

# UMHLABUYALINGANA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY



## COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

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**Theme: “A people centered municipality that promote the quality of life”**

## **1. Background**

### **1.1 Geographic Location of UMhlabuyalingana**

UMhlabuyalingana is one of the four local municipalities that comprise UMkhanyakude District Municipality. UMhlabuyalingana is located in the northern KwaZulu-Natal along the border with Mozambique to the north, the Indian Ocean to the east, Jozini Municipality to the West and Hlabisa Big Five Municipality to the south. The Municipality is generally rural, with the population being spread among the 18 wards and four traditional council areas (Tembe, Mashabane, Mabasa and Zikhali).

### **1.2 Situational Analysis**

The UMhlabuyalingana Municipality is situated in the north Eastern part of KwaZulu-Natal. The Municipality has area of 3621 km<sup>2</sup> and a population of 172077, with an average household size of 5 people per household, according to Statistics South Africa 2016 Community Survey. The municipality has a rural character with 99% of the municipality classified as rural. Nearly 60% of the municipality area falls under traditional authority ownership, with the remaining 40% consisting of commercial farms and conservation area.

### **1.3 Municipal Structures and Functions**

The Municipality is well capacitated and structured to perform its legislative mandate, with all functions in the municipality delegated to the municipal manager and five departments to assist him in the execution of duties. The municipality is mandated to perform the functions allocated to it by section 84 of the Municipal Systems Act (No 32 of 2000).

## **2. Introduction**

The communication Strategy provides a framework for delivering UMhlabuyalingana Municipality Strategic Plan goals, strategies and outcomes.

The Communication Strategy sets out a two tiered approach to communication planning:

- **Planned campaigns** will run at various times of the year to promotes and market specific services, programs, activities and events.
- **Ongoing media activity** underpins the campaigns with ongoing delivery of key messages to all target audiences.

Through communicating ongoing key messages in a positive way, UMhlabuyalingana Municipality will build a stronger links, trust and value perceptions with the community.

Umhlabuyalingana Municipality website is the gateway for the community to find out detailed information and to provide links to opportunities for two way communication.

More two-way communication between UMhlabuyalingana Municipality and its target audiences will provide a platform for better community engagement.

Within the communication Strategy, there is scope for ongoing support of major community events and activities through sponsorship arrangements, with tailored messages as appropriate.

### **3. UMhlabuyalingana Municipality Vision, Mission Statement and Core Values**

- **Vision**

To be a people centered premier socio-economic development and environmentally friendly service delivery municipality

- **Mission Statement**

“Creating an enabling environment and sustainable development which promotes quality of life”

- **Core Values**

Commitment

Responsibility

Accountability

Transparency

## **4. The Purpose of the Communication Strategy**

### **4.1 Primary Purpose**

Primary purpose of the strategy is to present mechanisms and guidelines for communication between internal and external environment of the municipality. It is further in the interest of the strategy that could be used in formulating the municipal policy on communication.

### **4.2 Primary Focus**

Primary focus of the strategy is on determining the manner in which communication should occur internally between:

- Departments on their programmes and projects
- Head of Departments
- HOD's and subordinates

External communication will on the other hand focus on facilitating communication between:

- Municipality and community organizations
- Municipality and business community
- Municipality and any other interested and affected stakeholder.
- Municipality and the community at large.
- Municipality and other Government Departments

Most importantly the strategy focuses or alludes to the number of intervention of programmes aimed at strengthening the communications between the stakeholders, strengthening the social responsibility of the municipality and further harmonizing the relationship that the municipality has with the community at large.

Based on the abovementioned focus areas, the strategy tables a detailed action plan for all activities to be undertaken in promoting and pursuit of effective communication within the municipality.

## **5. Legislative Requirements**

In terms of chapter 4 of the Municipal Systems Act, the Municipalities are encouraged to strive for maximum participation of its citizens to its various programmes. Again the Promotion of Access to Information Act of 2000 further asserts the need for accessibility of the municipal information based on certain conditions as stipulated by the municipality. Furthermore the white paper on local government defines

developmental local government as government that is committed in working with its citizens. Undoubtedly the central focus of the abovementioned legislation revolves around the effective communication between the municipality and its constituencies.

