



# **KRB Communications Policy**

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## Definition of Terms

**Communication Policy:** General principles that guide how Kenya Roads Board will communicate with all its stakeholders.

**External Communication:** The exchange of information and messages between KRB and other organizations, groups, or individuals outside its formal structure in order to facilitate cooperation with external stakeholders and to present a favorable image of KRB

**Internal Communication:** The sharing of information within KRB among staff and Board members for business and social purposes.

**KRB Staff:** Any person employed by the Board, as well as members of the KRB Board of Directors.

**Media:** a means of communication that reaches or influences people widely and rapidly where necessary.

**Material Information:** Any information relating to the business and affairs of KRB that when publicly released would significantly affect, or would reasonably be expected to have a significant effect on the image or reputation of the Board.

**Confidential Information:** Information not widely disseminated within or external to the KRB, which, if disclosed, would be unduly detrimental to the KRB's interests.

**General and Routine Information:** Information that would not otherwise be classified as confidential information, and which is not otherwise required to be kept confidential.

**Selective Disclosure:** Disclosure of confidential material information to one or more individuals or companies and not broadly to the consumers.

## Policy Statement

### Background

The Kenyan Constitution places a strong emphasis on strengthening public participation. The constitution in various chapters and clauses require that public participation to be undertaken at all levels of government before decision-making.

Article 35 of the Kenya Constitution states that every citizen has the right of access to information held by the State; and that the State shall publish and publicize any important information affecting the nation. The Information ACT, 2016 also gives guidelines on how information shall be handled, processed and publicized for public consumption. These propositions make the basis of this Policy document.

KRB is committed to providing a framework through which the organization can disseminate effective communications, capitalize on positive publicity and minimize the effects of negative media.

### Introduction

Communication is essential to an organization's success in the provision and development of effective services. The Communications Policy provides staff with information on how communications will be done.

Communication activities should always inform and educate, emphasizing on the Board's strengths and dealing with negative publicity in a positive manner. This policy acknowledges the importance for the Board to maintain a good reputation with its stakeholders, in order to capitalize on new opportunities and continue to be known as an organization that effectively and efficiently funds and oversees road maintenance and that by executing her mandate, KRB immensely contributes to a better quality of life in Kenya.

Communications have a number of benefits, including:

- Keeping stakeholders informed of the Board’s activities and events.
- Developing and improving services through feedback.
- Raising awareness of the organization’s achievements in quality, excellence and innovation.

**Purpose of the Policy**

This policy applies to all staff within the organization and relates to all types of internal and external communications. Communications should always be two-way, transparent and carried out in a timely and effective manner. Further, the policy shall ensure that KRB;

- I. Has guided communication execution in line with the strategic objectives.
- II. Speaks with one voice.
- III. Has coherent and consistent communication flow at all times
- IV. Listens to and provides feedback to stakeholders.
- V. KRB’s Staff deliver messages effectively and efficiently.
- VI. Has a basis for a co-coordinated approach to communicating with its stakeholders.

**Implementing the Policy**

**Functions and Responsibilities**

**Executive Director**

The Executive Director has ultimate responsibility for all communications made by and on behalf of Kenya Roads Board.

The Access to Information ACT, 2016 states that the Chief Executive Officer of a public entity shall be an information access and may delegate the performance of his or her duties as an information access officer under this Act to any officer of the public entity.

The Executive Director is the only Spokesperson for KRB and has a duty to speak truthfully and openly to the best of his/her knowledge regarding KRB, subject to the disclosure restrictions as expounded in this policy.

### **General Managers, Managers & Deputy managers**

All managers and deputy managers have a responsibility to establish effective communication systems within their areas of responsibility. They should ensure that all staff are aware of the contents of this Policy and develop a culture in which staff feel able and confident to share ideas or concerns. Further, managers and deputy managers have a responsibility to manage and monitor noticeboards within their scope of responsibility to ensure that the content is up to date, relevant and compliant with Board's policies.

### **Staff Members**

All media enquiries received by members of staff, should be forwarded to the Communications team immediately for a response. If the request is being received verbally (i.e. telephone conversation), staff should take details of the request, forward them onto the Communications team and inform the caller that a member of staff will call them back shortly. Staff should not be tempted to provide a response themselves and should not pass the caller directly through to the Communications team.

### **Board of Directors**

If approached by the media, they should direct all calls to the Communications team through the General Manager Legal and Corporate Affairs department, who will deal with the enquiry as appropriate.

### **Legal and Corporate Affairs Communications Team**

The Legal and Corporate Affairs Communications Team works to develop the reputation of the Board and manage expectations of stakeholders by ensuring clear and open communication channels are maintained.

**The team’s main functions include:**

- I. Be the focal point for information exchange between KRB and its various publics;
- II. Provide a unified channel for information dissemination;
- III. Organize media briefings; and the provision of media training for the Board and Staff;
- IV. Produce and distribute information items and articles including, publications, and press releases;
- V. Assist departments and General Managers with the analysis of their Communications needs and the implementation of the requisite communications programmes and activities;
- VI. Undertake all event planning and management as may be necessary.

They will receive notification of media enquiries either directly from the media themselves or from a member of staff. On receipt of this information the team will ensure that an appropriate and timely response is provided and the details of the enquiry and response are recorded. It is the responsibility of the Legal and Corporate Affairs Communications team to ensure that this policy is implemented and maintained.

**Channels of Communication**

The Board shall receive and send communications using various methods to reach both internal and external stakeholders. These may include, but not limited to, staff monthly bulletins, internal staff portal, press briefings, forms of social media (e.g. Twitter, YouTube, Facebook etc), KRB website, public meetings, exhibitions, radio interviews, television appearances etc.

Cognizant to our diversity, all communications should comply with the Disability Discrimination Act, and use positive images and language in order to promote equality and diversity.

Communications in a variety of formats, for example braille, audio or other languages, should also be made available to cater for the needs for persons with disability.

## **Internal Communications**

KRB staff are its biggest asset and they act as the day-to-day ambassadors for the Board. Developing effective staff communication, involvement and participation skills is essential for the Board's operations and reputation. Staff play a vital role in relaying messages to stakeholders and therefore form an essential part of the Board's overall development of stakeholder participation and partnership.

When communicating internally, all messages should be consistent with the Board's values, up to date, relevant and presented in a clear and concise manner. They should be available in a range of different formats and disseminated in a manner appropriate for the type and nature of the communication.

The Corporate and Legal Affairs Communications team will take the lead in facilitating and promoting effective staff communication strategies and will offer advice and support to managers as requested.

Internal communications may take various forms, such as but not limited to team briefings, one on one meetings, staff portal communications, monthly bulletins, and emails.

## **External Communications**

Kenya Roads Board communicates with a wide range of external stakeholders. These stakeholders may include the Ministry of Transport, Infrastructure, Housing and Urban Development, Road Agencies (KeNHA, KURA, KeRRA, KWS), County Governments, the National Treasury and other oversight institutions (KRA, SCAC), members of parliament (National and Senate Assembly), Development partners, media and general public.

Before any communication is made, the Board must decide how it wants the communication to be received hence should be composed in an appropriate manner. For example, is the purpose of the communication is to promote good practice, provide key information like disbursement of road maintenance fund to stakeholders and highlight successes of completed works. All communications, should be credible, open, honest, timely, realistic and professional. Target audiences should be identified and the most appropriate and effective method of delivery chosen to ensure maximum coverage.

It is important that KRB cultivates a robust two-way communication channel between the Board and its members in order to promote confidence in the service delivery. Feedback on service provision is essential for the future development of the Board and to provide information on encountered challenges.

**Media Relations, Public Comments and Designated Spokesperson(s)**

**Media Relations**

The Legal and Corporate Affairs department coordinates all media relations activities. Unless otherwise authorized by the ED, media-relations activities and media interviews are restricted to the ED; who is the KRB’s spokesperson. In specific circumstances, and with authorization from the Executive Director, the following exceptions can be made:

The General Managers of key directorates; Legal, Finance, Planning and Technical may communicate with media about administrative matters; and from time-to-time, senior officers and/or other subject-matter experts may be called upon to speak to the media regarding specific areas of responsibility or subject matter. These opportunities will be pre-arranged in consultation with the ED and Legal and Corporate Affairs department.

Unless in conflict media deadlines are to be respected wherever possible.

KRB’s personnel who are not authorized to serve as spokespersons will not respond on behalf of the KRB to any enquiry from, or initiate communication with, the media.

The key principles of engaging with the media shall include:

- I. Directing all media inquiries to the Communication and Public Affairs department;
- II. Developing and maintaining good relationships with the media; especially the local and specialized media;
- III. Being open and accessible to the media;
- IV. Making information available to the media through appropriate spokespersons;
- V. Respecting the right of the media to represent all views in their coverage.

