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**“Internal Communication Strategy for enhanced communications amongst
Associations and NOC”**

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May I humbly take this opportunity to express my gratitude for being endorsed by my NOC, the Eswatini Olympic and Commonwealth Games Association (EOCGA), to undertake this internationally acclaimed Executive Master's Degree in Sport's Organisation Management (MEMOS).

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ABSTRACT

This project analyses the effectiveness of the current internal communication methods between the National Federations (NF's) affiliated to the Eswatini Olympic and Commonwealth Games Association (EOCGA). The project aims to develop a comprehensive internal communications strategy in order to amplify communication between these organisations; to eliminate communication gaps that do not work and replace them with relevant, proven updated strategies, with the objective of improving overall inter-organisational communication and enhancing relationships between these entities.

To answer this question, literature was reviewed from previous scholars with specific emphasis on studies relative to "Sports Communication", "Strategic Communications" and "Internal Communications". Research questionnaires together with SWOT analyses were conducted with 22 of the NOC affiliated National Federations Secretary Generals, in their capacities of being the first receivers/responders of correspondence across their respective associations. A case study of communication between the National Sports Regulatory body known as the Eswatini Sport and Recreation Council (ESRC) and their 30 National Federations membership was also concluded to ascertain their internal communications strategy amongst themselves. Lastly, communication methods for three (3) other international NOC's (Czech Republic, New Zealand and South Africa) were also benchmarked and some of their strategies have been incorporated into our proposed communication strategy.

The results show that although the communication channels do exist between the associations and the NOC, there is room for improved updated strategies which could enhance inter-organisational communication. What was also discovered is that a number of associations are of the impression that the NOC tends to focus more on individual sports such as athletics as opposed to team sports such as volleyball, hence some NF's tend to ignore some correspondence thinking it isn't directed at their organisation. The annual replacement of the NOC's Communications Intern has also been identified as a major communications hindrance because every year the associations are introduced to a new individual, thus the need for this position to be appointed on a fulltime (permanent) basis for continuity sake.

From these studies, an all embracing comprehensive internal communication strategy will be developed which will encompass the overall suggestions of the associations as referenced in their submissions. Some of the proposed action plans include the development of an extensive website for easy access of readily available information such as athlete and scholarship programmes from Olympic Solidarity amongst others. The SG's also feel the urgency for an information and best practice sharing platform apart from the Annual General Assembly (AGM) and have suggested the establishment of a quarterly Secretary General's Forum amongst others in the research.

Once these recommendations and suggestions have been assembled and collated, this internal communication strategy will be presented to the EOCGA Executive Board, who shall ratify this document with the ultimate goal of improving internal communications processes amongst all internal stakeholders.

ABSTRAIT

Ce projet analyse l'efficacité des méthodes de communication internes actuelles entre les fédérations nationales (FN) affiliées à « l'Eswatini Olympic and Commonwealth Games Association » (EOCGA). Le projet vise à développer une stratégie globale de communication interne afin d'amplifier la communication entre ces organisations ; éliminer les lacunes de communication et les remplacer par des stratégies actualisées pertinentes et éprouvées, dans le but d'améliorer la communication inter-organisationnelle globale et de renforcer les relations entre ces entités.

Pour répondre à cette question, les chercheurs ont procédé à des revues de littératures en mettant un accent particulier sur les études relatives à la « communication sportive », la « communication stratégique » et la « communication interne ». Des questionnaires de recherche ainsi que des analyses SWOT ont été menés auprès de 22 des secrétaires généraux des fédérations nationales affiliées aux CNO, en leur qualité de premiers destinataires/répondants de la correspondance dans leurs associations respectives. Une étude de cas sur la communication entre l'organisme national de réglementation des sports connu sous le nom de « Eswatini Sport and Recreation Council » (ESRC) et leurs 30 fédérations nationales membres a également été conclue pour déterminer leur stratégie de communication interne. Enfin, les méthodes de communication de trois (3) autres CNO internationaux (République tchèque, Nouvelle-Zélande et Afrique du Sud) ont également été comparées et certaines de leurs stratégies ont été intégrées à notre proposition de stratégie de communication.

Les résultats montrent que malgré l'existence de canaux de communication entre les associations et le CNO, il existe des opportunités de développer et d'intégrer des stratégies actualisées et améliorées, qui pourraient contribuer à renforcer la communication inter-organisationnelle. Ce qui a également été découvert, c'est qu'un certain nombre d'associations ont l'impression que le CNO a tendance à plus se concentrer sur les sports individuels tels que l'athlétisme par opposition aux sports d'équipe tels que le volley-ball, d'où certaines FN ont tendance à ignorer certaines correspondances, pensant qu'elles ne sont pas destinées à leur organisation. Le remplacement annuel du référent en communication du CNO a également été identifié comme un obstacle majeur aux communications, car chaque année, les associations sont présentées à une nouvelle personne, d'où la nécessité de nommer ce poste à temps plein (permanent) par souci de continuité.

À partir de ces études, une stratégie globale de communication interne sera élaborée et englobera les suggestions générales des associations telles qu'elles sont référencées dans leurs soumissions. Certains des plans d'action proposés comprennent le développement d'un site Web complet pour un accès facile à des informations de base telles que les programmes d'athlètes et les bourses d'études de la Solidarité Olympique entre autres. Les SG ressentent également l'urgence de créer une plateforme de partage d'informations et de bonnes pratiques en dehors de l'Assemblée générale annuelle (AGA) et ont suggéré la création d'un forum trimestriel du secrétaire général, entre autres dans la recherche.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the study

The primary goal of the Eswatini Olympic and Commonwealth Games Association (EOCGA) is to lead Eswatini athletes to the Olympic Games every quadrennial whilst also promoting the Olympic Movement and Olympism throughout the Kingdom of Eswatini.

However, in order to achieve this, the organisation needs to work hand-in-hand with the National Federations (NF's) who are affiliated to the EOCGA and are responsible for producing these athletes who shall go on to represent the country.

Without effective and efficient internal communication between these organisations, athlete representation at elite international level will not be possible, therefore this research paper seeks to get a better understanding of the significance of internal communications across the organisation and to develop a comprehensive internal communications strategy in order to amplify communication between these organisations for the success of all associations.

This is in line with Section 4 of 7 of the Universal Principles of Good Governance (UPGG) as adopted by the Olympic Congress in 2009 decree which advocates for NOC's to be Accountable and Transparent in their operations.

Bavelas & Barrett (1951) argue that communication is the most fundamental activity in an organisation and it is the basis of all the functions of an organisation (1951: 253). As such, organisational activities cannot be coordinated without communication among the various departments or parts of the organisation.

Because the EOCGA does not have a formal internal communications strategy for communication with its National Federation's, the development of this strategy is aimed at enhancing how the NF's receive information from the National Olympic Committee as well as how they may provide feedback for increased internal transparency and accountability amongst themselves so as to be compliant with Section 4 of 7 of the UPGG.

Hola (2007) defines effective internal communication as the start and base for the whole organisation and its prosperity, and it is the base of knowledge management which increases the competitive advantage in the severe market environment.

The NF's affiliated to the EOCGA comprise of twenty sports (22) organisations. From the research interviews conducted with the Secretary Generals of these associations, the general perception is that although there is some form of internal communication between the entities, there is room for improvement and the establishment of formal, laid down strategies in which communication is cascaded between the NOC and the NF (and vice versa).

Communication strategies of three (3) other NOC's from different parts of the world have also been used to benchmark these studies to look at how other organisations implement their communication strategies as well as a case study of how our local sports mother body communicates with its membership at national level.

We shall analyse the existing internal communication strategies as the start and base for the prosperity of all the organisations implicated in this research as per HOLA's theory, before providing suggestions of how this new internal communication strategy will improve communications and increase our competitive advantage in the severe market environment.

1.2. About the Kingdom of Eswatini

The Kingdom of Eswatini (formerly known as Swaziland) is a country situated at the base of the African continent, landlocked between the Republic of South Africa and the People's Republic of Mozambique.



An outline showing the map of the Kingdom of Eswatini on the African continent. (source: [bbc.com](https://www.bbc.com))

This is the last absolute monarch on the African continent led by His Majesty King Mswati III comprising of a population of about 1.4 million people through a Monarchical Democracy system of governance, whereby the King rules in collaboration with elected Members of Parliament, voted into parliament through a constituency based electoral system.

The country attained its independence on 6 September 1968 from the British Empire although it is still a member of the Commonwealth. The country's name change was renamed by His Majesty during the country's 50th independence celebrations held in September, 2018.

There are two (2) official languages, namely English and SiSwati and people of all ethnic races live together in harmony.

The Government of the Kingdom of Eswatini is headed by the Prime Minister (appointed by the King in consultation with the King's Advisory Committee involving high standing members of society from various industries and professions), together with a Cabinet of Ministers comprising of the Deputy Prime Minister and eighteen (18) other Cabinet Ministers, each

responsible for their own portfolios ranging from Justice, Agriculture, Finance and Home Affairs amongst others.

Amid these portfolios is also the Ministry of Sports, Youth and Cultural Affairs, which is responsible for all sports, cultural and youth related affairs in the country.

1.3 Sport Development in Eswatini

Through the Sports and Recreation Act of 2020, the Ministry of Sports, Culture and Youth Affairs is responsible for establishing the Eswatini Sports and Recreation Council (ESRC) which is responsible for:

- Providing for human development through sports and recreation
- Coordination of the relationship between the Council, Eswatini Olympic and Commonwealth Associations, National Sports and Recreation bodies and other agencies and;
- The regulation and promotion of sports and physical recreation, and incidental matters.

The Chairman of this organisation serves as an ex-officio Executive Board Member of the Eswatini Olympic and Commonwealth Games Association (EOCGA) to serve the interests of Government on the Board, and the President of the EOCGA also sitting on the ESRC Board as an ex-officio to serve the interests of the Olympic Movement at national level.

1.4 Eswatini Olympic and Commonwealth Games Association (EOCGA)

1.4.1 About EOCGA

The EOCGA was established in 1968 and gained affiliation to the (IOC) in 1972. It is an organisation that belongs to the Olympic Movement and to the people of Eswatini, duly represented by its membership to undertake and respect the provisions of the Olympic Charter and the World Anti-Doping Code and to abide by the decisions of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and its structures.

1.4.2 Mission

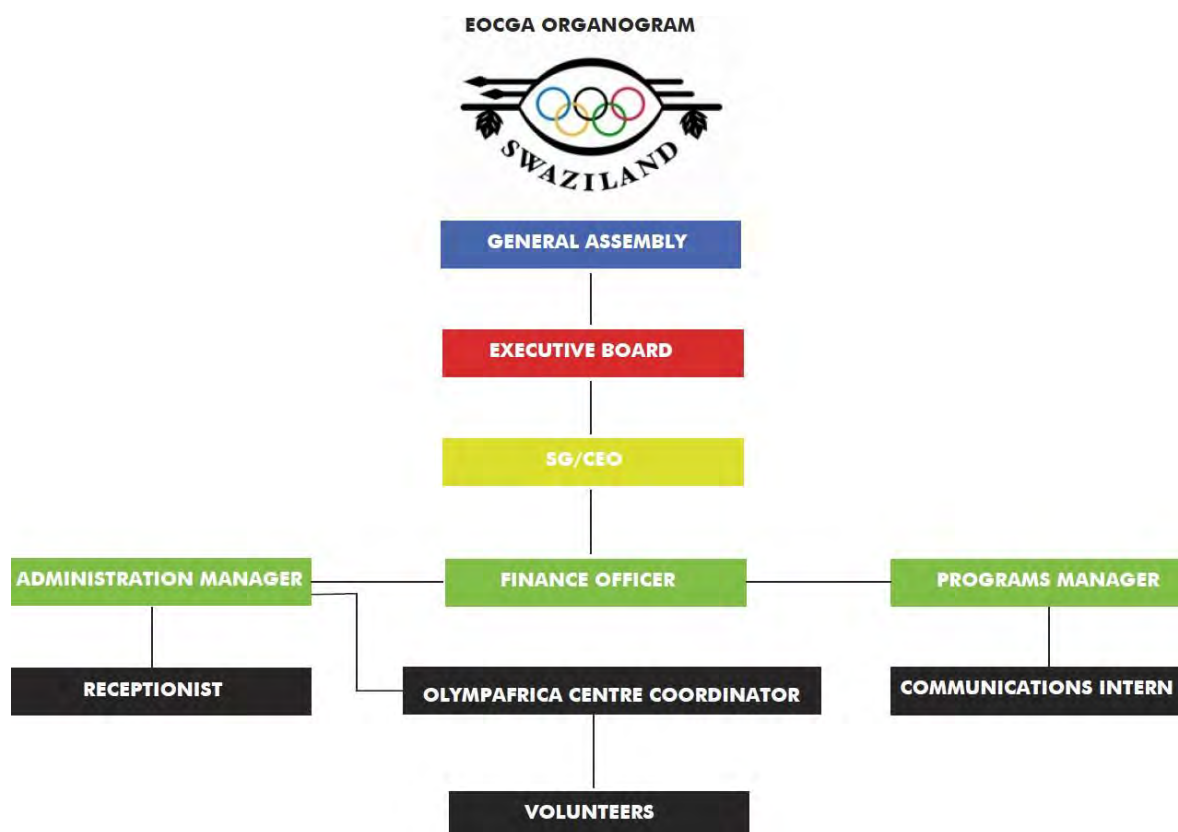
“To ensure that athletes are at the heart of everything we do, living and promoting Olympic and Commonwealth values in Eswatini”.

1.4.3 Vision

“To make sport a dependable inspiration for Eswatini”.

1.4.4 Governance

The EOCGA, in Assembly, is the highest decision-making body on any Olympic, Commonwealth and All Africa Games policy matters in Eswatini.



The organisation is governed by an elected Executive Board which consists of the following individuals and must comprise 30% women representation as per the dictates of the UPGG:

- ❖ President
- ❖ Vice-President
- ❖ Secretary General/Chief Executive Officer: ex-officio
- ❖ Treasurer
- ❖ Members (x4)
- ❖ Athletes Commission representative
- ❖ ESRC Chairman (Government representative: ex-officio)

1.4.5 Secretariat

The EOCGA Secretariat comprises of the office of the SG/CEO which derives its power from the EOCGA constitution and is chiefly responsible for the delivery of the association's mandate. It provides overall oversight of all divisions/departments within the organization and acts as the principal link between the association and National Federations (NF's).

The CEO is responsible for overall supervision of all staff that include Administration Manager, Finance Officer, Programs Officer, Communications Intern, OlympAfrica Coordinator, Receptionist and Volunteers.

1.4.6 National Federations (22 Associations)



1.5 Communication between EOCGA and National Federations

There are numerous internal communication methods in which communication is disseminated to the NF's. Although informal, due to lack of internal communication policy and strategy, these have tended to work for both entities despite the fact that some of the associations have submitted a couple of grievances in the manner in which information is currently cascaded.

Some of the existing communication methods include the following approaches below although their effectiveness, expectations and suggestions for better engagement will be analysed later in the document;

1.5.1 Emails

All official internal correspondence between the EOCGA and the NF's is disseminated through sending an email to the Secretary Generals of the NF's as the first receivers and responders of this information and also sending a copy of the email to the address of the NF President.

These SG's are then responsible for cascading this information through to their respective Executive Boards who will then decide what to do with this information and how they shall disseminate this information to their membership.

However, most of the NF's SG's and President's do not have official Olympic Sport Organisation (OSO) addresses and a majority of this official correspondence is sent to the personal email addresses of these individuals. In some instances, this information is sent to old or non-functioning email addresses thereby the information not reaching the NF.

This information is usually updated whenever there is a change of personnel in office as the NOC will request these updates or these details are also requested through the circulation of an update form when the NOC is hosting NF's; be it during the General Assembly, extraordinary meetings or any other types of meetings in which the officers are present, both physically and virtually.

1.5.2 Telephone (Cell phone)

The email correspondence is normally succeeded up by the NOC making a follow-up phone call to the designated NF individuals informing them of the correspondence sent to their personal email addresses for their action and/or input.

Most of the OSO's do not have official offices with relevant personnel who may confirm receipt of this information and sometimes the NOC may not be able to get into contact with these designated individuals as sometimes their cell phones are unavailable for many different reasons such as work commitments, their cell phone not being available on the network, a change of cell number or the designated number is constantly engaged for other reasons.