## **6. Context and Scope of Communication Strategy**

Umhlabuyalingana Municipality Communication Strategy is formulated within the context of government's electoral mandate and pursuant to the government vision of contributing to and promoting the creation of a better life for all – communication is important and central to all key decision of government.

- It is within the government mandate (national mandates, main focus being rural development) which links the strategy to the Outcome 9, OSS, vision 2030 & basic service delivery.
- The communications strategy is for 4 years ending 2020 which will be reviewed annually, linked to the electoral cycle and updated annually in order to be relevant in dealing with issues within the environment.

(It is also informed by the State of the Nation Address, (State of the Province Address and provincial EXCO Lekgotla – for provinces), the National Communication Strategy, government's programme of action as identified by the Cabinet Lekgotla of January, departmental strategic plan and objectives and the MTSF).

Among other things, this strategic framework identifies communication priorities, strategic emphases, core messages and themes.

## **7. Key Objectives of the Strategy**

- To reinforce and increase accountability through the communication process.
- Obtain public buy-in through information sharing and educating processes.
- Provide accessible cost effective service delivery and to communicate this message to our stakeholders.
- Establish communication platforms where the community needs are communicated to the municipality and vice versa.
- Establish customer care desk to disseminate information and assist the public with queries and complaints.
- Adopt an integrated approach, involving all stakeholders to bridge the communication gaps.
- Empower local communities by keeping them informed about local government issues and how they can participate in these processes.
- Communicate all municipal processes, priorities and outcomes to stakeholders.
- Create awareness of the role that Umhlabuyalingana Municipality plays amongst its stakeholders.
- Improve and encourage good media relations.
- Establish a comprehensive diary of events for the municipality.

- Promote interactive and pro-active governance and direct communication programmes with communities with UMhlabuyalingana Municipality. Encourage all stakeholders to participate effectively in Umhlabuyalingana Municipality programmes, projects and activities.
- Raise awareness of the achievements of the UMhlabuyalingana Municipality and the programmes And service delivered.
- Promote and market the investment potential of the Umhlabuyalingana Municipality.
- Promote the corporate identity and image of Umhlabuyalingana Municipality.

## 8. Communication Objectives

- a) **To better inform the community** of the services and activities carried out by UMhlabuyalingana Municipality in line with the goals outlined in Council’s Strategic Plan. Advertising, editorial and other printed and electronic media are to be used, all providing links to UMhlabuyalingana Municipality website. Community events also allow a good platform for this ‘educate and inform’ component of strategy.
- b) **To enhance and encourage two-way communication** with all members of the community. Digital and social media are to be used all providing links to UMhlabuyalingana website. In person at Council Forums, Elected Member public meetings (for examples, at shopping centres and markets) and community events also assist in encouraging two-way communication.
- c) **To drive community participation and engagement** with the Council, programs, activities and events provided by or supported by the UMhlabuyalingana Municipality. A combination of advertising, editorial, digital and social media supported by other channels are to be used, along with targeted community engagement activities. Additionally, communications are to be created specific to each event, program or activity to achieve this objective.

## 9. Communication Challenges

- Illiteracy
- Cross boarder dynamics which affects the language.
- Vast locations of the community within the municipality.

