

gesci
Founded by UN ICT Task Force



GESCI

GESCI COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

Revised 2023

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List of acronyms

ADEA

Association for the Development of Education in Africa

ADSI	African Digital Schools Initiative
AFDB	African development Bank
AKE	African Knowledge Exchange
ALICT	African Leadership in ICT
AUC	African Union Commission
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
FAWE	Forum for African Women Educationalists
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
ITU	International Telecommunication Union
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
ISESCO	Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
KM	Knowledge Management
MCF	MasterCard Foundation
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SIPSE	Strengthening Innovation and Practice in Secondary Education
STI	Science, Technology and Innovation
TPD	Teacher Professional development
TVSD	Technical and Vocational Skills Development
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

1. Introduction

Communications is a core strategic function of any organisation, and with the diversification of the global information landscape it has increasing importance. The role of communications is to plan strategically, manage and sustain an organisation's relationship with key audiences, taking responsibility for the organisation's reputation and thereby helping the organisation to achieve its strategic and operational goals. The Communication Strategy (CS) is a living document, linked with a feedback process (see section 12) that will constantly be monitored, evaluated, updated and adapted to ensure that the growing knowledge and experience gained through the implementation of GESCI's programmes and activities are fully reflected.

The purpose of this communication strategy is to give to GESCI a coherent voice, visibility and presence in the areas in which it works as it implements its activities and plans as outlined in the GESCI Strategic Plans and in the GESCI Donor Management Strategy. It will help GESCI effectively communicate with internal and external stakeholders, including employees, partners, suppliers, donors, beneficiaries and the public at large as it aims to streamline communications among operations, programmes, human resources and functions and maintain a unified voice and consistent messages.

GESCI's priorities are in the following areas: Leadership capacity development for knowledge society planning and development; integrating ICT in teaching and learning to improve the quality of education; ICT-based Teacher Professional Development (TPD); developing new skills for employment (TVSD), project monitoring and evaluation and becoming the focal point for Knowledge Society development in Africa.

This communication strategy seeks to ensure that stakeholders in these areas develop an understanding of our vision and mandate, have an accurate picture of our strategic objectives and the impact of our work. In addition, this strategy will outline a plan to increase internal and external support of GESCI, and to revive enthusiasm to both processes.

Factoring in GESCI's mandate to assist governments in the socio-economic development of their countries through the widespread integration of technology for knowledge society development and the vision to 'build a knowledge society for all', this strategy will consider GESCI's growth since its inception in 2003, the current context and the global post-2016 agenda in education.

2. GESCI's current context

GESCI was founded to respond to the difficulties emerging economies were experiencing in planning for the integration of ICTs into national education and training systems. Two key strands of GESCI's work are

- Engaging in distributed leadership development for coherent policy development and implementation. Working with leaders at every level of Government to equip them with skills and confidence to act in leadership roles in developing and implementing policies for knowledge society development.
- Providing capacity building and technical and strategic advice to developing countries seeking to harness the potential of ICTs to increase access to, and to improve the quality and effectiveness of education (formal and vocational training).

GESCI currently collaborates with 16 African governments at national and regional levels. GESCI also collaborates with continental and multilateral organisations and corporations such as AFDB, AUC, ADEA, British Council, ECOWAS, FAWE, IGAD, Intel, ISESCO, ITU, UNESCO and World Vision as well as with development partners such as Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland, the MasterCard Foundation and Sida.

2.1 Opportunities

Changes in global agendas in ICT and education, youth skills and enterprise development and employment, training environments in emerging economies, priorities of governments, civil society, private sector and international donors will influence GESCI's agenda. Therefore, some of the opportunities that will now inform our strategic objectives are:

1. *Drivers of change:* Widespread and growing youth unemployment, inequitable access to a quality primary and secondary education, widening urban-rural divide in access to inclusive and quality educational and training opportunities.
2. *The post 2015 Sustainable Development Goals:* these underpin, emphasize and validate the relevance of the existing portfolio of GESCI programmes and projects. For example, goal 4 of the SDGs on ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all, which aligns with GESCI's vision of 'building a knowledge society for all' and the proposed (African Digital Schools Initiative) ADSI programme which seeks to provide an effective, sustainable and replicable model of teacher and school leadership development that will contribute to addressing the issues of teacher quality and supply, equality of access for all including girls and the more marginalised through the integration of ICT into teaching and learning at secondary level in Kenya, Tanzania and Cote d'Ivoire.
3. *Redefined regional agendas in education, ICT and STI.* For example
 - *Africa post-2015 education agenda:* In a lifelong and sector-wide perspective that would address access, equity and quality for all – children, youth and adults - at all levels of education from early childhood education to higher education and adult learning, and across formal, non-formal and informal modalities.¹
 - African governments and regional intergovernmental organizations and strategies are identifying new priorities for the continent. For instance, some of the strategic objectives outlined in the African Union's Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa - STISA 2024² are to "improve technical competencies and institutional capacity for STI development" and "facilitate STI policy reforms, harmonization, science diplomacy and resource mobilization". As has been done in the past, GESCI will continue to contribute to these through the policy forums held on education and youth skills development.
4. *Redefined global agendas.* For instance the *Qingdao 2015 Declaration:* The first global declaration on ICT in education which highlights the different ways in which technology can support the global agenda for education which was suggested at the World Education Forum for the next 15 years. To achieve the goal of inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning by 2030, ICT must be harnessed to strengthen education systems, knowledge dissemination, information access, quality and effective learning, and more efficient service provision.³
5. *Changing donor priorities:* Due to ongoing political and economic realignment in Europe, traditional funding from EU organizations and governments is shrinking and/or being redirected to other sectors. Instead there is a shift towards sourcing for funding from foundations that are perceived to have more stability. In addition, redefinition of the GESCI Donor Management Strategy for mobilisation of adequate and sustainable resources, and diversification of funding sources is ongoing to adapt to these changing priorities. For example, one of the main objectives for Norway's global education effort is to help ensure that as many children as possible develop skills that enable them to find gainful employment, and that improve the prospects of economic growth and sustainable development in the broadest sense.⁴
6. *Research products being developed by GESCI:* Have the potential to build our profile as a thought leader in knowledge society development and as an expert knowledge organization.

¹ Sub-Saharan Africa Regional Ministerial Conference on Education Post-2015, Kigali, Rwanda 9-11 February 2015

² <http://hrst.au.int/en/sites/default/files/STISA-Published%20Book.pdf>

³ <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/education/resources/in-focus-articles/qingdao-declaration/>

⁴ Norwegian White paper on Education for Development Meld. St. 25 (2013–2014) Report to the Storting (White Paper)

2.2 Challenges

As at August 2015, the Leadership Africaine dans TIC (LATIC) programme is being implemented in Senegal, Morocco and Cote d'Ivoire. GESCI is seeking partnerships to continue delivering the African Leadership in ICT (ALICT) programme (English version of LATIC) through third-parties in form of a potential franchise model. Other successfully implemented projects in GESCI in 2015 were Strengthening Innovation and Practice in Secondary Education (SIPSE) and The African Knowledge Exchange (AKE). ADSI programme, still in planning stages, is a proposal for a large-scale ICT integration project built on the learnings of the SIPSE project.

With GESCI's track record and its competitive advantage of continuous innovation and efficiency in the last 12 years, there is potential to expand the donor base and activities to more countries in and out of Africa. Founded as a global organisation it is GESCI's ambition, in the longer term, to regain its footing in Asia and Latin America where it originally operated with measured success.

There is therefore need to commit more resources to the growth and sustainability of current and future GESCI projects. Achieving this will require immense communication support to demonstrate the successes of GESCI to current and new stakeholders.

3. Background to the communications strategy

GESCI is a knowledge and expert technical assistance organisation providing strategic advice to its clients, partners and networks and building the capacities of public sector leaders at various levels to achieve its vision of *"Building a Knowledge Society for All."* In this context one of GESCI's strategic goals is to become a thought leader in knowledge society and leadership development for all relevant government levels in ICT, education, science and technology and innovation and inclusive Knowledge Society development. This goal needs to be consistently communicated through GESCI's communication channels and tools.

3.1 Where are we now?

Internal and external communication are key in the success of this CS. An effective internal process of communication will make it much easier to realize the objectives of external communication.

Understanding the current state of things is crucial for highlighting the strengths of the current communication efforts and for identifying any communication and information gaps. This reveals the communication culture, style and effectiveness and will ensure clear articulation of new communication goals, barriers and long-term objectives.

The current state of GESCI's communication is as follows:

3.2 Internal communication

GESCI currently uses various channels and tools for internal communication.

- Staff meetings – held twice a year
- CEO reports to the Board of Directors – prepared every quarter
- Email updates from senior management
- Steering committee meetings held
- Weekly/bi-weekly programme meetings
- Quarterly programme review meetings
- Collaborative online workspace on Mahara platform
- Annual report
- Annual newsletter
- WhatsApp Group

Gaps in the current internal communication efforts are in Appendix 1.

3.3 External communication

GESCI currently communicates with external stakeholders through:

- Online channels
 - Website
 - Social media – new Facebook account (Facebook.com/GlobaleSchoolsandCommunitiesInitiative) was created in March 2015; Twitter (@GESCI) updates now regular from February 2015; project videos posted on YouTube; ALICT alumni engaged on LinkedIn.
- Printed corporate and project communication materials
 - Brochures, flyers, posters, banners - mostly disseminated at partner meetings and workshops.
 - Annual report – prepared every July to give information about GESCI activities and impact. From 2014, these reports will coincide with the calendar year
 - Press releases – as and when required
 - ALICT e-update - prepared every six weeks for ALICT alumni
- Events – GESCI participates in selected regional meetings and conferences

Gaps in the current external communication efforts are in Appendix 2.

4. Principles underpinning the communication strategy

Although there have been various initiatives to push the GESCI brand and work since its inception, there is need to ensure that the brand name and impact are always fresh on the minds of GESCI stakeholders. It is a lot about perception – if the GESCI brand and work are not reinforced and promoted consistently, the organization stagnates in the minds of stakeholders and could potentially fade in the background.

Following findings derived from an analysis of GESCI’s online channels, observation, desk research and one-on-one meetings with team members in early 2015, this communication strategy is anchored on three principles - *Strengthen, Create awareness and Engage*.

This communications strategy is being developed to address strategies to achieve the following organizational objectives:

1. **Strengthen** internal and external communication in order to achieve our overall organizational objectives
2. **Create awareness** about GESCI’s objectives as we demonstrate the impact of our work as we engage
3. **Attract** and new partners, collaborators and donors through effective communication with these stakeholders

5. Objectives of the overall communication strategy

This strategy does not simply propose the use of the logo on all GESCI products. Although this is important, activities to communicate the values of GESCI and future strategy will also be outlined. The objectives are based on the GESCI Strategy Report 2013-2016, the GESCI Donor Management Strategy and GESCI’s strategy post-2016 in a dynamic operational context.

Therefore, the specific objectives of the communication strategy are:

1. To promote GESCI as an expert knowledge and technical advice organisation and a thought leader in the domains in which it works so that GESCI's objectives, work and impact are made known to all stakeholders
2. To increase and to vigorously push GESCI brand visibility by developing and ensuring consistent and timely delivery of communication outputs for reaching the specific target groups.
3. To closely align the communication strategy with the organizational strategy
4. To promote message consistency, especially for outreach, advocacy and publicity
5. To encourage participation among GESCI, its beneficiaries and partners.
6. To maintain existing and develop new partnerships
7. To develop and implement an effective knowledge exchange mechanism across GESCI's operations and programmes

It is proposed that this will be done as follows:

1. Objective 1: To promote GESCI as an expert knowledge and technical advice organisation and a thought leader in the domains in which it works so that GESCI's objectives, work and impact are made known to all stakeholders

- Use existing and new communication online and offline tools to communicate about GESCI on a consistent and regular basis, and to enrich policy dialogue and knowledge sharing on education, ICT and STI from lessons learnt in GESCI's work

The strategy:

1. Ensure regular online communication through:
 - Regular website and social media updates of programme and corporate activities
 - Monthly e-updates to existing partners, donors and the board
 - Produce and disseminate GESCI annual report
 - Social media
 - Bi-weekly LinkedIn engagement of ALICT programme alumni
 - Social media updates
- Ensure offline communication:
 - Attendance or participation in selected international and regional conferences annually (at least 2 of each)
 - Annual media cafes with national and regional media
 - Convening policy forums on education, ICT and STI

Objective 2: To increase and to vigorously push GESCI brand visibility by developing and ensuring consistent and timely delivery of communication outputs for reaching the specific target groups.

- To uphold GESCI brand integrity to promote and protect our values
 - To remind others of our value proposition through developing GESCI brand guidelines by end of July 2015 to ensure consistent use of the GESCI brand on all communication
- Ensure correct use of the GESCI logo on all organisation/programme communication on all consequent online and offline communication materials produced
- Highlight GESCI brand in all programme and corporate activities

The strategy:

- Develop and implement GESCI brand guidelines by end of July 2015, including providing guidelines (internal staff refresher training) and templates for PowerPoint presentations and photography
- Produce and disseminate corporate and programme video and print communication materials

Objective 3: To closely align communication strategy with organizational strategy

- Conduct communications audit to identify strengths, weaknesses and highlight opportunities for aligning the communication strategy with organizational strategy. Include outcomes from July 2015 staff meetings that were held to inform GESCI's strategy post-2016.

The strategy:

1. Develop GESCI communication strategy by end of August 2015
2. GESCI website redesign to ensure clarity in communication of GESCI's strategic objectives
 - a. Agree on objective of new website
 - b. Agree on content
 - c. Identify company/consultant to do the work, prepare TOR and work towards completion by mid- August 2015
3. Develop guidelines for execution of Knowledge Management by end of July 2015 and propose TOR for consultant
4. Contribute to leadership development and policies and strategies for knowledge society development
 - d. Work with teams to plan and deliver policy forums
 - e. Document and share policy recommendations from policy forums with governments, researchers, programme partners and contributors, and on GESCI communication channels

Objective 4: To promote message consistency, especially for outreach, advocacy and publicity

- Ensure message consistency to partners, stakeholder and programme beneficiaries

The strategy:

1. Develop a communications tool kit accessible to all staff for use in external communications
2. Co-ordinate overall GESCI message at events by developing standard conference and workshop packages for corporate and programmes
3. Prepare and disseminate press releases for GESCI events
4. Initiate and maintain relationships with the media through at least one annual media breakfast meeting. Avoid the 'spray-and-pray' strategy and develop personal relationships with the media.
5. Ensure that stories and photographs are captured at all programme and corporate events, and used for publicity and outreach

Objective 5: To encourage participation among GESCI, its beneficiaries and partners.

- Ensure ownership and encourage engagement and innovation

The strategy:

1. Cross-share and review overall and programme feedback through reports, case studies, policy briefs and stories on the GESCI website.
2. Hold regular programme debrief meetings with the programme-specific beneficiaries and partners
3. Publish lessons learnt and success stories on online and offline platforms

Objective 6: To maintain existing and develop new partnerships

- Ensure message consistency to partners, stakeholder and programme beneficiaries and manage their expectations

The strategy:

4. Dissemination of programme updates, GESCI annual report and other periodic reports to existing stakeholders
5. Attend at least 6 programme events and 1 GESCI event for networking and relationship building with stakeholders and the media
6. Develop a pitch deck for use by staff in communicating with potential donors

Objective 7: To develop and implement an effective knowledge exchange mechanism across GESCI's operations and programmes

- Position GESCI as a thought leader in leadership development for all relevant government levels for ICT for education, science and technology and innovation and inclusive Knowledge Society development.

The strategy:

1. The KM portal
 - a. Support consultant in the development of a KM portal
 - b. Ensure implementation and use of the KM portal
 - c. Promote the KM portal through other media and at events in order to drive traffic to the portal
2. Initiate and launch the African Leadership Network forum in the first quarter of 2016.
3. Disseminate research products being developed by GESCI staff

** See Appendix 3 for the plan for achieving these objectives*

6. Stakeholder analysis

It is crucial to identify all people, groups and institutions who may have an interest in GESCI and/or its programmes, and distilling ways to manage their interests and expectations so that GESCI meets its strategic objectives.

GESCI has a broad stakeholder base broken down into four categories:

1. *Users* - These are the people who will use the products of projects or programmes - they are the beneficiaries of the outputs.
2. *Governance* - have an interest in how things are managed on the project or programme.
3. *Influencers* - have the ability to change the direction of projects or programmes.
4. *Providers* - provide resources to the project or programme.

Users	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project beneficiaries • Local communities where programmes are implemented • Programme alumni • Policymakers
Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GESCI staff • Programme Steering Committees • GESCI board • Govt. ministries
Influencers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Journalists/media • Academia / researchers
Providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Donors • Private sector • Regional and national bodies • GESCI partners

These four groups can further be categorized as internal and external stakeholders. It is important to separately define the purpose, overall goals, specific objectives, stakeholders and communication channels and outputs communication plans according to these internal and external stakeholders.

7. Internal communication plan

7.1 Purpose

GESCI's internal communication plan addresses the need for effective communication among GESCI staff and across programmes. If the internal stakeholders aren't aligned with the core objective and messages and aren't serving as ambassadors for GESCI, then the external communication will be weakened.

