

## **Founding Statement of the State-Owned Entities Communicators Association (SOECA)**

### **Introduction**

The strategic role of State Owned Entities in South Africa came to the fore in May 2013 when the Presidency released the report of the Presidential Review Committee on SOEs. Established in May 2010, the Review Committee was a response to the need to beef up policy on SOEs and to strengthen their role in the economy in particular and in society in general. Critically, the Committee was meant to assess how SOEs can respond to a clearly defined public mandate and support the developmental state aspirations of the South African Government.

One of the developmental state aspirations of the SA Government is an informed citizenry that can participate in the life of their nation and benefit from the country's democracy dividends. Therein lie the implications of this report for those who communicate and market the services of state owned entities.

The Committee found that there are 715 SOEs serving various commercial and non-commercial objectives across all spheres of Government. But the question has to be asked: do ordinary South Africans know and understand these entities, what their roles are and how they impact citizens' lives?

Do they take up their services and hold them accountable to their mandates?

The Committee has made a number of recommendations which have been accepted by Cabinet. While this is not the place to deal with these extensively, one thing that is certain is that change is coming to SOEs. Cabinet will be seeking to re-orient SOEs towards the goals of attaining the country's socioeconomic developmental goals and maximizing the operational efficiency and financial sustainability of these entities. An Inter-Ministerial Committee has been established to guide the implementation of the Review Committee's recommendations.

The reform SOEs are about to undergo, let alone their existing mandates and programmes, call for their communicators and marketers to review how they have been doing things and align their communication strategies to be in line with the re-orientation Government is taking. Apart from that, the reform process itself will need to be properly communicated. The above considerations set the scene for SOE communicators to organize themselves and prepare for what is about to unfold.

### **2. Best Practices from the Government and the Public Sector**

Formations of professionals within government and the public sector, both locally and internationally, are a common feature. Professionals stand to benefit more from such formations as they provide a platform for the promotion of their professions and the exchange of knowledge and ideas, among others.

In conceptualizing a body that represents SOE communicators, regards were given to similar bodies or platforms within the South African Government and public-sector space.

#### a. State Owned Enterprises Procurement Forum

This forum was incorporated as a Non-Profit Company in 2006. Its purpose is to share best practices in supply chain management by and within SOEs. Among its objectives are:

- To identify areas where synergies exist and to exploit these for the benefit of SOEs.
- To share information on global best practices in the procurement of goods and services.
- To facilitate the sourcing of Government funds for the training and development of BEE
- suppliers, with specific emphasis on black women, youth and people with disabilities.
- To promote Procurement as an integral function and profession.

The Forum is voluntary and consists of members who are procurement managers/executives from a number of SOEs. Its founding members include managers/executives from the following entities:

- Denel
- Petroleum Oil and Gas Corporation of South Africa (PetroSA)
- South African Post Office (SAPO)
- State Information Technology (SITA)
- Telkom

#### b. Government Communication Forums

The Government Communication and Information System runs a Government Communicators Forum (GCF) that meets quarterly and is attended by communicators from the three spheres of Government. Although SOE communicators do occasionally attend the GCF, its composition, programme and agenda have a bias towards government communications in the Public Service.

The GCIS also runs and coordinates other forums such as the Internal Communicators Forum. The is forum followed a Cabinet decision in 2006 in which GCIS was mandated to intensify internal communication within the Public Service and to enable public servants to better understand government policies and programmes and act as disseminators of reliable government information in their own communities.

Members of the forum are Heads of Internal Communication in national departments together with relevant support staff. Its purpose is to nurture internal communicators to become communication agents able to mobilize public servants to contribute towards better and effective communication between government and the people. The forum has its own webpage (within the GCIS website) and has a clear programme of action for an entire year with specific themes and campaigns.

Partners:



government  
communications  
Department  
Government Communication and Information System  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



There are several other forums like the above, involving chief financial officers in government, internal auditors, website managers and IT managers, among others. It is a practice from which SOE communicators can learn.

## **Association of SOE Communicators**

Having regard to the above and to other international experiences, it was proposed that SOE communicators organize and/or constitute themselves into an Association of SOE Communicators – an association that will become a mouthpiece of all communicators and marketers within SOEs.

On the 9<sup>th</sup> November 2014, SOECA was formed and officially launched at DBSA, Midrand as non-profit entity, by about 55 SOEs, namely, Prasa, Sanral, Land Bank, SAA, Eskom, Safcol just mention but a few. It was gigantic step in the SOEs fraternity.

It was not by accident that SOECA's formation attracted various institution who ultimately become its partners, namely, State Owned Entities Procurement Forum (SOEPF), Government Communicators Forum (GCF) under GCIS as well as Brand SA.

The Association advocates for the development, empowerment of SOE communicators, within the sector as well as the promotion of professional interaction with the media fraternity. As in a number of professions and specialized functions within the public sector, this body was formed so that SOE communicators have a platform through which they can share best practice and advance a collective agenda. This body is dedicated towards advancing the cause of SOE's as a strategic sector in both the economy and in the country in general, through communication.