**Roles and Responsibilities of the Designated Spokesperson**

The Access to Information ACT, 2016 states that the Chief Executive Officer of a public entity shall be an information access and may delegate the performance of his or her duties as an information access officer under this Act to any officer of the public entity.

The Executive Director is the only Spokesperson for the KRB and has a duty to speak truthfully and openly to the best of his/her knowledge regarding the KRB, subject to the disclosure restrictions as discussed in this policy.

**Public Comments at Industry Conferences**

KRB’s personnel, who are invited to make speeches or presentations about KRB to industry groups, conferences, or public meetings, as a part of their normal area of responsibility, should receive the approval of their supervising Manager prior to accepting such invitations.

Should such an opportunity be pursued, the roles and responsibilities of the designated spokesperson stipulated above will apply.

**Statements of Personal Opinion**

KRB personnel should refrain from making public statements of personal opinion regarding the KRB and from presenting a personal opinion regarding KRB as a fact.

**Media monitoring**

A daily report of press coverage will be kept by the Communications team and will be circulated to Executive Director, board members and senior managers.

**Press release procedure**

Press releases are issued to present a positive message about Kenya Roads Board and its work amongst the public and other stakeholders. Press releases serve to inform others about our objectives and achievements and should at all times promote positive messages. The Legal and Corporate Affairs Communications team will issue statements that explain or defend the organisation’s position on issues that may arise. All press releases and

statements from KRB will be planned, coordinated and released through the Communications team.

Press releases that refer to other partners will not be issued until we get the approval of the content from their Communications department.

Press releases will also be available on KRB's website, Facebook and twitter accounts.

## **Digital Communication**

### **KRB Website**

The Legal and Corporate Affairs Communications team will oversee the KRB's website and internal portal for editorial content. It will be used to provide relevant information to staff and other stakeholders on policies, news and information about the Board's activities.

Internal portal will be used for staff members only. This will include information such as training courses updates, useful contact information, departmental briefs, new appointments, vacancies and other related information and updates. The purpose is to ensure that staff are fully informed and updated on what is happening in and around the organization. Additionally, ensuring that they are able to easily access and utilize information and appropriate documentation as required.

### **Social Media**

Social media should be treated the same as any other communication channel. KRB acknowledges and actively uses the following social media channels Facebook - @KenyaRoadsBoard, Twitter- @KRB\_Kenya, and YouTube – Kenya Roads Board. A published message has the potential to be as widely read as a newspaper headline.

## **Social Media Policy**

This section provides guidance for employee use of social media, which should be broadly understood for purposes of this policy to include blogs, microblogs, electronic newsletters, online forums, social networking sites, and other sites and services that permit users to share information with others in a simultaneous manner.

### **Application**

This section **applies** to all KRB staff and consultants that directly engage in online conversation on behalf of KRB

It does **NOT** apply to:

Staff or consultants' personal use of social media where no reference is made to KRB and/or such usage has no connection to the workplace or work-related matters;

Policy

**Responsibility:** All information and postings on the social media site will be handled and created and approved by the Legal and Corporate Affairs department only. No other employee shall post content on KRB's social media sites without specific authorization to do so by the Legal and Corporate Affairs department.

KRB employees engaged in personal or professional social media and blog communications are discouraged from referencing professional -related content unless doing so is in a manner consistent with the organization's mission, values, and administrative policies and procedures.

If an employee has a personal blog or site that at all relates to or discusses road maintenance or practice management issues, in an effort to avoid confusion, the employee should include the following disclaimer on those sites: "This is a personal site, produced in my own time and solely reflecting my personal opinions. Statements on this site may not represent the views or policies of my employer, past or present, or any other organization with which I may be affiliated."

**Good Conduct:** Do not express, communicate or link to comments that are vulgar, obscene, threatening, pornographic, harassing or defamatory or which are a violation of KRB's workplace policies against sabotage, discrimination, hostility or harassment on account of age, race, religion, sex, ethnicity, nationality, disability, or other protected class, status, or characteristic.

**Apply common sense** and respect others in posts and discussions. If an audience disagrees with the information shared, responses should be appropriate and inoffensive.

**Personal privacy:** It is good to be careful **NOT** to disclose other people's personal information or publish images of others without permission. Be aware that people may be readily identifiable even when names are not used

## **Violation**

Breach of this policy may lead to disciplinary action, which may range from a warning up to termination of employment, depending on the severity of the breach. If you breach the law, you may also be held personally liable.