## 10. Messengers

- Our political principals are the chief spokespersons of the municipality.
  - **The Mayor/Deputy Mayor**
  - **The Speaker**
  - **EXco members & Senior Management**

## 11. Key Messages

- Umhlabuyalingana Local Municipality strives to create a municipality which is environmentally sustainable.
- Umhlabuyalingana Local Municipality is forward thinking, progressive and inclusive organisation, delivering a range of services and programs for all members of the community.
- Umhlabuyalingana Local Municipality is a great place to live, work and tourism.
- Umhlabuyalingana Local Municipality collaborates with a wide range of partners and supports initiatives which help deliver a positive, health lifestyle and a cohesive community.
- Umhlabuyalingana Local Municipality listens and engages with issues identified by the wider community
- Umhlabuyalingana Local Municipality the Mayor and Speaker provide a two –way link with members of the community.
- Umhlabuyalingana Local Municipality is an organisation committed to responsible governance.
- Umhlabuyalingana Local Municipality is open to two –way communication between all members of Umhlabuyalingana Municipality, the municipality employees and elected members or Cllrs.
- Umhlabuyalingana Local Municipality collaborates with all levels of government, creating partnerships to ensure the best outcomes for the municipality.

## 12. Target Audiences

Umhlabuyalingana Local Municipality target audiences each have specific information and communication requirements. Different target audiences consume media in different ways with digital and social media usage increasing across most target audience groups.

A target audience centred approach to communication will allow communication planning to be broken down into strategies that can be customised for each target audience groups.



**Target audience 1: The UMhlabuyalingana community – those who live, work and take part in Umhlabuyalingana municipality life.**

This group consists of a number of sub-groups, including:

- ✓ Young people aged 12-20
- ✓ Students
- ✓ Families with young children
- ✓ Men and Women aged 20- 45
- ✓ Men and Women 45+
- ✓ Defence community
- ✓ Seniors
- ✓ Persons with disability
- ✓ Culturally and linguistically diverse groups
- ✓ Ratepayers
- ✓ New arrivals in uMhlabuyalingana Municipality
- ✓ Community Groups
- ✓ Schools

**Targets audience 2:** Mayor and Elected Members (Cllrs)

**Targets audiences 3:** businesses, retailers, business organisations and peak bodies.

**Targets audience 4:** Non – Umhlabuyalingana residents – territory wide and interstate visitors, potential investors, sister municipality communities

**Targets audience 5:** Media

**Targets audience 6:** National government, provincial government and Local government (other municipalities)

### 13. Ongoing Media Presence

Key messages will be communicated through ongoing media throughout the year to all target audience groups via the UMhlabuyalingana Municipality Website, Social media, monthly advertising presence in newspapers, and media releases DC presence to LM media segments. This ongoing media activity will help deliver the overall communication objectives for the strategy.

#### Public Relations Approach

Regular media releases will be issued to generate editorial coverage across all major media types, media releases to include information related to:

- ✓ Council meeting announcements, news and key decisions
- ✓ Promotion of community events and programs
- ✓ Mayor comments on current issues
- ✓ UMhlabuyalingana Municipality 'good news' stories
- ✓ Updates in emergency situations

The mayor to use regular spots on radio slots to underpin current key community messages in line with issued media releases.

The monthly Mayor's briefing provides an excellent opportunity for more in depth coverage of key topics.

Noted: The current Communication Policy sets out the spokespeople for UMhlabuyalingana Local Municipality:

- The Mayor of Umhlabuyalingana LM is the principal spokesperson for the uMhlabuyalingana Municipality, with the Communications Officer being the first contact for all enquiries.

In general, the Mayor and Elected Members are the spokespeople on the policy matters and senior managers are the spokespersons on operational matters.

#### ▪ Issues Management

From time to time the UMhlabuyalingana Municipality will need to put together plans to respond to an emergency situation, crisis or other major issue.

Key stakeholders will be involved in creating an overall plan to managing the issue through all of its phase, using all available media channels to reach audience as required.

- **Community Engagement**

Community engagement communications will take place on a project by project basis throughout the year. Community engagement activities such as public forums and workshops, face to face and web based communication will be considered for each project. Activities adopted will be in line with the level of community engagement for each project.

- **UMhlabuyalingana Website**

The website is the gateway for the community to find out detailed information and to provide links opportunities for two-way communication. The website address is to be used in all communications and where appropriate.

Content on the website is updated on an ongoing basis, and kept up to date with timely news stories releases and events listings.

- **Social Media**

All digital and social media presence will link back to the Umhlabuyalingana Local Municipality website for further detailed information.

Twitter will continue to be used by Umhlabuyalingana Municipality news updates, promotion of Umhlabuyalingana municipality programs and events and emergency communications (e.g. updates in the event of cyclone Dineo).

UMhlabuyalingana Municipality Facebook page will be launched as a communication tool for the community to stay informed about significant news, events, programs and activities. The Facebook page will also permit active two-way communication with the Umhlabuyalingana Community.

In addition, Facebook is used to support specific programs (for examples, bombing of Umhlabuyalingana, healthy Umhlabuyalingana, Libraries and youth services).

- **E-Newsletters**

It is recommended the UMhlabuyalingana Municipality develop a plan for the rollout of e-newsletter to support key messages across different target audience groups. This approach is in line with an overall trend leaning towards digital communication for delivering timely information

to target audience groups. It also supports the Umhlabuyalingana Municipality goals moving towards a more environmentally sustainable municipality, and will, over time, reduce the Umhlabuyalingana Municipality reliance on paid for advertising to share news, promote events, programs and activities.

E-newsletters also provide a platform for two-way communication with the community (ability to click through to social media location and provide easy feedback via emails or posts).

Acquisition of email addresses distribution of e-newsletter could take place via:

- ✓ Cards to fill out information (with drop boxes) at the UMhlabuyalingana Municipality Libraries, the Customer Services desk and at community events.
- ✓ Investigation of the existing email registers for use.
- ✓ Social media activities.
- ✓ Response card in rates notices.

▪ **Sponsorship**

Umhlabuyalingana Municipality supports a number of key events and programs in Umhlabuyalingana via sponsorship, either cash, in-kind or a combination of both.

All existing sponsorships are reviewed as contracts expire on an ongoing basis. All approaches made to Umhlabuyalingana Municipality for sponsorship are assessed against a number of criteria, including:

- ✓ Alignment of goals and values, evidence of long term benefit to the Umhlabuyalingana Municipality.
- ✓ Enables activity to take place in uMhlabuyalingana; promote economic growth, community participation and broad access for the community.
- ✓ Promotes or supports specific business, industry or economic goals, cultural, art or social goals or supports healthy lifestyle or supporting goals.
- ✓ Opportunity for promoting Umhlabuyalingana Municipality and leveraging media presence
- ✓ Risk assessment analysis is acceptable
- ✓ Demonstrable return on investment

#### **14. Primary Communication Channels for Campaigns**

In addition to the media activity, planned campaigns will deliver tailored messages to specific target audience groups. Paid for advertising and other marketing tools and activities, supported by the ongoing media presence will be used to achieve each campaign's objectives. Detailed plans for campaigns will be developed each year in line with available budgets.

- **Newspapers**

The Ilanga, Isolezwe, Zululand Observer are three Major newspapers available for coverage of all key target audiences. It is recommended that newspapers are used for advertising, and to communicate the council stories.

- **TV**

TV is also a key medium to target via media releases and the Mayor's briefing to drive editorial coverage within news and current affairs programs.

- **Radio**

Due to there being relatively few commercial /community radio stations available in Umhlabuyalingana, Maputaland Community Radio has been identified as one of the medium that will be used to communicate the council news and advertising. Ukhozi FM and other radio stations will also be considered for advertising and the Mayor's briefing to drive editorial coverage within news and current affairs programs.

- **Magazines/Newsletters**

Umhlabuyalingana Newsletters magazines are distributed free of charge each Quarter in Umhlabuyalingana. These Magazines/ Newsletters offer opportunities to generate editorial coverage of significant events as well as allowing more detailed information to be imparted to support major campaigns through the year.

- **Online Advertising**

Online Advertising offers the opportunity to target the Umhlabuyalingana Community on selected messages can be tailored by each campaign and user can easily click through to the website for further information

▪ **Other Media Channels**

Other media channels such as community noticeboards, Posters and flyers will be used throughout the year to support campaigns and overall key messages.

**15. Communication Plan Development**

Key messages will be communicated through ongoing media activity through the year to all target audience groups.

In addition to the ongoing media activity, planned campaigns will deliver tailored messages to specific target groups.

Communication plans will be developed for campaigns for each year based on available budgets. Specific messages tailored for individual campaign goal and objectives will be developed and media channels will be selected to best achieve the campaign goals.

**Appendix 1: Communication Channels**

As Communications plans for campaigns for the year are developed, the following list of available Communication channels will be considered for use.

<p><b>OFFLINE</b> Advertising:  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Newspapers</li> <li>-Magazines</li> <li>-TV</li> <li>-Community noticeboards</li> <li>-Posters and street pole banners</li> </ul> Community Events and sponsorships:  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Banners</li> <li>-Programs</li> <li>-Signage</li> <li>-Elected Member presence</li> </ul> </p>	<p><b>ONLINE</b> <u>Existing channels:</u>  <a href="http://www.umhlabuyalingana.gov.za">www.umhlabuyalingana.gov.za</a>  Facebook  Email signatures  E-newsletter   <u>New Channels</u>  Online advertising (Facebook, media sites)  YouTube   Community Engagement activities through new and existing channels</p>
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<p>Community engagement activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Forums and Workshops</li> <li>-Word Storming</li> <li>-Ward Committees</li> </ul> <p>Elected Member presence at shopping centres</p> <p>Leaflets and booklets</p> <p>Branded place-name signage</p> <p>Sponsorships</p> <p>Messages – on – hold</p> <p>Newsletters</p> <p>Media releases and LM speeches</p> <p>Posters and flyers (Libraries and Customer Service Area)</p> <p>Customer Services Area</p> <p>Annual Report</p> <p>Rates notices</p> <p>Public forum (preceding Council meetings)</p> <p>Local Government Focus magazine</p> <p>Loud hailers</p> <p>Public Participation Meetings</p> <p>Traditional Media</p>	<p>Live streaming</p> <p><a href="mailto:www.info@mhlbuyalingana.gov.za">www.info@mhlbuyalingana.gov.za</a></p>
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### 16. Programme

The communications programme is the guide for all future action, the standard against which the success or failure of communication is measured, the most critical means for keeping the campaign on track.

PROGRAMME	COMMUNICATIONS APPROACH	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMEFRAME
Annual Report Public Participation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Municipal newsletter</b></li> <li>• <b>Print &amp; electronic media</b></li> </ul>	<b>Office of the Municipal Manager</b>	<b>Quarter 3</b>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loud hailing</li> </ul>		
IDP Review Public Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipal newsletter</li> <li>• Print &amp; electronic media</li> <li>• Loud hailing</li> </ul>	Office of the Municipal Manager	Quarter 2
IDP/Budget Public Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipal newsletter</li> <li>• Print &amp; electronic media</li> <li>• Loud hailing</li> </ul>	Office of the Municipal Manager	Quarter 4
National Celebrations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipal newsletter</li> <li>• Print &amp; electronic media</li> <li>• Loud hailing</li> </ul>	Office of the Municipal Manager	National holidays
Mayoral Izimbizo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipal newsletter</li> <li>• Print &amp; electronic media</li> <li>• Loud hailing</li> </ul>	Office of the Municipal Manager	Quarterly
Municipal Events(Capital Projects Handovers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipal newsletter</li> <li>• Print &amp; electronic media</li> <li>• Loud hailing</li> </ul>	Office of the Municipal Manager	
Ad hoc Community Meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipal newsletter</li> <li>• Print &amp; electronic media</li> <li>• Loud hailing</li> </ul>	Office of the Municipal Manager	
Municipal Radio Slots	Local & National Radio Stations	Office of the Municipal Manager	Quarterly
Municipal Newsletter		Office of the Municipal Manager	Quarterly