## **Objectives**

- Pioneer and share best practices and professional standards in marketing and communications across SOEs and our industry partners.
- Facilitate the professional development of SOE communicators and marketers.
- Attract and retain creative and committed members.
- Share professional resources and expertise among SOE communicators and marketers.
- Network and maintain contact with one another and with government communicators, especially the Government Communication and Information System.
- Identify areas where synergies exist and exploit these for the benefit of SOEs.
- Promote the communications profession within SOEs.
- Improve communication within the SOE sector and between SOEs and the public.
- Recognize achievement in improving professionalism among SOE communicators and marketers and in furthering the public's understanding of the SOE sector.

## **Legal Persona of the SOECA**

Partners:



The SOECA shall be a membership-based organisation that has a separate legal persona from its members with perpetual succession and shall be autonomous subject to the provision of this Constitution

The SOECA's policies are determined by the members, which once adopted can only be changed in a duly constituted "Annual General Meeting" and its leadership is accountable to the members in terms of the processes and procedures laid down in this Constitution.

The SOECA is voluntary association of all various communicators and marketing practitioners by and within the state-owned entities in all spheres of government

The SOECA comprises of all state-owned entities communicators and marketing practitioners and has direct interest in dealing with various institutions that seek to promote the positive role of the SOEs such as State-Owned Entities Procurement Forum and such like bodies.

### **Membership Categories**

The Association shall have the following categories of membership: Active, Student, Retired, Honorary and Organisation/Agency, Associate as well as

#### **Among our strategic objectives are:**

- To develop, promote and sustain a positive image of SOE's;
- To leverage resources from the various SOE's to advance the core mandate of SOECA
- Provide strategic and collegial advice to members in areas of their work;
- Identify good news stories for external publication and utilize market intelligence to drive the SOECA agenda;
- To drive and create awareness around an integrated communication approach across SOE's;
- Providing professional reporting in a format that is easy to understand, to share progress and to track the success of communication; and
- Deliver impactful and leading – edge communication campaigns to educate and inform our stakeholders via multiple external channels (social media, opinion pieces, advertorials, etc)

#### **Current Executive Members: (5 years)**

- Congress Mahlangu: SOECA Executive President
- Wisani Ngoben: Deputy President – Gauteng Gambling Board
- Barileng Dichabe: Secretary General- Armscor
- Moemise Motsepe: Deputy SG- National Empowerment Fund
- Thabiso Magodiolo: Treasurer – Brand SA
- National Convenor: Kaizer Kganyago – SABC
- Raeesh Waja: Publicity Secretary- Eskom
- NW Provincial Convenor: Ida Dikeledi – Magalies Water
- WC Provincial Convenor: Kagiso Mamabolo- NSFAS
- Limpopo Provincial Convenor: Maruping Manyathela – Road Agency Limpopo
- Kzn Provincial Convenor: Siva Naidoo- KNZ Liquor Board
- GP Provincial Convenor: Sicelo Mkosi- Sars

Partners:



- **Additional Executive Members:**
- Siphon Makgaba: Bankseta
- Tahir Seema: SALGA
- Toni Gumede: Brand SA
- Nana Zenani: Prasa
- Sekgoela: PIC

### **SOECA's Programmatic intervention**

- a) **Annual SOE Communications Conference**  
This annual event will provide SOE communicators with practical educational sessions to help them increase their skills and network with each other.
- b) **SOE Communicators Awards**  
These awards, to be presented, in the second year after the inaugural SOE Communicators Conference, will honour those individuals who have brought forth their agencies' messages with excellence and high standards of professionalism.
- c) **Quarterly Forums**  
The association shall hold four (4) forums per annum, with a standing one which shall take place immediately after the President's State of the Nation Address (SoNA) in February of each year. This particular forum shall seek to unpack the SoNA and explore what implications it has for SOEs.
- d) **Mentorship Programme**  
The Association shall inaugurate a mentorship programme through it will match those who are just beginning in their careers with those who are experienced.
- e) **Commissioning of research**  
The Association will commission research in such areas as the number of SOE communicators, their qualifications, positions they hold, years of experience, salary levels, their communication budgets, and any other area(s) that can advance the work and understanding of SOE communicators.
- f) **SOECA Golf Day**  
The Association will seek to strengthen its presence amongst strategic stakeholders by holding annual golf day. Golf day will also constitute a key social responsibility of association, and it will be done under the theme: "playing for a boy child".

### **Conclusion:**

As a newly established body, SOECA adheres to all codes of good practice and does not seek to be influenced by any sector, be a political party/parties, private sector or any civil society. We endeavour to promote and protect the image of the SOE's in an uncompromising way and professional way.

Partners:



As a professional body, we remain independent and answerable to all SOEs Communicators and marketers who all believe that SOEs are main drivers towards a transformed and sustainable economy.

Ends

Partners:

