they have CBO representatives serving on them. They are official municipal structures and are thus not independent as other organisations of civil society are.

Government policy in support of a strong civil society, is based on the following principles

- a. It is politically desirable to encourage a strong civil society and CBOs in particular, in order to strengthen our democracy.
- b. The active involvement of empowered communities and CBOs is necessary to ensure appropriate and sustainable service delivery and other development interventions.
- c. Due to their value-based approach and experience in working with poor communities, NGOs are well suited to assisting government to give effect to the first two principles, above. NGOs are also suited to playing an independent role in research, monitoring and evaluation.

Based on a number of analyses, including the mid-term and final evaluations of the first phase of the Masibambane programme, government and civil society agree that the current level of involvement of civil society in the sector is not at the desired level. The causes of this situation include:

- i. The low level of awareness and knowledge of water and sanitation planning and delivery frameworks amongst communities and CBOs, and the limited support for community based engagement with these.
- ii. Diminishing role of CBOs in water and sanitation delivery programmes, due to municipalities' emphasis on fast-track, top-down delivery of infrastructure, at the expense of sustainability and community buy-in.
- iii. The limited number of NGOs engaged with policy formulation, monitoring and service delivery in the water and sanitation sector.
- iv. The limited capacity of existing NGOs actively engaged in the water and sanitation sector.
- v. The lack of awareness of CBO and NGO services amongst government departments and local municipalities.
- vi. The poor perception of NGO and CBO services by government departments and municipalities.
- vii. The barriers to entry to service provision for CBOs and NGOs due to excessively cumbersome and demanding contractual procedures by local municipalities.
- viii. The weak level of national and provincial co-ordination between and among civil society organisations and networks.

This Advocacy and Communication Strategy as part of the Civil Society Strategy 2004 aims to address some of the above problems and constraints, and to help achieve the following results, as set out in the Civil Society Strategy:

- (i) **Communications programme:** Meaningful dialogue established with local government through implementation of concerted, well resourced communications programme, with high level political support, to inform all sector stakeholders about the necessity for and value of civil society participation, and how it can be achieved, to include structured, ongoing engagement between representative of civil society and all three spheres of government;
- (ii) **Community involvement:** Increased numbers and capacity of CBOs engaged with municipalities in all stages of water and sanitation programmes, thereby increasing the efficacy and sustainability of these programmes, as well as providing services at community level in the operation and maintenance of water schemes, either as Water Service Providers, or contracted by them;
- (iii) **NGO capacity building:** Enhanced technical and management ability of existing NGOs providing water and sanitation delivery, monitoring and policy services;
- (iv) **Contracting of NGOs:** Increased numbers of NGOs contracted by municipalities to deliver water services, and by provincial and national departments to carry out monitoring, policy roll-out and research activities;
- (v) **Non-service delivery role of civil society:** NGOs and CBOs participating in the programme, with independent funding, in areas other than service delivery, i.e. in their monitoring, advocacy and awareness raising role.

- (vi) **Civil society co-ordination:** Increased coordination and networking between NGO and CBO participants in the Masibambane Programme, and structured in such a way as to continue beyond the life span of the programme.

The Communications Strategy will reflect the priorities highlighted by the following;

- The Civil Society Strategy 2004
- The Draft Report of the 2005 Case Study Conference
- The Draft Stakeholder Survey 2005

1. INTRODUCTION

This document deals with an Advocacy and Communication strategy. A strategy is the ongoing participatory process of defining goals, assessing the present situation and defining and executing steps to attain the goals. Through this document we propose an outline for an Advocacy and Communication Strategy for the MCSSP (Masibambane Civil Society Support Programme). This means that in this document the goals are about advocacy and communication in **all its different aspects**, about the primary processes and the goals of the MCSSP, the image building of the MCSSP, about sending out messages and about responding to messages from the outside.

Consultation with stakeholders and Steering Committee members indicated that it is high time that the MCSSP make its voice heard. This calls for an advocacy strategy that generates awareness and dialogue and influences national development actions. The strategy covers activities such as outreach, advocacy, communication, networking and monitoring of results. It also requires solid commitment from all relevant parties involved.

Without a doubt, an advocacy and communication campaign strategy for the support of the MCSSP is being implemented almost two years late. This should therefore sensitize all stakeholders at all levels on the urgency of the assignment. Advocacy and communication is everybody's business in the MCSSP. As such, all stakeholders should contribute to it. The strategy of mainstreaming advocacy and communication within the MCSSP and strengthening capacities at national and regional level is intended to enable the MCSSP to undertake effective advocacy initiatives and meaningful dialogue and communication as part of their ongoing work.

Many stakeholders are involved in this change process, with many very different interests and agendas. These stakeholders include law makers, national, provincial and local government, donors, government officials and development organisations, politicians, networks and other NGO's, etc. Stakeholder surveys and networking actions have shown that we currently face different perceptions of reality that raise challenges. Through these different perceptions, many misunderstandings may occur. A constant communication effort is therefore needed. This communication has to be based on a well defined, two way communication strategy, aimed at advocating the MCSSP's position and work

Advocacy and IEC (Information education and communication) are techniques used to attempt to change the perceptions and behaviour of individuals and groups. These techniques reinforce each other and due to the challenges, changes and perceptions the MCSSP is currently facing, this strategy can not just focus on one of these elements.

There is often confusion between advocacy and information, education and communication (IEC) and community mobilisation. This is because IEC and community mobilisation can also involve influencing, persuading and mobilising people into action – which are all key advocacy 'words'. This strategy will look at advocacy and all related concepts in its aim to promote meaningful dialogue, advocacy and raising the profile and accountability of civil society as partners in development.

1.1 Defining Advocacy and Related Concepts

Advocacy is a process of communication which is different from mere communicating, dissemination of information and education (IEC). Advocacy goes beyond this and first seeks support, commitment and recognition from policy and decision-makers and the general public about a problem. Advocacy provides solutions and support in tackling issues.

Advocacy has been defined or conceived differently by different people and organizations. But in essence, advocacy is based on the communication model. Typically, advocacy communication emanates from concerned individuals or interest groups who are looking to change legislation, policy provisions, resource allocation, public commitment and increased media attention to an issue or a cause – it targets stake-holders (leaders and decision makers) who are in a position to bring about the desired action. In this strategy, advocacy is being defined as: ***“the act or process of convincing leaders and decision makers to use their powers and influence to support an issue or cause by the making or changing of a law, policy or programme and in the allocation of resources”.***

Advocacy is a long and sustained process. It deals with behaviour change (Information, Education and Communication –IEC) of target audiences. Its aims to support a cause or an issue; to promote or reinforce change in policy, legislation or programme, and to create a supportive environment and mobilize resources

Advocacy is becoming crucial as demand for good-quality services rises and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and country targets are drawing nearer.

For advocacy to be effective, one need to master the basic skills in issue-identification, setting goals and objectives, communication, planning, lobbying and networking. This strategy will address all of these.

Other definitions of advocacy:

Advocacy is working with other people and organizations to make a difference.

Advocacy is putting a problem on the agenda, providing a solution to that

The words "lobby" and "advocacy" are commonly used interchangeably and people sometimes confuse the words "lobbying" and "advocacy." However, lobbying is a more narrowly defined activity than advocacy. The legal definition of lobbying usually involves attempting to influence legislation. Advocacy covers a much broader range of activities which might, or might not, include lobbying. One way of differentiating between the two terms is to understand that lobbying always involves advocacy but advocacy does not necessarily involve

lobbying.

The original meaning of "lobbying" is focused on influencing the formal political process, and stands for the theory and practice of persuading one or more legislators by approaching them in the "lobby" of a parliament. "Advocacy" in the way we have defined it is a broader notion which puts more emphasis on the representative and promotional aspects of what usually is a series of activities, which very well may include but is not necessarily limited to lobbying.

There are different ways of lobbying ranging from the writing of letters to key target audiences expressing the issue or having face to face meetings to discuss the issue to a large scale campaign involving multiple groups and spokespersons using various media channels including public rallies.

This brings us to **networking**. A sample definition of an advocacy network is “a group of individuals and/or organizations working together with a common goal of achieving changes in policies, laws or programmes for a particular advocacy issue”.

There are clearly benefits and challenges of working as a network. Some of the benefits are more credibility and visibility due to numbers, sharing of resources allows for greater cost-effectiveness, complementing of skills, expertise and experiences, and a network represents a larger constituency. Some of the challenges of an advocacy network could be the agenda of one member dominating the others, poor coordination, conflicts among members, extra

meetings, etc. It is important to consider carefully the advantages and disadvantages of a network before making a decision to join it.

As with lobbying, there is often confusion between advocacy **and information, education and communication (IEC)** and community mobilisation. This is because IEC and community mobilisation can also involve influencing, persuading and mobilising people into action – which, as stated previously, are all key advocacy ‘words’.

The terms "information", "education" and "communication" are defined below.

Information includes the generation and dissemination of general and technical information, facts and issues, to create awareness among policy makers, administrators, academics and the general public, of important developments in the population situation and policies of a country. It may involve public information activities to advocate necessary changes in policies, leadership and resource allocation.

Communication is a planned process aimed at motivating people to adopt new attitudes or behavior, or to utilize existing services. It is based on people's concerns, perceived needs, beliefs and current practices; it promotes dialogue (also called "two-way communication"), feedback and increased understanding among various actors. It is thus an integral component of all services and outreach activities. This process is most effective when it involves a strategic combination of media, and interpersonal (or "face-to-face") communication supported by print media and other audio-visual aids.

Education refers to the process of facilitating learning, to enable audiences to make rational and informed decisions, and to influence their behavior over the long term. Education can be carried out through the formal education sector, or through non-formal channels such as social networks.

2. BACKGROUND AND CURRENT SITUATION

The need for a MCSSP strategy for communication and advocacy cannot be overemphasized. Since adoption, the principles and goals of the MCSSP are still to be adequately disseminated in a way that they would resonate both nationally and in the provinces. An effective communication strategy and advocacy initiatives would help to create awareness for and also build credibility for the programme among sector partners and government. That way the prevailing lack of knowledge about the National Steering Committee (NSC), the programme and what the programme stands for would be reduced.