7.2 Objectives

The specific objectives of the internal communication plan are:

1. To encourage knowledge sharing and build a communication culture for strengthening overall communication objectives
2. To strengthen internal flow of communication between teams and to and from senior management

3. To harness cross learning and reduce projects operating in isolation, and therefore reduce duplication of effort
4. To coordinate communication efforts from GESCI to external stakeholders

7.3 Stakeholders

- GESCI staff
- Programme Steering Committees
- GESCI board
- Existing donors

7.4 Communication channels

The current channels of internal communication at GESCI as described in section 2 are meetings, reports, emails, newsletter and a collaborative online workspace on the Mahara platform.

New channels and outputs that will be developed to complement the above in order to strengthen internal communication will include:

- Bulletin/brief – This bi-weekly communiqué that is a collation of programme updates will be shared among staff. It will then be abridged as monthly update to the GESCI board.
- Knowledge management (KM) portal - GESCI has been producing significant amounts of data, information, knowledge, knowledge products, tools and artifacts in its areas of work since its inception in 2004. There have been several attempts and mechanisms to organise, store, and systematise GESCI's data, knowledge products and tools but these efforts have not been successful. The KM portal will be a systematic approach for the creation, storage, retrieval and re-use of knowledge resources to ensure that staff members have easy and quick access to the latest knowledge and information, and that they can apply that knowledge to their work at all levels within the organisation's operations
- Research products – Products such as case studies, policy briefs and position papers, will be developed by staff and shared internally among staff and externally to inform policies, practices and programmes in education, ICT and STI.
- Calendar - In order to maximize of publicity for GESCI activities (convened by us or when invited to participate), it is important that staff fill in a calendar when going out on GESCI activities. The information captured will be used for partner identification to add onto our database for external communication and to develop content for our website and social media tools. In addition, it will facilitate planning for publicity and outreach materials.

8. External communication plan

8.1 Purpose

GESCI's internal communication plan addresses the need for effective communication among GESCI staff and across programmes. If the internal stakeholders aren't aligned with the core objective and messages and aren't serving as ambassadors for GESCI, then the external communication will be weakened.

8.2 Objectives

The specific objectives of the external communication plan are:

1. To create awareness about GESCI, its programmes and the impact of its work.
2. To raise the profile of GESCI as a thought-leader in knowledge society development
3. To promote networking and partnership-building
4. To promote knowledge exchange between GESCI and external stakeholders
5. To improve GESCI's visibility through creation of a consistent and clear message

8.3 Stakeholders

- Project beneficiaries
- Local communities where programmes are implemented
- Programme alumni
- Policymakers
- Govt. ministries
- Journalists/media
- Academia / researchers
- Private sector
- Regional and national bodies
- Existing partners
- 56Potential partners
- Potential donors

8.4 Communication channels

The current channels of internal communication at GESCI as described in section 2 are the GESCI website, social media platforms, policy forums, emails, reports, programme brochures, posters, banners and press releases.

New channels and outputs that will be developed to complement the above in order to strengthen external communication will include:

- Communications tool kit – This resource will be used by GESCI staff to communicate and share GESCI’s core messages. It will include the corporate brochure, corporate video, corporate PowerPoint presentation and programme brochures and infographics.
- PowerPoint pitch deck – for use by staff when engaging potential donors and partners. It will articulate GESCI’s organizational model, current programmes, our competitive advantage, our impact to date and a specific call-to-action to the prospective donor or partner.
- Knowledge management (KM) portal – as highlighted in section 7.4, but with different access rights for external stakeholders to gain access to GESCI’s knowledge products as we strengthen our position as a thought-leader in knowledge society development.
- Annual media café - an informal networking event with national and regional media to interest them in GESCI’s work, to articulate our objectives and impact to them as well as solicit their support for GESCI’s activities

9. Key messages

The information about GESCI that will be shared internally and externally constitutes of

Programme goals, objectives, activities, impact and outcomes and lessons learnt and corporate news in form of meeting participation and contribution, strategic organizational updates

The overall key message by GESCI to its stakeholders is:

An international NGO based in Kenya implementing programmes in leadership development for coherent policy formulation, teacher professional development through integration of ICT and youth skills development in emerging ICT and digital-based industries, within the context of sustainable Knowledge Society development.

This key message is underpinned on the vision to “*Build a knowledge society for all*”.

