



KZN Human Settlements

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Kwabantu

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GUIDELINES FOR STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

In terms of The Republic of South Africa's Bill of Rights, everyone has the right to access to any information held by the state. This is also emphasised in the Principles of Batho Pele.

Although several measures exist through which consultation and communication currently takes place with the Department's stakeholders in the process of policy development and research, it has been noted that there is a lack of constructive participation by most stakeholders.

1.2 PURPOSE

Consultation and communication are proactive means to engage with staff and various stakeholders to help to determine or test policy options and identify any gaps and implementation resource needs that may have been overlooked. The way we consult and communicate is an essential part of bringing onboard our stakeholders to ensure success. Consultation through contact with key stakeholders is needed to ensure that input is taken from various perspectives. This is vital to ensure accuracy of content and to inform individuals within the target groups of the reason and purpose of the consultation. They will also be able to determine if the result will impact on them.

Keeping a record of who we have consulted and how we communicated with them is a necessary tool for future policy reviews. In addition to obtaining information, stakeholders can communicate their needs directly to the Component.

These guidelines aim to provide an appropriate consultation and communication process since this is paramount to the effective adoption, approval and implementation of policies, guidelines and procedures. It also incorporates Think-tanks as a forum where engagement between relevant stakeholders especially sector departments will participate in the effort to create integrated, sustainable human settlements. The process will help ensure that all the relevant stakeholders are properly consulted for the required purpose specifically on new policies or legislation, changes to existing policies, implementation strategies and the communication of this timeously.

1.3 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

More involvement and participation of interested stakeholders will be encouraged through a transparent consultation process that will enhance the Department's accountability.

A general standard for consultation and communication will be adopted to help the Component to rationalise its processes and be effective in achieving them in a meaningful and systematic manner. The process will provide coherence through mechanisms for feedback, evaluation and review.

An exchange of good practices, mutual learning and the effective communication of policy, strategy and research information must be promoted.

2. CONSULTATION PROCESS (Illustrated in Annexure 1)

Prior to initiating any consultation, the purpose of the consultation must be determined, who the target group will be, the consultation method and the expected completion date.

2.1 PURPOSE OF CONSULTATION

The Department nominates representatives to attend National task team/reference group meetings. The representative provides verbal input or comment at meetings or collates and submits comment or input from other relevant directorates to the National Department of Human Settlements as part of their consultation process in National strategy, Policy research and development.

At Provincial level there are various reasons for consultation to take place, these include, requests for policy information, research, guidance & advice, comments for development of new policy or legislation; debating, monitoring, evaluation & enhancement of existing policy/legislation/guidelines/procedures and, communication of new or enhanced policy/legislation/guidelines/procedures.

2.2 TARGET GROUP

The identification of the target group will depend on the nature and content of the policy being developed or evaluated, research project being undertaken, problem identified or information communicated. To ensure adequate coverage of the relevant stakeholders, they should include those affected by the policy, those involved in implementation and/or those that have a direct interest in the policy. These groups should be given an opportunity to express their opinions. A list of target groups relevant to the Department of Human Settlement is attached as Annexure B. This list is not exhaustive.

2.3 CONSULTATION METHODS

2.3.1 Telephone, Facsimile, E-mail or Regular mail

- ◆ Requests for policy guidance and advice received via regular mail, telephone, facsimile or e-mail should be responded to via the same or preferred method.
- ◆ Comments on draft policies/guidelines/procedures may be requested via e-mail from the identified target groups.

2.3.2 Website Publication

- ◆ New draft policies/guidelines/procedures or amendments to existing policy may be posted on a dedicated page on the website inviting comments. Open public consultations with external stakeholders like implementing agents and municipalities will be posted on the internet. In exceptional cases such as policies on internal procedures when confidentiality is required, consultation may be restricted to internal stakeholders through the use of the intranet.
- ◆ Internal and external stakeholders will have access to approved National and Provincial policy documents through publication on the Department's website.

2.3.3 Workshops, Information/Debate Sessions or Task Teams/Reference Groups

- ◆ Workshops/debate sessions with internal and/or external stakeholders will provide a forum for participation and contribution in policy research, development, evaluation and enhancement.
- ◆ Specific task teams or reference groups may be formed consisting of key stakeholders when consultation requires being more in-dept and frequent. This will include, but is not limited to a Human Settlements Think Tank (see 2.3.5, below)
- ◆ New or enhanced policies/guidelines/procedures will be communicated through Information sessions with internal and external stakeholders.

2.3.4 Policy Communiqué

- ◆ Policies/guidelines/procedures will be communicated through the publication of the Policy Communiqué to all stakeholders as and when they are approved. The Communiqué will be forwarded to all stakeholders through traditional mail and e-mail, when available, as well as be published on the Department's website. Policies in draft stage will also be posted on the Department's website for comment and stakeholders will be notified via e-mail of such posting.

2.3.5 KwaZulu-Natal Department of Human Settlements Think-Tank / Reference Group

- ◆ Policy related matters may also be referred to advisory bodies and / or reference groups of the MEC for Human Settlements and Public Works and or Head of Department for Department of Human Settlements, KwaZulu-Natal.

2.4 TIME FRAMES

A reasonable consultation period granted for adequate submission of comments on draft policies will be a minimum of 2 weeks (10 working days). Urgent cases where there is a need for swift decision-making or where stakeholders have already had sufficient opportunity to comment, the period may be shortened to 1 week (5 working days). The time frames for the Think-tanks will be informed by the proposed terms of reference. Cognisance needs to be taken of timing constraints for inputs requested from the National and/or other Departments.

2.5 APPLICATION

- ◆ All draft policies/guidelines/procedures inviting comments through the chosen method of consultation must provide a closing date for submission based on the suggested time frames.
- ◆ The responsible official's contact details including, telephone number, facsimile number and/or e-mail address must be included in the request for comments.
- ◆ Should there be significant input received, a revised draft will be developed and re-submitted for further consultation before proceeding for approval. Although

consultation may be required at more than one stage in the process, the extent of consultation will be determined by the Department in proportion to the subject being addressed.

- ◆ Receipt of contributions will be acknowledged either individually or by a collective response depending on the number received.
- ◆ All approved policy documents being communicated will, where appropriate and feasible, be made available in alternative formats to the visually and hearing impaired stakeholders in Braille or recorded tapes/compact disks.
- ◆ The operational issues of the Think-tanks / Reference Groups or advisory panels will be informed by the terms of reference.