The strategy should also involve all parties of the MCSSP from the national structures right down to local levels. By doing so broad communication goals would be set, with messages that would be shared by all involved, so that there would be conformity in the messages that are going out from all MCSSP activities. This way information presented would be tailored to specific goals of the programme and specific goals of the communications strategy. A common message being disseminated at all levels of the programme would inspire a sense of purpose, ownership and oneness.

The national advocacy and communications strategy in support of the MCSSP is based on the need to create awareness, dialogue, and advocacy and build credibility around the MCSSP at national, provincial and local levels, while also maintaining a sustained interest among our partners to continue to support its implementation.

Looking at recent surveys and interpreting perceptions and challenges raised by partners and sector stakeholders during consultations, the MCSSP should take a note that only if the objectives of this strategy are successfully implemented and have the desired impact of changing perceptions and attitudes, will the goals of community involvement, CSO capacity building and contracting of NGOs be achieved.

The following are some of the issues that highlight the need for the proposed advocacy and communications strategy:

2.1 The Civil Society Strategy—2004

Since 1994 the NGO sector has faced a number of challenges, which have impacted on its ability to play meaningful roles in water and sanitation delivery. Some of these challenges can be defined as:

- (i) A shift or change in roles, from anti government activism to constructive engagement to being a government service provider - a shift which many NGOs were unable or unwilling to make.
- (ii) Shifts in funding patterns, with donor funding no longer going to NGOs and CBOs, but being channelled through government, pushing them further into the role of government service providers.
- (iii) Failure of the National Development Agency, whose mandate is to fund development through civil society, to make a significant impact in terms of ensuring the viability of NGOs, in particular, and CSOs in general.
- (iv) Insufficient capacity of NGOs, caused by staff moving into government and elsewhere, and by having to shrink in size due to reduced funding.

At present most of these challenges still exist. In order to analyse the causes of this situation, and to develop a strategy to deal with it, the National Steering Committee of the Civil Society Support Programme convened a strategic planning workshop in September 2004, in which representatives from civil society, SALGA, DWAF (national and regional) and DPLG participated. The participants reached agreement on the following as the most important causes of the low level of participation of civil society:

i. The low level of awareness and knowledge of water and sanitation planning and delivery frameworks amongst communities and CBOs, and the limited support for community based engagement with these.

Meaningful engagement in water and sanitation programmes is hampered by the lack of engagement by local level community initiatives, due largely to a lack of support and information regarding local level planning and delivery frameworks. Compounding the issue is the lack of support provided to community-led initiatives by NGOs and other CBOs due to their capacity constraints and lack of independent funding, and to most municipalities not giving this high enough priority.

ii. Diminishing role of CBOs in water and sanitation delivery programmes, due to municipalities' emphasis on fast-track, top-down delivery of infrastructure, at the expense of sustainability and community buy-in.

Experience in service delivery in most municipalities is largely based on the CMIP programme, and evaluations of this approach have highlighted a number of problems due to the lack of attention paid to community involvement.

iii. *The limited number of NGOs engaged with policy formulation, monitoring and service delivery in the water and sanitation sector.*

This is due to a range of factors, already mentioned above.

iv. *The limited capacity of existing NGOs actively engaged in the water and sanitation sector.*

NGOs presently engaged in policy formulation, monitoring, education, and service delivery in the water and sanitation sector vary considerably with regard to their technical and institutional capacity to provide consistent and adequate services. This is due to institutional problems, such as limited resources, weak management, and high staff turnover, as well as contextual factors, including excessive demand on services, inappropriate financing mechanisms, and undue government antagonism.

v. *The lack of awareness of CBO and NGO services amongst government departments and local municipalities.*

For a range of reasons, national, provincial and local government awareness of the potential for CBO and NGO services is low. This may be due to the lack of coverage of NGOs and CBOs, or preconceived notions of NGO/CBO roles by government officials. Also, a lack of marketing and networking with service providers has led to a low level of awareness of the services that existing civil society organisations can provide.

vi. *The poor perception of NGO and CBO services by government departments and municipalities.*

In cases where local and provincial government are aware of NGO and CBO services, there may be a poor perception due to previous experience with the quality and consistency of such services. In many cases these remain perceptions. At the same time, instances of poor performance of private sector companies are not considered sufficient reason for not using them - on the contrary, programmes are in place to build their capacity.

vii. *The barriers to entry to service provision for CBOs and NGOs due to excessively cumbersome and demanding contractual procedures by local municipalities.*

CBOs and NGOs, and indeed DWAF, have identified the cumbersome and onerous procedures for contracting of service providers as a significant barrier for entry of civil society contractors in the water sector. Inappropriate security provisions, guarantees and contracting criteria also contribute to the overall barriers to entry, with the result that larger, established NGOs have significant advantages over newer institutions in terms of tendering for work.

viii. *The weak level of national and provincial coordination between and among civil society organisations and networks.*

Inter-organisational networking and coordination within the NGO and CBO sector are generally weak, with an absence of structured relationships to link institutional roles and programmes. This may be due in part to the lack of institutional capacity at national and provincial levels to coordinate effectively, and the absence of an overall strategic focus for engagement by civil society, but also to the lack of promotion of such initiatives within government programmes.

Taken together, these problems provide significant obstacles to broad-based, meaningful participation by civil society in water and sanitation service delivery. This in itself poses problems of the sustainability and success of the programme, given that the overall capacity to maintain delivery infrastructure and services over the longer-term is seriously undermined.

2.2 The Stakeholder Survey Report - 2003

During MSB 1 no real stakeholder survey was undertaken, but an exercise was done into profiling and marketing NGOs (not CBOs). The exercise looked at the way NGOs marketed themselves and did not evaluate the MCSSP. Under MSB 2, both CBOs and NGOs were considered.

The following information relevant to the advocacy and communications strategy was taken directly from the 2003 Stakeholder Survey Report:

Key Stakeholders in Previous Studies Done Under Masibambane 1

The Report on Profiling and the Marketing Report identified the following key stakeholders:

- NGOs,
- Provincial officials of DWAF,
- Political representatives and officers of key municipalities which were involved in Masibambane (WS-SSP), and
- Representatives of the South African Local Government Association (SALGA) at provincial level.

The studies only looked at KwaZulu Natal, the Eastern Cape and Limpopo – the provinces in which the Masibambane WS-SSP was being implemented at the time.

Key Focus Areas of Previous Studies Done Under Masibambane 1

The Report on Profiling was specifically about the consultations that were held with municipalities and stakeholders. The specific focus areas of the study were the following:

- Municipalities' perceptions of NGOs/CBOs,
- Procurement,
- Marketing, and
- Views on public – public partnerships.

The Marketing Report focused on understanding of the underlying perceptions of municipalities towards NGOs and to use the information to support NGOs in developing an effective marketing strategy to market themselves to local government as credible service providers. This study did not focus on the broader civil society; it focused only on NGOs. The following were the key focus areas:

- Issues to be addressed by the marketing strategy and their documentation,

- A marketing strategy framework, and
- Design of generic marketing materials and brochures.

The report included an assessment of NGO strength and weaknesses; of opportunities and threats for NGOs; of perceptions of municipalities about NGOs; and a proposed marketing approach.

Perceptions About the Role of the NGO`S and Municipalities in Water and Sanitation Services Projects

The **Report on Profiling** reflected the following perceptions that municipalities hold of NGOs:

- There was ambiguity on the understanding of the roles of the NGOs from the municipal officials. In essence, they did not necessarily understand what NGOs are. In some instances they confused their role with political role-playing while in some instances they confused their roles with that of private sector organisations.
- There were general doubts about the NGOs' ability to deliver on effective and efficient developmental programmes because of a plethora of reasons, including the perception of lack of professional conduct and the perception of lack of specialised skills.

On the other hand, the NGOs themselves also acknowledged several weaknesses, viz.:

- The lack of focus by NGOs, wanting to do everything, even in areas where they do not necessarily have skills or capacity.
- Their lack of understanding of tendering processes and requirements.
- Poor marketing and communication strategies (in regard to stakeholders other than communities, i.e. municipalities).

The NGO sector further identified the following strengths amongst themselves:

- Their excellent relations with all the relevant stakeholders in the communities.
- Their ability to drive community initiatives.
- Their ability to charge competitive prices in water and sanitation delivery.

In the report, the recommendations relating to a marketing strategy for NGOs are as follows:

- NGOs' and municipalities' goals are similar in as far as Water and Sanitation provision are concerned and hence they need to work towards a common goal.
- NGOs can play an advocacy and education role in the social contract between the municipalities and the community.
- NGOs can facilitate alternative means of service delivery to the community working together with municipalities.
- NGOs need to be professional and competitive in their service delivery endeavours. They need to show that they too can execute projects with minimum hiccups.
- It needs to be made clear that NGOs need not belong to political parties.

- There is a need for a focused approach on communications by NGOs.

The **Report on Marketing** identified that NGOs are generally good in employing community advocacy tools for service delivery and that they promote community initiative. However, they are perceived by municipalities to be risky social partners because of a number of reasons, including perceived high turnover rate of their staff, perceived lack of specialised skills and being not adequately competitive. The issue of perceived lack of professional conduct emerged from this study relating to both lack of adherence to tender requirements and overstating of capacities. There were however some positive perceptions, including the affordability of NGOs' services as well as their abilities to involve a broader scope of the members of the community in their project. From this study it further emerged that municipalities do not always understand the role of NGOs adequately and might therefore have negative perceptions about their roles. Municipalities are not forthcoming to NGOs and the environment in which they operate by not paying them on time or not allowing advance payments.