Clarity and consistency are key for effective communication. Different messages could lead to each recipient recalling something different, or even understanding a message that was not intended by GESCI. The key message should be reflected on all offline and online communication. The messages can be direct (brand journalism) or indirect (through media/influencers). However, it is important to have derivatives of this key message adapted for each stakeholder group as follows:

The key messages to be communicated will tell GESCI’s story by highlighting the evidence and impact of GESCI’s work, and will be framed to meet the stakeholders’ needs and priorities dependent on:

- What channels the stakeholders receive information from
- The interest of the stakeholder/s in the message
- The level of engagement required

Programmes will have separate key message specific to the programmes, but aligned to the overall key corporate message. These are further explained below:

- ALICT - The first innovative action learning, collaborative applied course for public sector leaders in Africa, focusing on policy coherence and futures thinking to address cross-sectoral sustainable knowledge society development.
- ADSI/SIPSE - In partnership with governments, using sustainable and innovative strategies to transform education systems through integration of ICT, with an emphasis on teacher professional development
- AKE - Creating new and scalable industry-focused models for youth skills development in the new and emerging ICT and digital-based industries

STAKEHOLDER	TAILORED TOOLS	CROSS-CUTTING TOOLS
Users <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project beneficiaries Local communities where programmes are implemented Programme alumni Policymakers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workshops Policy forums GESCI research products e-updates Alumni Network and platform Mobile phones GESCI newsletter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programme brochures Programme videos GESCI newsletter Social media KM portal GESCI website
Governance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> GESCI staff Programme Steering Committees GESCI board Govt. ministries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monthly bulletin/brief Staff meetings Steering Committee meetings Board meetings Face-to-face meetings Policy forums Partner social media channels Partner websites 	
Influencers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Media Academia / researchers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Press releases Media/news stories Face-to-face meetings Case studies Regional and national conferences Breakfast meetings 	
Providers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Donors Private sector Regional and national bodies (AUC, ISESCO, AFDB, etc) GESCI partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Breakfast meetings Partner websites Partner social media platforms GESCI research products Face-to-face meetings 	

* See Appendix 4 for social media guidelines; and refer to GESCI brand guidelines

10. Resources

- All allocated GESCI programme budget

- ts and core funding
- Partner channels – websites, and online and offline publications

11. Timeline

January 2017 with review

12. M&E

Monitoring and feedback are crucial to ensure that activities in this communications strategy align with the overall objectives. Monitoring will be on an ongoing basis, based on the targets, timelines and outputs. By monitoring and responding to feedback regularly, communications can continue to address the needs and concerns of key stakeholders.

Proposed feedback models will include:

- Direct feedback – via email or face-to-face from senior management, programme managers, programme steering committees and the GESCI board
- Formal feedback – from partners, donors and programme beneficiaries
- Informal feedback - will be obtained via the GESCI website, partners' communication channels, media mentions, word of mouth and from social media platforms.

The feedback will be collated as a 'Communications Report' and presented quarterly by the communications team to GESCI's senior management.

In addition, GESCI's M&E team will systematically conduct in-depth research to measure the success of this communications against the pre-set objectives. Appendix 6 highlights how each communication objective will be measured.

13. Appendices

Appendix 1: Gaps in current internal communication

1. Weak internal communication as highlighted by staff during quarterly review meetings. Projects appear to be working in isolation, while indeed there is opportunity for cross learning and reduction of duplication of efforts.
2. Fragmented and uncoordinated communication efforts from GESCI – mostly due to late or lack of internal information in order to adequately support GESCI activities

Appendix 2: Gaps in current external communication

1. Untapped potential for greater visibility of GESCI and showcase of the impact of its work. To date GESCI has worked in 16 African countries. However, the brand and impact of the work have not been fully made known.
2. Weak relationships with national and regional media resulting in low media mentions and low external visibility.
3. Lack of an abridged website and internal staff version of the regular reports to donors and project collaborators to keep staff updated of other projects besides theirs, and the general public awareness of GESCI activities

4. Poor content organization and intuitiveness of the current website resulting in low traffic to the website
5. Poor utilization of social media tools
6. Irregular presence in national and regional conferences may be missed opportunities for reinforcing our position as a thought leader in ICT4E and for networking and expansion of our partner base. However, benefits and outcomes are intangible any many are not cost effective
7. A weak knowledge management system

Appendix 3: Action plan

STAKEHOLDER	TOOLS	FREQUENCY	OWNERSHIP
Group 1: Users			
Project beneficiaries	Workshops	As required	PMs
	Policy forums	As required	PMs
	Mobile phones	As required	PMs, IT department
Programme alumni	e-updates	Quarterly	Communications, PMs
	GESCI newsletter	Quarterly	CEO
Local communities where programmes are implemented	Workshops	As required	PMs
Polymakers	GESCI research products	Quarterly	CEO
	Policy forums	As required	PMs
Group 2: Governance			
GESCI staff	Staff meetings	Twice a year	CEO
	Email	As required	CEO and Senior Management
GESCI board	Board meetings	3 per year and as called by Chairman	CEO
	Bulletin/brief	Monthly	CEO, PMs, Communications