## **Other Channels of Communication**

### **WhatsApp**

With the advent of mobile technology, many organizations are now using WhatsApp as an official Communication tool. Adoption of technology is not only ideal for communication, but can prove to be reliable and convenient where information needs to be relayed in real time. Despite the advantages of using WhatsApp, this kind of technology can prove to be detrimental if caution is not considered. Therefore, the following rules should apply in official communication;

The official KRB WhatsApp platform should be controlled from a central place; Legal and Corporate Affairs Communication department and the Human Resource department.

Staff within the organization can be initiators of information or discussion. Subsequently;

All employed staff are required to be on the group for operational reasons and if they are not then it will be up to the administrators to include them.

The official group should never be used to berate someone else or air personal grievances. If one has an issue, they address it with the relevant person or management directly.

Members should not send data-insensitive messages.

Only matters concerning the operations of KRB will be posted and discussed on this platform.

No cliché forwards or posts that are not work related will be shared on this platform.

Employees should avoid discussing with external publics details of a sensitive crisis, which the employer is still resolving.

“Mute” is allowed on your WhatsApp group after hours (unless you are part of an emergency response group).

Although it is a formal communication channel, it should not be assumed that all employees have access to internet at all times. It is therefore upon the management and information originators to, alongside WhatsApp, use other formal communication channels to reach all employees.

### **Noticeboards, Posters and Leaflets**

Noticeboards are positioned in all departments at KRB. They should be used to display posters, staff notices, memo and media releases to enhance communications amongst staff.

Externally, the Board can liaise with County governments, key offices and health facilities and other public and private organizations to be allowed to post messages on their noticeboards.

Content should be carefully monitored and managed by the Communications department within the Board and the content originator and should always be up to date and relevant.

The Communications team for branding and content must approve all leaflets produced by KRB's respective departments. If the leaflet is intended for public use, it must first be reviewed and approved by the relevant internal groups prior to being published. All leaflets designed for staff only should be forwarded to the Communications Team who will ensure content and corporate branding compliance and make arrangements for them to be uploaded onto the staff portal.

## **Language**

KRB shall use English and Swahili in all its formal communication.

## **Branding**

It is prudent that any form of communication, documentation or information being produced, has the correct corporate branding and is designed to complement the Organization's image. The Legal and Corporate Communications Team will provide advice and guidance to staff on appropriate branding, as well as monitoring communications to ensure that they comply with the organization's corporate image and values. The Brand manual provides detailed correct use of KRB's Brand Identity.

## **Confidential material**

KRB's Confidential information should be treated with utmost confidentiality. Restrictions and care must be taken to ensure the information is used only to further the approved mandate of the KRB. Access to confidential material information is restricted to authorized persons who should be aware of their confidentiality obligations and who have signed confidentiality agreements where required by the KRB.

Wherever practical, confidential information should:

- I. Be identified as such.
- II. Be stored in locked cabinets to which access is restricted.
- III. Be removed promptly from meeting rooms at the conclusion of meetings.
- IV. Be subject to secure limited access of electronically stored computer information.
- V. Not be discussed in places where the discussion may be overheard.
- VI. Not copied unnecessarily or discarded where others can easily retrieve it.

## **Training**

The Board will ensure that all relevant staff will receive adequate media training in order to facilitate their performance when being required to provide media briefings and take part in interviews with members of the press.

## **Communication Changes**

Changes initiated by the KRB are considered to have ‘occurred’ once the decision has been made to implement them. This includes any and all significant changes in KRB that potentially impact the perception of KRB, such as purchases or modification of major assets and future plans for service development.

The Executive Director is the authority on whether or not information constitutes a material change. Prior to withholding disclosure of a material change, the ED will consult legal counsel for concurrence.

Material changes will be broadly disclosed by way of a news release or public notice. Unfavorable news will be disclosed just as promptly and completely as favorable news. The news release and /or public notice will contain enough detail to enable the media and investors to understand the substance and importance of the change being disclosed.

KRB’s Secretary will ensure required material change reports are filed in accordance with applicable legislation.

Until such time as public disclosure is complete, in order to prevent selective disclosure, material changes will be considered confidential material information.

## **Release of Information**

### **Principles of Material Information Disclosure**

When releasing material information, KRB will adhere to the following:

- I. Where a determination has been made to disclose material information, such material information will immediately be broadly disclosed to the public via news releases and/or public notices;
- II. Disclosure must include any information of which would make the rest of the disclosure misleading (half-truths can be misleading);
- III. Unfavorable material information must be disclosed as promptly and completely as favorable information;
- IV. Disclosure on the KRB's website does not by itself constitute adequate disclosure of material information;
- V. No selective disclosure. Confidential material information must not be disclosed to selected individuals (for example, in an interview with media or in a telephone conversation with a significant stakeholder); and
- VI. Disclosure must be corrected if KRB subsequently learns that earlier disclosure contained a material error at the time it was given.