While this study was mostly about developing a marketing strategy, perception and attitude issues such as professional conduct and approach, and understanding the environment in which municipalities operate were highlighted as significant in impacting on communication. The core issues to a large extent related to doubts in the capacities of NGOs in the endeavour to deliver services to the population

2.3 Consultations with Sector Partners and Government – 2005

In preparation for the development of the advocacy and communication strategy, one-to-one consultations were held with:

- Government (different government departments and also different directorates in Department of Water Affairs and Forestry (DWAFF)
- South African Local Government Association (SALGA)
- Department of Provincial and Local Government (DPLG)
- Representatives from municipalities
- Water Information Network (WIN)
- MCSSP representatives
- Other civil society organisations and networks

The following perceptions, views and challenges were raised:

- There is very little awareness of the work of the MCCSP
- There is confusion within government about who to contact as spokes body for civil society in the sector. One central entry point will be preferable
- Various individuals raised the challenge that they do not know who civil society is, how to utilize and relate to CSOs and where to contact civil society
- There is a strong perception that the MCSSP and the Steering Committee only focus on securing work for civil society as service providers and give no active suggestion on what civil society can bring to the table and the active role they can play in the sector, as partners in development
- There is common consensus on the statement that civil society should play a broader role in the sector than just as service providers
- It is time that the sector gets positive feedback from civil society and success stories should help to raise awareness
- There is still a question regarding the representativity of the MCSSP
- There should be a mind shift within CSOs—they should realise that the real work is with the municipalities, and not at national level any more

- Civil society should communicate and raise their suggestions, concerns and role clearly and assertively to the sector players
- Civil society should come with a concrete sustainable plan and then ask sector stakeholders for the resources –not the other way around

Positive feedback from the consultations:

- All stakeholders were positive regarding dialogue and partnership with civil society
- Stakeholders want to see civil society play a valuable and active role in the sector
- Stakeholders are willing to improve communication, cooperation, and coordination within the sector, between all relevant stakeholders, in order to have a common strategy and vision.

2.4 DWAF National Regulation, Reform and Support Indaba -2005

During the National Regulation, Reform and Support Indaba of DWAF in August 2005, a lot was said by speakers and in discussion groups on what the MCSSP should acknowledge and address in the advocacy and communication strategy as well as in their business plans.

- The sector should work in partnerships to reach our goals (DWAF Current DG-Mike Muller)
- National government should set the tone in working together and facilitate it down to other levels of government. (DWAF Current DG-Mike Muller)
- Project Consolidate is about forging partnerships that will result in practical improvement in the quality of peoples lives at local level (DPLG-Patrick Flask)
- Through Project Consolidate civil society should engage and interact directly with municipalities and local communities. (DPLG-Patrick Flask)
- Communication is an integral part of Project Consolidate and the MCSSP through it's advocacy and communication strategy should make direct links
- MCSSP should come with written recommendations and an active campaign on how civil society can help to build capacity in local government.
- There should be effective cooperative governance in the sector. There should be interactions between Councillors, ward committees and communities and civil society. (SALGA-Amos Masondo)
- The sector should be committed to work in partnerships and put the end user first. There should be sharing of knowledge and information to benefit all. South African Association of Water Utilities (SAAWU) is committed to work with all sector role players (Willie Modisha-SAAWU)
- We need to have clear strategies and common understanding of objectives in the sector (Hon Ms BP Sonjica, Minister: DWAF)
- There should be no confusion of responsibilities of stakeholders in the sector. (Hon Ms BP Sonjica, Minister: DWAF)
- We should all pull our collective wisdom. (Hon Ms BP Sonjica, Minister: DWAF)
- The main purpose of regulation is to protect the end user. (Hon Ms BP Sonjica, Minister: DWAF)
- Current sector challenges: access to basic services; quality services; sustainability; accountability; capacity and information (DWAF-Sugandree Muruvan)
- One of the key issues that need to be addressed is consumer voice. It needs to be built. Consumers need to be educated as to their rights and there is a need to create responsive consumer services. (DWAF-Sugandree Muruvan)

- There is an assumption that some players in the sector are not yet able to provide data as needed at the required quality (DWAF-Sugandree Muruvan)
- There are definite capacity constraints in terms of ability to collect data; therefore data collection capacity needs to be supported. (DWAF-Sugandree Muruvan)
- It is in the interest of DWAF as the regulator to support effective engagement with consumers and the development of consumer voice (DWAF-Sugandree Muruvan)
- DWAF will publish regulatory information and arrange an annual forum on consumer service and consumer voice. (DWAF-Sugandree Muruvan)
- DWAF will engage with civil society representatives on regulation issues on a regular basis. (DWAF-Sugandree Muruvan)
- DWAF will support initiatives to develop civil society capacity to engage constructively with regulation issues. (DWAF-Sugandree Muruvan)
- There are poor linkages and alignment between detailed strategies within and between sector support partners (DWAF-William Ramphele)
- Available support to local government is not well communicated. (DWAF-William Ramphele)
- It is one of the objectives of the support strategy to enable all sector players to fulfil their roles effectively (DWAF-William Ramphele)
- The sector support implementation plan should enhance coordination. (DWAF-William Ramphele)
- The sector support implementation plan should ensure that strategic interventions are allocated to sector partners (DWAF-William Ramphele)
- The institutional reform strategy plan to communicate its intentions to the sector. (DWAF –Marie Brisley)
- The civil society organisations unanimously declared during a break away session that currently there is no enabling environment for engagement between government and CSOs.

2.5 Challenges and Perceptions the MCSSP should take note of.

- The perception that the MCSSP only exists at or during the meetings of the Steering Committee and in between meetings little demonstrates its existence.
- The range of the sector stakeholders, tend to feel that little has been done to keep them informed or involved with civil society agendas and that the MCSSP priorities have yet to be fully streamlined into national and provincial plans.
- Government and other civil society organizations and networks claim not to be aware of the MCSSP priorities and activities.
- There is a lack of strategy to promote the MCSSP, its role, value and activities.
- It also indicated that thus far, no effort has been made to coordinate civil society activities, promote consistency within the programme or between the NSC and the sector partners in carrying out communication and advocacy activities in support of the sector goals.
- There is a great need for relevant information in the sector
- There is a great need to educate the consumer and represent its voice

3. STRATEGY

3.1 Strategic Objectives

- Through effective communication, build credibility and awareness for the MCSSP, its Steering Committee, its achievements and its projects, on national, provincial and local level
- To raise awareness in the sector about the role, value, responsibilities, rights and availability of Civil Society
- To develop effective 2-way communication, both internal and external
- To mainstream advocacy as an integral part of all work done by the MCSSP
- To establish avenues of constant dialogue and partnership building, between civil society itself as well as with all sector stakeholders
- To build civil society capacity for both effective dialogue and advocacy
- To put in place mechanisms to regularly monitor and evaluate communications, awareness levels and perceptions about civil society and the MCSSP

3.2 Expected Outcomes

The expected outcomes would be:

- A MCSSP that is visible, credible and involved in all sector dialogues
- A sector that is aware of the role, value, rights and responsibilities of civil society as partner in development
- NSC members and provincial coordinators who are effective and skilled in implementing and incorporating effective 2-way communications and advocacy interventions into all actions of the programme
- The knowledge that the NSC is the vehicle that facilitates constant dialogue and networking between the different CSO actors and networks in the sector
- Increased awareness, credibility and acceptance of the MCSSP objectives and work
- Increased sustained funding for advocacy and communication interventions
- Increased consultations and dialogue between government, civil society and other sector partners
- Increased and accelerated participation of local bodies and representatives

3.3 Key Elements of the Advocacy Communications Strategy

While specific advocacy techniques and strategies vary, the following elements form the basic building blocks for effective advocacy.

Elements of a successful advocacy communications strategy:

- **Identify the key issues**
- **Set goals and objectives**

4. STRATEGIC THRUSTS AND ACTION PLANS

In proposing an outline and potential activities for the MCSSP advocacy and communications strategy, positive responses are sought to the following questions:

- Will it help to increase understanding of what the MCSSP stands for and what it does?
- Will it help to increase support for the MCSSP?
- Will it help to increase resources for the MCSSP?

To achieve its advocacy and communication goals and reach the expected outcomes, the MCSSP should be driven by the following 10 key strategies.

4.1 Strategic Points of Actions

- **Get our own house in order**
- **Mainstreaming advocacy within the MCSSP**
- **Build a culture of 2-way communication**
- **Build strong partnerships and networks**
- **Actively changing perceptions**
- **Becoming visible and let our voice be heard**
- **Enhance our information capacity**
- **Fit strategy and message to the target audience**
- **Follow through to provincial and grassroots level**
- **Enhance our skills and capacity to implement this strategy sustainably**

Action Point 1: *Get our own house in order*

Taking the current situation and perceptions facing the MCSSP to heart, one can not but agrees that the programme urgently needs to address this challenge. The proposed advocacy and communications strategy will raise the profile of the MCSSP, help to increase understanding of what we do and what the programme stands for, and to help increase support and resources for the MCSSP. Some of the challenges confronted by the MCSSP stem from insufficient financial and human resources that needs to be addressed to enable the programme to implement relevant actions on all levels.

Implementing the strategy will be a major challenge for the MCSSP due to our size, distance and diversity. For the strategy to be successful and effective, all members should be well informed and prepared to make positive changes.

Also, to ensure ongoing broad-based support from our partners, we must promote confidence in our programme and foster a positive image the MCSSP and its work. Confidence in our programme and the ongoing active support of our sector partners will be key to the success of the advocacy strategy.

This strategy should allow the members to function in a proactive manner and to pursue a team-oriented approach to all interventions and projects.

Effective communications, advocacy and community outreach should be an ongoing process, and the MCSSP will need to remain creative and flexible as new ideas are brought forward and program priorities change over time. In that context, this strategy should be considered an initial plan and a framework for implementing future initiatives.

Challenges and Lessons Learned	Actions to be Taken
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on surveys and consultations the perception is that the current system for communicating in the MCSSP is ineffective, incompletely addressing information needs and too often reporting in a disorganized manner. • There are very few advocacy interventions and none are documented and reported • Currently all communication is based upon the one-size-fits-all approach. • The strategy need to establish the most effective way to raise awareness of and change perceptions of; and about the Steering Committee as well as the programme, throughout the sector , identifying opportunities, strengths and weaknesses • Budget limitations is a reality • There are currently no media relations • Most of the members are not trained, professional communicators or advocators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear benchmarks would need to be identified and monitoring mechanisms would be required. • A communications audit needs to be done to evaluate existing approaches, materials and tools in communication and advocacy. • Effective and demand driven information materials need to be developed and streamlined (stationary, brochures, leaflets, folders audio-visual materials, including PowerPoint presentations etc) to reflect the identity of the MCSSP, its achievements, and intellectual civil society leadership in the sector. Publications are also a means of reporting on the work of the programme and key advocacy tools to convey the identified messages. • Key advocacy issues need to be identified • Goals and objectives need to be set • Target audience segmentation needs to be done • Effective and creative messages, slogans and catch-phrases need to be developed and agreement need to be reached on the delivery • Agreement on roles and responsibilities of a Communication and Advocacy task group as well as those who will help deliver the communications plans at each level • Research should be undertaken to identify the process that civil society groups in the HIV AIDS and Arts and Culture sectors took, to secure successful funding from government • New partnerships need to be formed e.g. with the Department of Social Development, other CSO networks, etc
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dissemination of informative material through the media, assuring the MCSSP visibility
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Action Point 2: *Mainstreaming advocacy within the MCSSP*

The mainstreaming of advocacy within the MCSSP means that every action of the programme, whether at national, provincial or local level, should carry out relevant advocacy elements within its respective business plans. It is however extremely important to ensure strategic unity and consistency of messages.

All NGO activities can be viewed as having an advocacy aspect. Even the smallest bread and butter intervention by an NGO at a local level will affect local power relations. Digging a well, for example, will increase the availability of water and will affect patterns of ownership, distribution, income and social-cultural relations. Therefore it is only right to say that the projects and interventions of the MCSSP are both of an operational and advocacy nature and should be recognised and implemented as such.

Advocacy is becoming crucial as demand for good-quality services rises and the MCSSP should adopt advocacy as part of its modus operandi. The ultimate goal will be checkmating bad governance, enhancing social responsibility, transparency, accountability and helping to give the poor a voice

The NSC should embrace the advocacy aspect in our work and approach the question of CSO accountability through the concept of political responsibility. If we as civil society do not take on that responsibility, who else will do so?

Challenges and Lessons Learned	Actions to be Taken
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For many members in the programme advocacy may be a new responsibility and there might be few who have experience at advocacy • As an advocate, you must be extremely familiar with the legislation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The MCSSP should actively influence policy through participatory processes. • As a first step, civil society lobbying government for a more inclusive

<p>and decision making process that you are attempting to influence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High-level contacts are critical • Consistency and continuity are vital • Building sustainable partnership relationships will be a long-term process • Political commitment is a fundamental ingredient of advocacy communication. • Without the support of our top leaders and sector partners, we cannot make great strides • For participatory advocacy or service monitoring to work, governments, decision makers and service providers have to be receptive to the findings and feedback generated • Examples of advocacy influencing policy-- general poorly documented • To be effective in advocacy, the MCSSC will have to stay informed. The situation in the sector is not static. It changes daily and lobbying activities are most effective when they are formulated and re-formulated in light of changes taking place on the ground. Being informed also means examining the entire scope of a given situation in order to pinpoint the cause of a problem. • Networking and coordination between all actors is critical. Effective coordination and networking at the local, regional and national levels will determine the success of implementing effective lobbying and advocacy strategies and strengthening capacity-building initiatives. Strong networks can share resources and build upon initiatives undertaken by others. • To encourage and support participation, civil society engagement and the fulfilment of governmental 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • attitude to the participatory process may be the maximum form of policy influencing which can be hoped for in the short term. This should be duly supported by our partners in the programme, thereby creating an enabling environment for dialogue and advocacy • Implement mechanisms to monitor policy and decisions at the local, provincial and national levels • Improve collaboration with government departments, political influential people, media, sector partners, CSO networks, local authorities, CBOs and community workers • Implement research to get the MCSSC thoroughly familiar with the legislative process • Implement measures to provide accurate, timely and useable information to decision makers • Relevant information should be supported with case studies and success stories that have a strong media appeal. • Effective 2-way information flow is important. From the MCSSP to policy-makers and decision makers and from decision makers to the programme • Plan for periodic updating of information – This is required if strategies are to be relevant and effective over the medium and long term • The MCSSP should have a good understanding of the arguments presented by opposing groups at all levels. This will enable us to present counter arguments to allies. • Using partnerships in advocacy will provide the MCSSP with strength for
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<p>responsibilities, government, local authorities and sector partners should put into effect, at appropriate levels, institutional and legal frameworks that facilitate and enable the broad-based participation of CSOs and community organizations in decision making , implementation and monitoring of development processes, thereby creating an enabling environment for partnerships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Throughout the advocacy process, communicating with decision makers and their offices will be challenging, as they are very busy and difficult to reach. 	<p>gaining policy influence and legitimacy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop joint initiatives with partners to develop joint strategies for promoting specific policy initiatives • Develop a strategy of dialogues with DWAF, other government departments, DPLG, SALGA, donors etc on civil society inclusion in participating decision making, advocacy and effective communication channels. • A collaborative relationship between government, civil society and other partners (donors, media, the local or national research community) • Encourage and facilitate the involvement of development workers, and representatives of community groups in the local decision making process. Document success stories and use for advocacy and visibility purposes. Start on a small scale , building local capacity and networks • Mobilize the media to increase awareness and aid advocacy efforts. • Ensure an information flow to the media on the national, provincial and local levels • Develop a network of journalists and eminent media persons. • Produce regular reports and position papers, recommendations etc on policies, speeches, conferences, papers, dialogues etc., and make it available. It is important that the material pass consistent messages. • Prepare advocacy materials, which incorporate identified messages that can be used at national, provincial and local levels. • Organise a high level event (music
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festival/ black tie) teaming up with high profile identities, partners and celebrities, as a channel for advocacy and fundraising for advocacy purposes

- Creative **avenues for advocacy fundraising** should be explored.
- Instigate a **research process** wherein research findings and additional data and information can influence decision-makers' attitudes and practices, and policies themselves
- **Identify data gaps** on all levels, that compromise informed decision making and policymaking, and promote actions that address these unmet needs.
- Gather "**voices of grassroots actors**" to change decisions and policy positions by contradicting or challenging policy-makers. Bring them face to face with the people their policies affect
- A key element of the MCSSP advocacy effort should be community outreach and meaningful collaboration with community partners and interest groups. **Local and provincial Work Groups** should be implemented to identify issues, case studies and develop recommendations.
- These groups, comprised of experts and leaders from the community, can play a major part in sustaining an **effective advocacy and community campaign**
- **Network with crosscutting groups at local level** e. g. woman's groups, youth groups etc.
- CBOs should play a huge role as **watchdogs at local level**
- Prepare **printed briefing materials** for

	<p>members on all levels to be used in visits and advocacy interventions. “One-pagers” and fact sheets on identified topics as well as an introduction to the programme can be placed in a MCSSP pocket folder</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All visits and other contacts should be coordinated to avoid duplication of effort, which can portray an unprofessional appearance. • The establishment of an Advisory Board for the MCSSP consisting of experts and highly influential people on identified fields in the sector, can be a major advantage to the NSC and can assist in advocacy, fundraising and building credibility and visibility of the MCSSP. They can also on our behalf address public forums, give media interviews and write letters to editors and policy makers. Together, one will also jointly produce information materials that will be disseminated nationally. This will help to build support for the MCSSP among leaders and individuals. • The NSC should continue to use sector meetings as forums for advocacy as well as raising the visibility of the MCSSP. Regular presentations should be made at industry meetings, conferences, workshops etc. • On all levels an effort should be made to continue to provide important contributions and recommendations. Important information should be made available on a regular bases to municipalities, • local government, government and other decision makers, should they wish to refer to the MCSSP and civil society in their statements and testimonials • Technology makes it easier to organize advocacy messages across
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	<p>the country at warp speed. E-mail, data bases, SMS messages, can all generate grass-roots reaction, urging them to take specific and immediate actions.</p>
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Action Point 3: *Build a culture of 2-way communication*

Executing a communication strategy can never be the work of a single person. It should be the work of the whole committee, because the committee communicates as a whole and everyone contributes to communication in and outside of the committee

Our communication should be viewed as a prime resource in two senses. We should inform, but we also need to be well-informed. Therefore we need to plan for incoming and outgoing, 2-way communications. This should be a coordinated and consistent effort that also delivers the MCSSP messages to its key audiences

The strategic communication of the MCSSP should be aimed at:

- Mainstreaming advocacy messages into all levels of communication
- Raising visibility of the MCSSP and its objectives
- Promoting awareness of the important development role of civil society in the sector
- Implementing 2-way dialogue and communication

Communications include all written, spoken, and electronic interaction with partners and identified audiences:

- online communications
- meeting and conference materials
- media relations and public relations materials
- reports and documents
- incoming communications, including procedures
- committee and communiqués
- corporate identity materials, including letterhead, logo, etc
- surveys
- certificates and awards;
- annual reports
- signage

- speeches
- presentations
- etc

Challenges and Lessons Learned	Actions to be Taken
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on surveys and consultations the perception is that the current system for communicating in the MCSSP is ineffective, incompletely addressing information needs and too often reporting in a disorganized manner. • Currently all communication is based upon the one-size-fits-all approach. • The strategy need to establish the most effective way to raise awareness of and change perceptions of; and about the Steering Committee as well as the programme, throughout the sector , identifying opportunities, strengths and weaknesses • There are currently no media relations • Most of the members are not trained, professional communicators or advocates • Building a communication and advocacy culture, especially one that used to be introverted, takes time • Through appropriate training, NSC members and other mediators can become more comfortable and confident in interacting with the media and other decision makers • The inherent complexity and perceptions of the current situation, makes simple, effective communication a special challenge. Normal communications will not ensure greater visibility for the MCSSP. A special outreach is needed to raise visibility, change perceptions and deliver strategic messages to the identified audiences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct a communication audit, evaluating our current internal and external communications. • Implement clear guidelines, structures, roles and responsibilities for incoming and outgoing communications on all levels • The development and maintenance of databases of relevant stakeholders, experts, decision makers, partners, CSOs, CBOs, local municipalities, etc. that the committee and provinces will need to contact. This need to be available to all and should be updated on a regular basis. • Ensure an information flow to the media on the national, provincial and local levels • Develop a contact list and database of media contacts on national, provincial and local level • Develop clear guidelines and roles for dealing and interacting with the media. The committee should be clear on who acts as spokesperson on specific issues; who issues and approves press statements; who may be interviewed on behalf of the programme • A recommendation is 3 types of media interactions:

- Another challenge is the availability of certain media to some of the stakeholders in the programme (e.g. not all CSOs have internet access or email addresses; some don't even have a fax.

1. A spokesperson who stays in regular contact with reporters, briefs them, issues press statements, deals with questions and queries and organises interviews
2. The leadership who is interviewed or asked questions,
3. or who is quoted when speaking at other forums such as at public meetings
4. Developed and printed materials on the MCSSP, its objectives, work and success stories, that can be handed out in a press folder

- The MCSSP will need to use the full range of communication technologies and outreach to the **local media** to positively and accurately present our program and goals. To be most effective, the programme should include media which targets diverse local communities via culture/language-based print, radio and newspapers.
- To keep the visibility and credibility of the MCSSP high and keep everyone informed of important events and issues, **regular media statements** should be made and press releases should be prepared in advance
- Council members should accept **speaking engagements** at conferences, workshops and forums, etc.
- We should **enhance our electronic communications** for the NSC as well as the provincial coordinators: corporate e-mail address, etc
- **Corporate stationary**, letterheads, complimentary slips and folders will be important in raising awareness and

	<p>creating credibility.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There should be agreement on clear roles and responsibilities of communicators at each level of the programme • A very important, and indeed vital component of the work of the NSC, • has been and should remain networking and communication with other civil society groups, special interest groups and networks all over the country <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The NSC should create a space for the exchange of information. A short term solution may be the NSC meetings, provincial forums, other forum meetings etc. At these forums, exchange of information should be on the agenda where best practices, success stories, recent research and publications/activities are shared. This will all be channeled to the person responsible for communications and will be circulated, posted on the WIN portal, shared with the press, printed in the newsletter –going through all the channels as identified in the strategy. • Identify spokespeople who have knowledge and experience on specific topics and use them as speakers, experts in relevant areas, consultants, at press meetings etc • In our quest to raise awareness and visibility, change perceptions and update our data and information, it is important to produce a regular newsletter. In the short term an electronic format will be the most cost effective and later when resources are available, printed copies can be distributed widely. • Newsletters, sector publications and printed material of partners can also be utilised to publicise the strategic messages of the MCSSP and to raise it's visibility
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In addition, a "Chairman's Update" format can be implemented as a vehicle for quickly sharing information about major and urgent issues and activities of interest to all. The goal of this is to ensure that members, receive timely and accurate information about issues that can affect them and that • they need to respond to. This can also serve an important purpose in the advocacy interventions, when members need to respond quickly with support, input and suggestions • As all members of the committee are not natural advocates and communicators, appropriate training and capacity building needs to be addressed.
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Action Point 4: *Build strong partnerships and networks*

The MCSSP cannot bring about change in awareness and perceptions on its own. Therefore it is necessary to organize the involvement of other organisations forging strategic partnerships which play a role in the change process. The strategy will also include people who can influence decision makers on our behalf in the network, and, if possible, the decision makers themselves.

Strengthening partnerships is a key element of the communication and advocacy strategy. Partners have an important advocacy role to play in portraying MCSSP activities, and expressing its value and role to other sector stakeholders.

It is important in advocacy communication to use a multi-sectoral approach with a mix of voices that includes government, media, academics, civil society, business and community leaders. Often you can do together what no one can do alone

Challenges and Lessons Learned	Actions to be Taken
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Networks and partnerships take time and energy to develop and maintain because they involve building relationships of trust with other people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The MCSSP will reinforce existing partnerships and need to form new strategic one's, example:

- Being part of a network may require you to compromise your position on issues or tactics
- Partnerships may require you to give in to more powerful organizations. Power is not always distributed equally among coalition members
- In a partnership you may not always get credit for your work. Sometimes the partnership as a whole gets recognition rather than individual members
- If the partnership process breaks down it can harm everyone's advocacy by damaging credibility
- Collaboration between government and civil society is a slow and delicate process
- One should realise that although partnerships are formed with partners working toward the same objective, every party still have its own agenda.

1. Department of Social Development/Education/Housing
2. Other government departments
3. Other relevant CSO networks
4. Community bodies
5. Media
6. Parliamentarians and policy makers
7. Private sector representatives
8. Researchers
9. Experts and influential people
10. Educators
11. International and regional networks

- With selected partners, **develop joint advocacy and public information campaigns** on issues of common concern.
- A **Civil Society Charter** should be developed and signed by DWAFF, SALGA and DPLG, to show their commitment to utilizing civil society.
- A **joint position and discussion paper with SALGA** should be developed on the process of engagement and sustainable ways for local government to deal with civil society
- Lobby for a **SALGA declaration on civil society**
- Communication is an integral part of **Project Consolidate** and the MCSSP through its advocacy and communication strategy should make direct links
- MCSSP should come with written recommendations on an active campaign on how **civil society can help to build capacity in local government.**
- Establish **advocacy and information units** that will help in the dissemination, research, monitoring, and channeling of advocacy information. These units, within the

	<p>MCSSP, as well as with sector partners, could greatly strengthen the flow of information in the sector. Encourage strong representation and participation from the community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage the appointment of committee members to leadership roles in regional/national associations and forums • It would be a great accomplishment if the NSC could facilitate the much-needed networking among civil society organisations in the sector. It should be aimed at promoting a culture of co-operation and collaboration among the numerous civil society groups. It can be an avenue for the sharing of information, the pooling of resources and the building of consensus among civil society organisations on key national issues, working in a joint venture on advocacy interventions. Furthermore the network aims at harnessing and galvanising the energies, expertise and experience that abound among civil society groups for optimum value and impact on policy and governance. The network should be open to all elements of civil society in the sector. • In partnership with government, the NSC should host a conference or workshops on advocacy and communications and the collaboration between government and CSOs. • Identify strategic partners that play leading roles in cross-cutting issues and establish partnerships. Join their networks and forums, as a means to gather information and research and also as to use these networks for advocacy. • Pursue issue-specific projects where exchange of information and viewpoints can enlighten public policy debate, and assist with advocacy.
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Action Point 5: *Actively changing perceptions*

Perception is the key to credibility. That is a crucial element in this advocacy and communication strategy. Only if the objectives of this strategy is successfully implemented and have the desired impact of changing perceptions and attitudes, will the goals of community involvement, CSO capacity building and contracting of NGOs be achieved.

This strategy sets out to actively change perceptions. The strategy will seek to create the perception, and the belief that the MCSSP are successful, dynamic and credible and that the role of civil society as partner in the water services sector is valuable. The objectives would be to set out in the activities, communications and programmes, information on how the MCSSP are managed, and how the projects and programmes would be implemented in such a way that would assure sector partners of its constant value. In building credibility, it will focus on target audiences and aim to persuade through a showcase the programmes, projects and events which would prove that the MCSSP and civil society is on course and alert the target audiences and the stakeholders that there are enough experience in and forces behind the NSC, thereby drawing in those still on the fence.

The strategy will also strive to showcase the ability of civil society to direct, manage and implement the MCSSP, technically and intellectually and that civil society share in the common developmental goals of the sector.

Experience has shown that when people talk and the media write about successful programmes, it grows among opinion leaders and decision makers, and helps to build allies. When celebrities and influential persons speak on behalf of a programme, they draw media attention and thereby help to raise visibility. All of these will be addressed through the strategy. The challenge lies in getting the commitment of high-profile celebrities and identifying high-impact local projects and success stories that will help journalists to put a human face to development issues.

Change is often seen as a threat creating fear, especially when the change is ending familiar practices. However, when the change is not visible in practice but only in name, it will not change the perception. Therefore this strategy should be –action

Challenges and lessons Learned	Actions to be Taken
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change is often seen as a threat • A strategy will change nothing if it is not being implemented and managed. • The right information and materials are a vital means to raising awareness of the MCSSP's work and position. • Appropriate and targeted information can help to increase resources for the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problem areas and perceptions, specific and general, would have to be identified. • Through stakeholder surveys, start monitoring perceptions of stakeholders of the MCSSP and its activities. • A special meeting should be organized to discuss the challenges identified and the proposed responses.

<p>organization.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The challenge lies in getting the commitment of high-profile celebrities and identifying high-impact local projects and success stories 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A 2-pager on how to deal with civil society should be developed and sector forums should accept it, own it and introduce it. The right information materials and publications are a vital means to raising awareness of the MCSSP as well as the important role of civil society in development An immediate and short term action should be to get the main strategic message out to decision-makers and stakeholders A pro-active approach should be followed with the media—nationally as well as locally. There should be regular press briefings, question and answer sessions, press statements to announce new projects etc. Organise a high level event (music festival/ black tie) teaming up with high profile identities, partners and celebrities, as a channel for advocacy and fundraising for advocacy purposes In partnership with WIN and the media, best practices and success stories should be showcased. Success stories will become key in creating the desired perception and also maintaining the interests and support of the stakeholders and the media by showing through success stories how the programme have impacted development and the life of local communities. Lessons learnt could then be disseminated to enhance further the effectiveness of the programme
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Action Point 6: *Become visible and let our voice be heard*

This forms part of changing perception and promotes action and change through advocacy and communication. A successful and dynamic programme and committee should make its voice heard. This calls for an advocacy strategy that generates awareness and dialogue, and influences national development actions. The strategy should cover outreach, communication, marketing and monitoring of results. It requires a solid financial commitment and specialized expertise.

Given the decentralized nature of the programme, efforts to raise visibility must be coordinated so that the messages directed to partners and decision makers are clear and compelling, from the national to the local level. Conscious efforts are made to tailor messages to specific audiences, for maximum benefit and results.

Challenges and Lessons Learned	Actions to be Taken
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change is often seen as a threat • A strategy will change nothing if it is not being implemented and managed. • The right information and materials are a vital means to raising awareness of the MCSSP`s work and position. • Appropriate and targeted information can help to increase resources for the organization. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish clear, focused objectives for raising the visibility of the MCSSP. The NSC should intensify its efforts, to profile the MCSSP with optimal impact • Assist in awareness campaigns, especially at local level, to build on advocacy and communications interventions and initiate and build the awareness level of the MCSSP simultaneously at national and local level. • Initiate “a road show”, i.e. a series of information sessions. In attempting to address the lack of information and perceptions on the MCSSP, a number of information sessions need to be scheduled, to explain the programme as well as the role and value of civil society. Civil society, government representatives, private sector, sector stakeholders, the media and other partners should attended these meetings • Establish advocacy and information units that will help in the dissemination, research, monitoring, and channeling of advocacy information. These units, within the

	<p>MCSSP, as well as with sector partners, could greatly strengthen the flow of information in the sector. Encourage strong representation and participation from the community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gather “voices of grassroots actors” to change decisions and policy positions by contradicting or challenging policy-makers. Bring them face to face with the people their policies affect. Initiate research exercises to inform policy makers of local realities. The exercise is by its nature one of consultation and participation with local community. • Ensure an information flow to the media on the national, provincial and local levels. • A pro-active approach should be followed with the media—nationally as well as locally. • There should be regular press briefings, question and answer sessions, press statements to announce new projects etc. • The right information materials and publications are a vital means to raising awareness of the MCSSP as well as the important role of civil society in development • Organise a high level event (music festival/ black tie) teaming up with high profile identities, partners and celebrities, as a channel for advocacy and fundraising for advocacy purposes • Produce regular reports and position papers, recommendations etc on policies, speeches, conferences, papers, dialogues etc., and make it available. It is important that the material pass consistent messages. • Feedback as a communication goal is also important. The NSC should strive to ensure follow-up actions to conferences, workshops, dialogues,
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	<p>etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify spokespeople who have knowledge and experience on specific topics and use them as speakers, experts in relevant areas, consultants, at press meetings etc • In our quest to raise awareness and visibility, change perceptions and update our data and information, it is important to produce a regular newsletter. In the short term an electronic format will be the most cost effective and later when resources are available, printed copies can be distributed widely. • The establishment of an Advisory Board for the MCSSP consisting of experts and highly influential people on identified fields in the sector, can be a major advantage to the NSC and can assist in advocacy, fundraising and building credibility and visibility of the MCSSP. They can also on our behalf address public forums, give media interviews and write letters to the editors and policy makers. Together, one will also jointly produce information materials that will be disseminated nationally. This will help to build support for the MCSSP among leaders and individuals. • Partner with WIN to get success stories and civil society contributions on the web
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Action Point 7: *Enhance our information capacity*

In advocacy, as well as service delivery, information is a powerful tool and critical to decision making. The sharing of information is key to any consultative exercise, thus enhancing our information capacity and providing relevant information should be an important part of the MCSSP's work.

Besides information provision, a wider information dissemination strategy is also significant. It raises awareness and heightens visibility.

Through this strategy the MCSSP should tap in to developing technological frontiers to enhance the effectiveness of proven advocacy strategies and to explore new and innovative modes of advocacy. The Internet redefines time and distance and cuts across borders. It can be used for fundraising, communication, co-ordination of actions, joint policy development, awareness building, research, advocacy, e-mail campaigns, etc.

Internet campaigns are a good advocacy tool to an extent. For mobilising grassroots support IT is not of help. But you can make the people you are representing aware of the issues by communicating information. Communication does not require technology but the information has been distilled through the application of technology. Internet doesn't replace traditional methods of advocacy, but complements them.

Challenges and Lessons Learned	Actions to be Taken
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Without appropriate information, CSOs cannot make informed and analytical comments and recommendations • At present there is a need for improvement of the availability of information in the MCSSP as well in the sector • A challenge is to demystify technology and make it work for civil society in advocacy and communication interventions • Government, decision makers and policy makers need to be well informed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The NSC should enhance our research capabilities based on the needs of the stakeholders in the sector • Contact should be initiated with writers, intellectuals and editors for collaboration. They can be motivated to write articles and briefs in a joint exercise. • In a partnership with WIN, case studies and success stories should be sourced for publication on the web. This partnership can lead to visibility and assistance in advocacy and communication challenges. • Establish advocacy and information units that will help in the dissemination, research, monitoring, and channeling of advocacy information. These units, within the MCSSP, as well as with sector partners, could greatly strengthen the flow of information in the sector. Encourage strong representation and participation from the community • Enhance our in-house information capacity, there should be an increase of publications of any kind sector issues and the role of civil society like: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • appraisals

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • arguments • articles • booklets • case studies • fact sheets • position papers • evaluations • recommendations • feedback • funding proposals • newsletters • reports of different kinds • reviews • letter campaigns • speeches • strategy documents • training materials • one-pagers • pamphlets and • brochures showcasing the visibility of the MCSSP. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The development and maintenance of databases of relevant stakeholders, experts, decision makers, partners, CSOs, CBOs, local municipalities, etc. that the committee and provinces will need to contact. This need to be available to all (WIN) and should be updated on a regular basis. • Educate members on the various methods of data collection and effective research • Conduct stakeholder surveys on relevant topics • Closer partnership need to be developed between civil society and researchers. • Utilise technology and the web for information dissemination, research, online lobbying, fundraising, etc.
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Action Point 8: *Fit the strategy and message to the target audience*

If you want to sell to fish, don't use skywriting. Fish don't read. People often spend a lot of time figuring out exactly what to say, without a lot of consideration of to whom it should be said.

Messages that we are going to use in this strategy should be designed to achieve goals. A winning message takes into account what will work with the audience to build support. We should create messages that will help us meet our goals and objectives.

There are several levels of this strategy- national, provincial and local. Each level would focus on the audience specific and relevant to it and adapt the activities as necessary in order to obtain support and action.

The following groups are identified as strategic audiences for the MCSSP:

- DWAF
- DPLG
- SALGA
- WIN
- Other government departments: Department of Social Development, Department of Health etc
- Municipalities
- Politicians (local, provincial, national),Portfolio Committee etc.
- Government officials (local, provincial and national)
- Businesses or business leaders
- Other civil society organizations or networks e.g. South African Water Caucus, SANGOCO etc.
- Sector partners
- CBOs, ward committees, community development workers and other community groups
- Religious groups/churches
- Labor organizations and other social organisations
- Academics/universities and researchers
- Professionals and consultants
- Opposition leaders
- Speech writers
- Media
- Women's organizations
- Ministry officials and ambassadors
- Development agencies
- Direct service organizations
- Opinion leaders and influential people in a certain field
- Many, many more...

Challenges and lessons Learned	Actions to be Taken
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Perceptions would have to be changed• Time is a challenge	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Messages should be clear, strategic and results-based

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Messages should be clear, strategic and results-based • The identification of who is to be reached by the advocacy and communications programme is one of the most important parts of the strategy • In order to make the communication strategy effective it is necessary to assess the needs of the various groups of audiences, as well as the most appropriate means of communication to meet their needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In order to make the communication strategy effective it is necessary to assess the needs of the various groups of audiences, as well as the most appropriate means of communication to meet their needs. • Using the target audience mapping form: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Do audience segmentation 2. Identify the needs of this specific audience 3. Select the message we want to communicate to this audience 4. Select the channels of communication • Determine the strategic messages and channels of communication at national, provincial and local level
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Action Point 9: Follow through to provincial and grassroots level

The fact that the communication and advocacy strategy is to be implemented at various levels (national, provincial and local) by several members and aimed at reaching various audiences, assume the existence of an effective coordinating structure. Coordination would also be required between the MCSSP and its partners

All strategic actions of this strategy need to be followed through to provincial and local levels.

Challenges and lessons Learned	Actions to be Taken
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historically, 1-way communications in the MCSSP has been driven at national level. • Provinces will need assistance and training to effectively implement the advocacy and communication strategy into their business and action plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocacy and communications interventions need to be coordinated at all levels • Assistance should be given to capture the communication and advocacy interventions into provincial business plans

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Departmental provincial Sector plans should be researched to determine if CSOs are covered sufficiently in the plans. Recommendations for support should be developed. Consultations and feedback on this issue will be important actions. • Provincial and local channels of communication and distribution of messages should be identified • Implement mechanisms to monitor policy and decisions at the local, provincial and national levels • Improve collaboration with government departments, political influential people, media, sector partners, CSO networks, local authorities, CBOs and community workers • Encourage and facilitate the involvement of development workers, and representatives of community groups in the local decision making process. Document success stories and use for advocacy and visibility purposes. Start on a small scale , building local capacity and networks • Ensure an information flow to the media on the national, provincial and local levels • Prepare advocacy materials, which incorporate identified messages that can be used at national, provincial and local levels Identify data gaps on all levels, that compromise informed decision making and policymaking, and promote actions that address these unmet needs. • Gather “voices of grassroots actors” to change decisions and policy positions by contradicting or challenging policy-makers. Bring them face to face with the people their policies affect • A key element of the MCSSP advocacy effort should be community
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	<p>outreach and meaningful collaboration with community partners and interest groups. Local and provincial Work Groups should be implemented to identify issues, case studies and develop recommendations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These groups, comprised of experts and leaders from the community, can play a major part in sustaining an effective advocacy and community campaign • Prepare printed briefing materials for members on all levels to be used in visits and advocacy interventions. “One-pagers” and fact sheets on identified topics as well as an introduction to the programme can be placed in a MCSSP pocket folder: • On all levels an effort should be made to continue to provide important contributions and recommendations. Important information should be made available on a regular bases to municipalities, local government, government and other decision makers, should they wish to refer to the MCSSP and civil society in their statements and testimonials • Implement clear guidelines, structures, roles and responsibilities for incoming and outgoing communications on all levels • The development and maintenance of databases of relevant stakeholders, experts, decision makers, partners, CSOs, CBOs, local municipalities, etc. that the committee and provinces will need to contact. This need to be available to all and should be updated on a regular basis. • Ensure an information flow to the media on the national, provincial and local levels • Develop a contact list and database media contacts on national, provincial and local level • The MCSSP will need to use the full
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	<p>range of communication technologies and outreach to the local media to positively and accurately present our program and goals. To be most effective, the programme should include media which targets diverse local communities via culture/language-based print, radio and newspapers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We should enhance our electronic communications for the NSC as well as the provincial coordinators: corporate e-mail address, etc • Agreement on roles and responsibilities of a Communication and Advocacy task group as well as those who will help deliver the communications plans at each level • Strong partnerships need to be established at provincial as well as local levels
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Action Point 10: Enhance our skills and capacity to implement this sustainably

The work we do as civil society is to improve the lives of others. Ultimately, we are effective only when we are competent. The change we seek through this strategy will elude us forever if we do not bring the right skills to bear on the problems we so desperately wish to solve.