Government ministries	Workshops	As required	Director of Programmes, PMs
	Policy forums	As required	Director of Programmes, PMs
	Face-to-face meetings	As required	Director of Programmes, Programme Managers
	Government websites	As required	Government ministries
	Government social media channels	As required	Government ministries
Partners and collaborators (AUC, GESCI, etc)	GESCI newsletter	Quarterly	CEO, Communications
	KM portal	Updated weekly	KM consultant, PMs, Communications
	GESCI website	Updated weekly	Communications
	Partner social media channels	As required	Partners
Group 3: Influencers			
Media	Press releases	As required	PMs, Communications
	Media/news stories	Six per year	PMs, Communications
	Regional/national conferences	Twice a year	Senior Management, PMs, Communications
	Breakfast meetings	Twice a year	Senior Management, PMs, Communications
Academia/researchers	Face-to-face meetings	As required	Director of Programmes, PMs
	Case studies	At least two per year	
Group 4: Providers			
Private sector	Breakfast meetings	As required	Director of Programmes, CEO, PMs
	Policy forums	At least 1 for every programme	Director of Programmes, PMs

Donors	Bulletin/brief	Monthly	CEO, Communications, PMs
	Programme videos	Updated regularly and made available online	Programme Managers, M&E team, Communications Lead
	GESCI website and social media	Updated regularly	Communications Lead
Regional and national bodies	Workshops	As required	CEO, PMs
	Round-table/face-to-face meetings	As required	CEO, PMs
	GESCI research products	At least three annually	M&E team, PMs
	Partner website and social media tools	As required	Partners
GESCI partners	Round-table/face-to-face meetings	As required	CEO, PMs
	Bulletin/brief	Monthly	CEO, Communications, PMs
	Partner website and social media tools	As required	Partners

Appendix 4: Social media policy - Making it about them and not us

Social media is one of GESCI's channels that serves to :

- a) keep stakeholders up-to-date with our programme and corporate activities,
- b) keep our pulse on what stakeholders want from us,
- c) quick responses on queries about GESCI and its activities and
- d) recruit new partnerships.

This policy applies to all social media tools that currently exist (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn Vimeo, YouTube) and to future channels that will be developed for both professional and personal use.

The objective for this social media policy is to ensure that the:

- GESCI brand name is always fresh on the minds of GESCI's online stakeholders. If the GESCI brand is not reinforced and consistently promoted on social media channels, it could potentially fade in the background.
- GESCI brand voice is not muddled when more than one staff member is commenting or responding.

Guiding principles:

1. Ownership
 - Primary:
 - Communications Team – responsible not only for maintaining the accounts, but also for commenting and responding
 - Senior Management – especially when attending external regional and international meetings
 - Secondary – all GESCI staff can comment and responding to queries related to their subject expertise
2. All text and photo posts will communicate GESCI's growing position as a thought leader in public sector leadership development in ICT for education, science and technology and innovation and inclusive Knowledge Society development.
3. Posts should not disclose GESCI's confidential information.
4. Posts on personal accounts will be accompanied with a disclaimer, e.g. "...the views expressed are mine and do not necessarily reflect the views of GESCI..."
5. Social media will not be used for third-party advocacy, marketing or public relations.

Appendix 5: Crisis management plan

Crisis communications policy

1. All crises will immediately be reported to the CEO and senior management.
2. A spokesperson will be appointed to handle every crisis. Only this appointed spokesperson can speak to the media and to the public. All other staff and board members will refer the media to the spokesperson, but not provide any information to the media.

3. All comments will be guided by professionalism and transparency, and serve to mitigate the crisis
4. As much as possible, responses will be proactive and action-oriented. "No comment" is not an acceptable response. If an answer is unknown or cannot be immediately answered, tell the inquirer you will get back to them and do so. If the question cannot be answered due to an overriding GESCI policy (such as sharing personnel information, etc.) let the inquirer know that.
5. Personnel matters are to remain confidential.

During the crisis

Step 1: CEO and senior management are informed of the crisis

Step 2: Spokesperson appointed

Step 3: Assessing the situation

- What is the source of the crisis?
- How will GESCI be affected?
- How much information is already out there?
- Is legal counsel needed?
- How will GESCI response be communicated? (This depends on the urgency and sensitivity of the crisis – either website, press release, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, one-on-one meetings)

Step 4: Developing written notes for spokesperson and reception to

- Reinforce and clarify GESCI's position and organizational objectives, or
- Correct inaccurate information, or
- Respond to questions that have come up

After the crisis

1. Re-convene team to evaluate what worked, what didn't work, what needs to be improved for the future.
2. If necessary, update the crisis communications plan

Appendix 6:M&E

Objective	How	Measurement
1. To ensure that GESCI's objectives, work and impact are made known to all stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular website and social media updates of programme and corporate activities • Monthly e-updates to existing partners, donors and the board • Produce and disseminate GESCI annual report • Social media <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Bi-weekly LinkedIn engagement of ALICT programme alumni ○ Facebook and Twitter updates • Attendance or participation in selected international and regional conferences annually (at least 2 of each) • Annual mediacafes with national and regional media • Convening policy forums on education, ICT and STI 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustained traffic to GESCI website • Good metrics on social media analytics • Sustained media mentions • GESCI attending (and being branded) in at least 2 international conferences and 2 regional conferences • Good metrics on e-updates data after dissemination • Good metrics on annual report data after dissemination • At least two policy forums convened annually by GESCI • Increased donor funding • Increased partnerships through signing of MoUs
2. To increase and to vigorously push GESCI brand visibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement GESCI brand guidelines by end July 2015, including providing guidelines (internal staff refresher training) and templates for PowerPoint presentations and photography • Produce and disseminate corporate and programme video and print communication materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of GESCI brand guidelines resulting in a coherent brand voice • Increased media mentions • Sustained events/conferences invitation and participation to contribute on GESCI's themes • Increased enquiry about GESCI's work and impact • Increased web traffic
3. To closely align the communication strategy with the organizational strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GESCI website redesign to ensure clarity in communication of GESCI's strategic objectives • Contribute to leadership development and policies and strategies for knowledge society 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication strategy • Sustained <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ invitations to conferences, forums, contribute on GESCI's themes ○ enquiry about GESCI's work and impact ○ complete by Q1 2016 • Knowledge management portal

	development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy recommendations from GESCI policy forums documented and disseminated • At least 3 GESCI research products produced and disseminated at local, regional and international forums
4. Promote message consistency, especially for outreach and publicity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a communications kit accessible to all staff for use in external communications • Co-ordinate overall GESCI message at events by developing standard conference and workshop packages for corporate and programmes • Prepare and disseminate press releases for GESCI events • Initiate and maintain relationships with the media through at least one annual breakfast meeting. Avoid the 'spray-and-pray' strategy and develop personal relationships with the media. • Ensure that stories and photographs are captured at all programme and corporate events, and used for publicity and outreach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standard conference and workshop packages for corporate and programme events developed as required according to the brand guidelines • Press releases disseminated for relevant GESCI events • Annual report developed • One annual media breakfast meeting held
5. Encourage participation among GESCI, its beneficiaries and partners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross-share and review overall and programme feedback through reports, case studies, policy briefs and stories on the GESCI website. • Hold regular programme debrief meetings with the programme-specific beneficiaries and partners • Publish lessons learnt and success stories on online and offline platforms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased traffic to GESCI's KM portal • Increased traffic to GESCI's website • Feedback about beneficiaries and partners about GESCI's work and impact • Active participation by beneficiaries and partners in GESCI's activities • Partners proactive in undertaking programme implementation and research with GESCI
6. Maintain existing and	Dissemination of	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pitch deck developed by end of

develop new partnerships	<p>programme updates, GESCI annual report and other periodic reports to existing stakeholders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attend at least 6 programme events and 1 GESCI event for networking and relationship building with stakeholders and the media Develop a pitch deck for use by staff in communicating with potential donors 	<p>August 2015</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attendance to at least 6 programme events and 1 GESCI event for networking and relationship building with stakeholders and the media Sustained and new programme partnerships Sustained and new media partnerships Increased donor funding Increased partnerships through signing of MoUs
7. Develop an outline for and implement knowledge exchange by GESCI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support consultant in the development of a KM portal Ensure implementation and use of the KM portal GESCI (and partners) to drive traffic to the KM portal through other media and at events Initiate and launch the African Leadership Network forum in the first quarter of 2016. Disseminate research products being developed by GESCI staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> KM portal developed and in use Sustained clicks on KM portal African Leadership Network initiated and running by the first quarter of 2016. At least 3 research products developed by GESCI staff disseminated