### **Unintentional Selective Disclosure**

If confidential material information has been inadvertently disclosed to any other person not bound by confidentiality obligation, such information must be broadly disclosed immediately via news release and/or public notice. Upon becoming aware of an unintentional selective disclosure, KRB personnel are required to advise the ED of the circumstances.

### **Routine Information Requests**

The appropriate employee/Manager can answer enquiries from the public for general and routine information if the information requested is contained in records/publications previously released for public distribution.

Enquiries from the public cannot be answered if the enquiry is regarding KRB’s activities that constitute confidential material information. If such an enquiry is made, the employee/Manager will respectfully decline the request as containing confidential or proprietary information.

**The Use of Forecasts and Other Forward-Looking Information**

The use of forecasts and/or other forward-looking information should only be released with caution. All forward-looking information must contain a statement that the information is forward-looking, a description of the factors that may cause actual results to differ materially from the forward- looking information, all material assumptions and appropriate risk disclosure, and cautionary language. Release of such forecasts and forward-looking information must first be approved by the ED.

**Responding to Rumours**

In general, no comment will be made in response to rumors or speculation regarding the Organization. However, certain exceptions may be made under the direction of the ED, with advice from the Legal and Corporate Affairs Communications team.

**Quiet Periods or Blackouts**

From time-to-time, quiet periods or blackouts, which will generally relate to periods before financial results are disseminated to the public and during publishing of the APRP, may be prescribed. During this time, communications is limited to commenting on publicly available or non-material information.

**Reporting Significant Events**

**Legal Actions, Deaths, and Unusual Incidents**

The ED and other senior General Managers of the KRB must be immediately informed of all deaths and unusual incidents involving a staff of KRB. The Corporate Secretary and the Human Resource Manager must be immediately informed of all legal actions involving the KRB. The Human Resource Manager will then take lead on communication related to staff as guided by the Human Resource manual/policy.

## **Information to Directors**

Information to the KRB of Directors, as a whole or to individual KRB members, must be disseminated through or with the approval of the Corporate Secretary's office.

## **Crisis Communication**

All crises should be reported to the Legal and Corporate Affairs department, who will, after assessing the situation, immediately relay the information to the Executive Director.

Only the Executive Director is authorized to release information to the media and to the public. **All** other staff and Board members should be professional and helpful to the media by connecting them with the Legal and Corporate Affairs department, but will neither speak to the media, nor provide any information.

- All comments should be guided by professionalism and transparency.
- Personnel matters are to remain confidential.
- When possible, responses should be proactive, responsive, and action-oriented.

## **Crisis Management Steps**

- Safety – Ensure safety of all people
- Notification – Notify the Executive Director immediately
- Before Going Public – assess the situation to determine the facts, determine the appropriate action, create a plan for communication, develop key messages, assess the resources necessary to manage the crisis
- Notify the Staff and Board
- Go Public
- Keep Records
- Ensure constant communication with key parties to the crisis
- Manage all parties involved

## **Monitoring and Evaluation**

Monitoring is the ongoing process of reviewing program activities to determine whether plans are being carried out as designed; Evaluation on the other hand is the systematic episodic assessment to determine the effectiveness, relevance, impact and cost effectiveness of a program.

KRB will assess the implementation and impact of the communication policy through various monitoring and evaluation activities.

A monitoring and evaluation plan has been formulated to monitor progress against target outcomes. The implementation of the corporate communications policy will also be measured against a number of Specific, Measurable, Accurate, Relevant and Timely (SMART) objectives.

KRB will use the following measures to monitor the success rate and effectiveness of the corporate communication policy:

- i. Increased stakeholder satisfaction and awareness rating;
- ii. Increased Staff satisfaction;
- iii. Increased positive media coverage of KRB activities;
- iv. Delivery of measurable improvements in the quantity of communications delivered through the website and Staff intranet;
- v. Increased brand recognition of KRB on a local, national, regional and international level;
- vi. Delivery of best value communication service.

## **Consequences for Non-Compliance with this Policy**

KRB personnel will be advised of this policy and its importance. KRB personnel are responsible for consulting in order to understand and comply with this policy. There is no circumstance under which any law or regulation should be disregarded in the conduct of the KRB's business. Failure to comply with this policy may result in disciplinary action.