## 17. Action Plan

EVENT/OPPORTUNITY	ACTIVITY	RESPONSIBILITY	CHANNELS	TIME FRAMES
Creating awareness to the community and encourage the culture of public participation	IDP PMS SDBIP	Office of the Municipal Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Municipal newsletter</b></li> <li>• <b>Print &amp; electronic media</b></li> <li>• <b>Loud hailing</b></li> </ul>	As per the municipal calendar
Creating public awareness	Road Safety Awareness Clean-up Campaign etc. HIV	Community Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Municipal newsletter</b></li> <li>• <b>Print &amp; electronic media</b></li> <li>• <b>Loud hailing</b></li> </ul>	As per the departmental calendar
Informing the community on the municipal projects	Launch of Capital Projects	Technical Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Municipal newsletter</b></li> <li>• <b>Media Briefings</b></li> <li>• <b>Print &amp; electronic media</b></li> <li>• <b>Loud hailing</b></li> </ul>	As and when projects are completed
Maximize and mobilize community participation in local economic development initiatives	LED and Tourism Awareness, such as Tourism Month, World Tourism Day etc.	Technical Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Municipal newsletter</b></li> <li>• <b>Media Briefings</b></li> <li>• <b>Print &amp; electronic media</b></li> <li>• <b>Loud hailing</b></li> </ul>	As per the departmental calendar

Educating the community on municipal services	Community Education on payment for services and municipal rates  Indigent registration Campaigns  Council's draft budget	Financial Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Municipal newsletter</b></li> <li>• <b>Print &amp; electronic media</b></li> <li>• <b>Loud hailing</b></li> <li>• <b>Community Meetings</b></li> </ul>	As per the departmental calendar
Youth programmes to promote extra mural activities while creating the culture of participation in municipal activities	Sports, Culture – Indlamu, Heritage Day etc. Encourage “Read a Book a Day” Awareness Campaigns etc.	Community Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Municipal newsletter</b></li> <li>• <b>Print &amp; electronic media</b></li> <li>• <b>Loud hailing</b></li> <li>• <b>Municipal events</b></li> </ul>	As per the departmental calendar
Creating the culture of public participation	Community communication, Promoting and communicating all the Municipal Affairs via the Radio, Web site, News Letters, News Papers etc. Mayoral Izimbizo	Office of the Municipal Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Municipal newsletter</b></li> <li>• <b>Print &amp; electronic media</b></li> <li>• <b>Loud hailing</b></li> <li>• <b>Community Meetings</b></li> <li>• <b>Media briefings</b></li> </ul>	As per the municipal calendar

### 18. Media Engagement Plan

Media engagement plan is a critical part of a developed communications strategy.

ACTIVITY	MEDIA	TIMEFRAMES	RESPONSIBILITY	STATUS/REMARKS
Quarterly Report	Maputaland Community Radio Advertorial on national Newspapers	July- September	Office of the Municipal Manager	Ongoing
IDP Review, 2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter report	Maputaland Community Radio Advertorial on national Newspapers	October-December	Office of the Municipal Manager	Ongoing
Annual Report, Quarterly Report	Maputaland Community Radio Advertorial on national Newspapers	January-March	Office of the Municipal Manager	Ongoing
Budget, Quarterly Report	Maputaland Community Radio Advertorial on national Newspapers	April-June	Office of the Municipal Manager	Ongoing

## **19. Structure and Processes**

- Consultations with stakeholders.
- Approval – by management & council.

## **20. Monitoring & Evaluation Process**

The municipal communication strategy will be monitored and evaluated through the following processes

- 'Before and after' research to track awareness of the research among important audiences.
- Evidence of translation of research findings into policy or practice.
- Evaluation of participation in and feedback from municipal events and other activities of government (Izimbizo, etc.)
- Tracking media coverage including volume and nature of coverage.
- Tracking community discussion of the municipal programme or project.
- Tracking expenditure and also assist in sharing costs where the need arises with other departments.
- Help to deal with all unforeseen issues.
- Monitoring website usage.