The goal is to equip all MCSSC members and provincial operators with the skills to promote the work of the program while increasing support for its activities within the strategy.

The business of talking to the media and developing allies and partners should be followed through to all levels of the programme. The challenge will be to promote a communication and advocacy culture throughout the organization, at all levels.

It is not enough and sustainable to make singular, one-time interventions. Members need to be empowered with the ability to implement advocacy and effective communications

Challenges and lessons Learned	Actions to be Taken
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most of our members are not skilled advocates and communicators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As all members of the committee are not natural advocates and communicators, appropriate training and capacity building needs to be addressed.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training interventions will be developed to support the strategy and strengthen the NSC and provincial operators in- house capacity for advocacy, communication and public information. • An advocacy and communications manual and tool kit should be developed. The toolkit can also be used by NGOs and CBOs themselves to build skills within their own organisations and implement advocacy work. • The 2-way communication under the strategy will continue to provide members with access to relevant information so that they will be aware of achievements and important events and necessary information. Only then will they be equipped to be the advocates in the field
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5. IMPLEMENTATION AND ACTION PLAN

The activities as highlighted provide an indication of the key activities required to support the achievement of the advocacy and communications strategy. These will be developed in more detail in the Implementation and Action Plan that will follow this strategy

6. MONITORING

The strategy will be monitored through the following mechanisms:

- Regular reporting and feedback at all levels
- Coordination of all efforts
- Stakeholder perception surveys
- Partnerships and joint ventures
- Focus groups

A sustained advocacy and communications campaign in support of the MCSSP can only be achieved through enhanced coordination at all levels, partnerships with more influential sector players and increased ability to communicate consistent, simple and clear messages to the various target audiences that the strategy seeks to inform and persuade.

7. IMPLEMENTATION

The implementation of the Civil Society Strategy requires the following processes to be conducted:

- Comments / input from all stakeholders on this Strategy. It is imperative that this strategy is supported by all stakeholders involved in the MCSSP.
- Adoption of the Strategy by the National Steering Committee of the Masibambane Civil Society Support Programme.
- Further consultations with key sector role players to achieve consensus on the respective roles and responsibilities
- Funding allocations made by DWAF
- Incorporation of the strategy into the BPs
- Implementation of the strategy on all levels
- Monitoring and evaluation

ATTACHMENT : KEY ELEMENTS OF THE ADVOCACY COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

1. Identification of Issues

This stage is also referred to as agenda setting. There are an unlimited number of problems which need attention, but not all can get a place on the action agenda, due to budget, time and other resources. Advocates decide which problem to address and attempt to get the target institution to recognize that the problem needs action

The next step is to develop policy solutions for these problems. What can you do to help solve the problem?

Definition of a Policy Issue:

A problem or situation which an institution or organization could take action to solve.

2. Set Goals and Objectives

Definition of an Advocacy Goal:

The goal is the subject of your advocacy effort.

Definition of an Advocacy Objective:

An advocacy objective aims to change the policies, programs or positions of governments, institutions or organizations.

Your advocacy objective is what you want to change, who will make the change, by how much and by when. Generally, the time frame for an advocacy objective will be 1-3 years.

An objective is an incremental and realistic step toward a larger goal or your vision; it is not a general goal

Goals are therefore the long-range desired outcomes or end results of our communications efforts. Strategic communications can play an important role in helping accomplish our goals.

- An objective should be specific and measurable.
- A goal is a long-term vision for change while an objective is short-term and measurable.
- A good objective includes the policy actor and the desired policy action as well as a timeline and degree of change if appropriate

- When choosing an advocacy objective for policy change consider the political climate, the probability of success, research and data on your issue, money available to support your advocacy efforts and your own capabilities.
- It depends on your recourses if you can choose more than one objective to work on at a time.

Advocates who attempt to fix everything run the risk of changing nothing in the process. Succeeding first with smaller objectives will give you and more enthusiasm, experience and credibility to conquer more ambitious objectives.

3. Strategic Communications

Definition of Strategic Communication:

Any planned communication activity that seeks to achieve one of the following communication goals: Inform, Persuade, Motivate, or Move to Action

Communication is at the center of any campaign strategy. People must know who you are, what you stand for and why they should support you and your campaign.

A successful campaign needs to build a profile to which people can relate. A good communications strategy will ensure that the right information reaches your target audiences (partners, supporters, decision-makers, opponents, and public) both inside and outside the campaign.

A key element of strategic communication is understanding your audience and seeing an issue from their perspective. The advocate must think about what will motivate a target audience to support a cause. This is, perhaps, the greatest challenge of strategic communication—the ability to put yourself in your audience’s shoes and see how they will benefit from supporting your cause. Try to think of the potential risks and rewards your target audience will face by joining forces with you.

Many advocacy efforts (as well as IEC campaigns) focus primarily on the first level of communication—to **inform**. There are higher objectives in a communication strategy that will achieve a greater impact. An effective communication strategy will seek to **motivate** the audience to feel something about the issue. At the third level, an advocacy message should seek to **persuade** the audience to adopt a desired position on the issue. Finally, the message should **move the audience to take action**.

4. Target Audience Analysis

Key audiences are those groups or individuals who make the decisions and/or take the actions that determine the continued success of a programme or intervention. Identifying your key audiences and understanding as much as possible about their existing attitudes toward your programme and determining the most effective ways to communicate with them are critical to developing effective communications strategies.

An audience-centered approach, offers the necessary tools to distinguish, analyze, reach and motivate key policy players. These techniques can help you target the institutions and people that are critical to your success, rather than attempting to reach all decision makers and all sectors players

To understand the knowledge, attitudes and beliefs of your audience, you must do some audience research. Begin your research with audience segmentation. That is a way of grouping decision makers, influential leaders, other NGOs and sector partners, into sub-groups with similar characteristics. You can target your messages to the particular concerns of each sub-group.

Definition of a primary audience:

The primary audience includes decision makers with the authority to affect the outcome for your objective directly. These are the individuals who must actively approve the policy change. These decision makers are the primary targets of an advocacy strategy.

Definition of a secondary audience:

The secondary audiences are individuals and groups that can influence the decision makers (or primary audience). The opinions and actions of this group are important in achieving the advocacy objective in so far as they affect the opinions and actions of the decision makers. Some members of a primary audience can also be a secondary audience if they can influence other decision makers. For example, the Prime Minister and a Minister might influence one another's opinions. Therefore, they are both a primary audience (targets) and a secondary audience (influentials).

In addition, your secondary audience may contain oppositional forces to your objective. If so, it is extremely important to include these groups on your list, learn about them, and address them as part of your strategy.

Changes must be made to achieve your objective. Identify the people who have the power to make or prevent these changes. These are the people you want to reach and convince to make the changes. They are your primary audience. Then identify the people who can influence these individuals in your primary audience. They are your secondary audience.

Secondary audiences may play dual roles: In the programme's launching stage, they may actually be the priority target audience. The programme should make sure mediators are equipped with the technical and communication skills necessary to be effective advocates or motivators

Some possibilities for both primary and secondary policy audiences:

- Politicians (local, provincial, national)
- Government officials (local, provincial and national)
- Businesses or business leaders
- Other civil society organizations or networks
- Sector partners
- CBOs and other community groups
- Religious groups/churches
- Labor organizations and other social organisations
- Academics/universities and researchers
- Professionals and consultants
- Opposition leaders

- Speech writers
- Spouses of politicians
- Media
- Women’s organizations
- Ministry officials and ambassadors
- Development agencies
- Government departments
- Direct service organizations
- Practitioners
- Opinion leaders and influential people in a certain field
- Many, many more...

The people and groups in the primary and secondary audiences can be further divided into supporters, opponents and undecided. Many of the people in your audience will not yet clearly take a position on your objectives. Advocates work to move the primary and secondary audience into active supporters so that the objectives can be achieved and sustained.

Beneficiaries, the individuals and groups who will benefit from achievement of the objectives and goals, are an especially important advocacy audience. As supporters, they can become powerful and committed advocates. Their personal testimony can raise awareness and concern about the problems being addressed by your advocacy goal.

Division of your target audience:

Supporters: individuals and groups who agree with your advocacy objectives and goal

Opponents: individuals and groups whose **opposition** to the objectives is already known

Undecided: individuals and groups who have **not taken a position** on the objective

5. Message Development and Delivery

One of the most effective ways to build awareness about your issues and to generate backing for your goals is to divide your audience into groups and develop a message to which each group will respond.

Definition of a message:

A message is a concise and persuasive statement about your advocacy goal that captures what you want to achieve, why and how. Since the underlying purpose of a message is to create action, your message should also

Five key elements of messages:

Content is only one part of a message. Other non-verbal factors such as who delivers the message, where a meeting takes place or the timing of the message can be as, or more, important than the content

Suggested message content:

Messages to decision makers should be short, concise, and persuasive. Even if the decision maker is not a politician, it can be beneficial to communicate (sometimes subtly) how your proposal enhances his or her

Suggested message formats:

- formal or informal face-to-face meetings
- informal conversations at social, religious, political, or business gatherings
- letters: personal, organizational, or coalition
- briefing meetings
- program site visits
- fact sheets
- pamphlets or brochures
- graphics or illustrations
- short video presentations
- power point presentations
- overhead or slide presentations
- newspaper articles or advertisements
- broadcast commentary or coverage

Messages are the concepts we want our key audiences to know. They express, in a nutshell, core ideas about the programme. Message statements provide guidance to those preparing communications materials, ensuring that the information being communicated about the programme is consistent and supportive of its goals. It is important to deliver a consistent message using multiple channels over time.

Messages are key items that everyone in the programme should know and agree with. A message is not the same as a slogan. A slogan is usually a few words that sum up the message. For example, the message “We can eradicate poverty by 2005” could be summed up in the slogan “Wipe out poverty!” Message themes can be a few sentences that explain the main ideas. These themes should be the basis of all communications such as pamphlets, speeches, interviews, submissions and petitions.

Everyone involved in the programme should understand the message and stay on it - one spokesperson contradicting the message can ruin a campaign. Coordination of messages is vital to help ensure that these various messages are not perceived as contradictory or in competition.

The programme should have two groups of messages:

- **“Big picture” messages**, suitable for all audiences. They should describe the MCSSP as a coordinated, dynamic and credible programme that have a definite role to play and will provide systematic, reliable and easy-to-use information and services that are critical to the sector.
- **Specialised messages** are targeted at specific key audiences. These specialized messages address the audiences’ misconceptions or concerns about civil society and the MCSSP, describe civil society will benefit them, and encourage participation with the MCSSP and civil society

While the theme may be broad, effective communication requires focus. To make the most effective use of limited resources, the focus should be on selected issues believed to be critical, and on the specific target groups that have been shown to need attention.

6. Channels of Communication

Good communication cuts through the clutter, it doesn't add to it. It does this by getting the right message, in the right medium, delivered by the right messengers, to the right audience

MCSSP advocacy and communication should be delivered through a variety of channels ranging from media, web-based dissemination vehicles to persuasion techniques including lobbying, face-to face negotiation, publications and public debate, etc. Both electronic and print media are critical to the success of our planned advocacy.

A multiple-channel, multimedia approach is needed. Channels of communication reinforce one another. It is best to combine channels (e.g., interpersonal with print media, e-mail with face-to-face and/or group communication) rather than focus on only one. Possible combinations are limitless. A research-based and comprehensive IEC approach encompasses a combination of the best ways to reach an audience (this combination is also called a "**media mix**")

Proposed channels of communications:

- Written and printed material
- Media
- Web-based vehicles
- Face-to face negotiation
- Partner organisations
- Publications
- E-mail
- Forums and core groups
- Networks and social organizations
- Dialogue
- Service providers
- Political and opinion leaders
- Indigenous and local systems of information
- CBOs
- Woman, religious and youth groups
- Ward committees
- Community development workers
- Partner and industry newsletters and forums

7. Building Support

In advocacy, we constantly build networks among people and sometimes coalitions among organizations in order to bring about change. Often you can do together what no one can do alone. Networks and coalitions take time and energy to develop and maintain because they involve building relationships of trust with other people.

Definition of a network:

A network consists of individuals or organizations willing to assist one another or collaborate.

How do you meet potential network members?

It is important to build an open and trusting relationship from the beginning. Here are just a few ways to start building trust with people:

- collaborate on projects of mutual interest;
- help bring attention to their work;
- assist them with special projects;
- share information with them;
- attend their meetings and invite them to yours.

Who should be in the network?

You will want to get to know people and organizations that are working toward the same objective as you are. You will also want to include people who can influence decision makers in your network, and, if possible, the decision makers themselves.

Many advocates increase their visibility by forming or joining networks and coalitions. Networks are most effective when there is a common goal and clear roles/norms within the group. Beyond the network's membership, it is important to build support with other stakeholders such as community members, universities, government, research institutes, etc. Often, the power of advocacy is found in the numbers of people who support your goal.

8. Budget for success

Most activities, including advocacy, require resources. Sustaining an effective advocacy effort over the long-term involves budgeting for success. With no budget for these efforts, alternative funds should be raised.

Too often, fundraising is seen as the poor stepchild of advocacy, but without resources our effort cannot survive. Therefore, seeking resources must be integrated into the strategy from the beginning.

It should be part of the strategy to expand and diversify our funding base. If the current budget has limited scope for urgent and short term advocacy and communication activities, alternative funding should be sourced.

9. Implementation

Change is often seen as a threat creating fear, especially when the change is ending familiar practices. However, when the change is not visible in practice but only in name, it will not change the perception. Therefore this strategy should be –action

The activities as highlighted in this strategy provide an indication of the key activities required to support the achievement of the advocacy and communications strategy. These will be developed in more detail in the Implementation and action Plan that will follow this strategy

Activities should be strategically planned and incorporated in all provincial Business Plans

10. Evaluation and Monitoring

Evaluating the effectiveness of communications effort is challenging, as it often involves trying to measure changes in attitudes. It is essential that we have a clear idea of what outcomes we expect from our communications activities and that those outcomes are expressed as clearly articulated goals that are realistic and do-able. Without knowing where we are trying to go, we cannot measure whether we have arrived there.

The strategy will build in evaluation mechanisms in critical activities and interventions.

11. Research and Collection of Data

Definition of data and research:

Quantitative or qualitative information gathered through an objective process.

It is often said that the facts speak for themselves. If this is true, then why don't more decision makers base their actions on objective data and research? Why is it that so much good research and data is never used to influence policy? The policy process, that is, selecting one policy option from among several choices, is essentially a negotiation among various actors. In order to be included in the negotiation process, data and research must be translated into information and presented in formats that policy makers and decision makers can understand and use. In this way, the facts can be made to speak the language of policy makers, community leaders, advocates, the public and the media, and the influence of data and research will be amplified.

Data and research are essential for making informed decisions when choosing a problem to work on, identifying solutions to the problem, and setting realistic goals. In addition, good data itself can be the most persuasive argument. Gathering and utilizing accurate, timely information supports all phases of the advocacy process

Successful advocacy relies on well-researched data and information. People who are undecided or even opposed are frequently convinced by statistics that support an advocacy position. Perhaps even more powerful is personal testimonies of people in need or success stories.

12. Media Relations

The media can be a powerful tool for building wide support for our advocacy and communication goals and the MCSSC should incorporate media outreach into our advocacy and communication plans. If we use the media effectively, the MCSSP can become well known and respected. Also, using the media will make us more transparent and accountable to the public and will help to build our reputation and influence.

Definition of media:

Any organized system that delivers information to large numbers of people. Media include radio, television, newspapers, trade journals or community newsletters etc.

Suggested message content:

The press generally likes to know how a situation affects individuals and often reports human interest stories. The media are also usually interested in new, groundbreaking information or how an issue relates to a current happening.

Suggested message formats:

- news release
- press conference or media event
- issue briefing for journalists
- graphics or illustrations
- fact sheet or back ground sheet
- media packet/press kit
- letter to the editor

The advantages civil society has with the media:

- The media are service-oriented
- You're the underdog
- You serve the public
- The "halo" effect

13. Good Presentations

Opportunities to influence key audiences are often limited. A decision maker may grant you one meeting to discuss your issue, or a minister may have only five minutes at a conference to speak with you. Careful and thorough preparation of convincing arguments and presentation style can turn these brief opportunities into successful advocacy. If you have one chance to reach a decision maker, what do you want to say and how will you say it?

Meeting with decision makers or other important audiences is where preparation meets opportunity. Often, these opportunities are brief and you may have only one chance to make your case, so making a presentation that will persuade and inspire your audience requires solid preparation and also skills.

A large part of effective advocacy depends on the relationships advocates develop with decision makers, influentials and other key audiences. The stronger the ties of trust, mutual support, and credibility between advocate and audience, the more effective that advocate will be.

14. Position Papers and Reports

Definition of a position paper:

A position paper is a one-page statement of your organization's position on a particular issue. A position paper is often used as the basis for describing your efforts to

the public and to the data you can find, and from whom the data increase your credibility in fact sheets.

Each person involved needs to know the group's position on the advocacy goal and objectives almost by heart and be able to respond to questions without hesitation.

Definition of a fact sheet:

Fact sheets list facts about your issue or a particular topic. Fact sheets sum up the issues in a few words. They also frequently contain data that are of interest to the

When writing fact sheets, make sure you use the most current footnote or indicate where and originated. This will greatly the eyes of people who use the

15. Skills

development

The work we do as civil society is to improve the lives of others. Ultimately, we are effective only when we are competent. The change we seek through this strategy will elude us forever if we do not bring the right skills to bear on the problems we so desperately wish to solve.

The goal is to equip all MCSSC members and provincial operators with the skills to promote the work of the programme while increasing support for its activities within the strategy.

The business of talking to the media and developing allies and partners should be followed through to all levels of the programme. The challenge will be to promote a communication and advocacy culture throughout the organization, at all levels.

It is not enough and sustainable to make singular, one-time interventions. Members need to be empowered with the ability to implement advocacy and effective communications

16. Prepare to handle opponents

Advocacy frequently generates opposition. Our opponents work just as diligently as we do to present their position as the correct one. Opponents may negatively portray or publicly denounce your group and its activities, and, in some cases, be very personal.

Whether the opposition is mild or strong, you should be prepared to address it in a way that is most beneficial to your own efforts. To do this effectively one should undertake thorough opponent research and use this information to prepare your position paper. You will also need to inform the public of your findings about your opponents so the public can place your opponents' position in proper context. The public needs to know how your opponent has opposed your issue and why his or her efforts will have a negative effect on your case