In other instances, when the NF personnel want to return a call to the NOC office number that called, the officers are no longer available at the NOC as they have retired from the office. This is because most NF personnel volunteer to do the work they do because work commitments take first precedence, meaning they usually attend to NF business after working hours when the NOC officers are no longer available.

1.5.3 Whatsapp messaging

The NOC and the NF's designated personnel also have an official Whatsapp messaging platform where correspondence and information is cascaded to them.

However, this platform also has its challenges as most of the designated personnel will not acknowledge receipt of information or acknowledge information after prolonged periods of time for various reasons such as lack of availability of mobile data, opening of messages weeks after messages have been sent, the Whatsapp number availed to the NOC does not work anymore or they cannot action correspondence timely due to work commitments.

1.6 Project Aims/Objectives

The aim of the research project is to identify the gaps and loopholes in the current means of internal communication between the NOC and its NF's.

Once these loopholes have been identified, using the information received from the various role players in the data collection process, strategic communication strategies will be recommended to be implemented in order to bridge the barriers which prevent effective internal communication from taking place.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The research was done using key research words which include “sports communication”, “strategic communications” and “internal communications” which give impetus to the project.

Literatures assessed in this research include articles sourced from Google Scholar, research papers found on the internet, articles from the Olympic Studies Centre and EOCGA as well as some research papers from previous MEMOS students pertaining particularly to communication strategies.

2.1 Defining Internal Communication

Because communication is a collective process of exchanging information and reaching mutual understanding via verbal or non-verbal means, in order for the EOCGA to be able to effectively communicate with its internal stakeholders (membership), the organisation needs to implement a communication system that will define the tools and processes to be utilized in order to share this information.

Also known as intra-organizational communication or employee communication, internal communications is defined as a collective effort of the organization’s group members to gather information/data and to achieve employee engagement as well as company performance for the organization (Kitchen & Daly, 2002; Tkalac Vercic, et al., 2012; Welch, 2013; Kataria et al., 2013).

The success of an organisation’s efforts to acquire resources and to influence the context within which it carries out its activities depends heavily on how well and how professionally a company communicates with its resource holders (Van Riel & Fombrun, 2007).

Internal communication includes all forms of communication within an organisation and is the exchange of information between employees or members of an organisation to create an understanding of the business (Tkalac Vercic et al., 2012).

The purpose of internal communication is to design and redesign information from the organisation and return company values and goals. It also helps organisations to coordinate daily activities and to reduce confusion as well as creating higher understanding for the task (Kitchen & Daly, 2002; Dolphin, 2005).

In the introduction to this paper, we stated that the primary goal of the EOCGA is to lead Eswatini athletes to the Olympic Games every quadrennial. Without its membership, who are the National Sports Federations (NSF’s) who hold these “resources” in the form of the athletes, the EOCGA would not be able to carry out its mandate as enshrined in the EOCGA constitution Article 4.3.1. which states that: “the EOCGA shall have the exclusive authority for the representation of teams of Eswatini at the Olympic, Commonwealth and at other Continental, Regional and World Multi-Sports Games that are patronised by the IOC”.

Thus, still as stated by Van Riel and Fombrum (2007), to succeed, organisations must develop healthy interactive relationships with their stakeholders – and the purpose of a company’s communication system is a means to facilitate this engagement.

Hallahan, et al. 2007 defines strategic internal communication as the purposeful use of communication by an organisation to fulfill its mission. This plan is used to identify key concepts including audience analysis, goal setting and message strategy.

Dolphin (2005) describes internal communication “as the transaction between individuals and groups at different levels and specialized in different areas with the purpose to organize daily activities or redesign organizations.

Sandra and Michael Rouse (2002) state that an internal communication strategy framework consists of four key elements, namely: Communication, Audience, Message and Channel of Communication.



Communication – A clear understanding of what we are trying to communicate.



Audience – Understanding the needs, preferences, requirements and skills of our audience will allow us to craft specific messages for our targets.



Message – Here we think about the style, tone and structure of our messaging.



Channel – We look at the best form(s) of mediums in which we may select to disseminate this information in relation to the audience targeted.

With specific regards to communication in an Olympic Sport Organisation, the Managing of Olympic Sports Organisations (as edited by Robinson 2020) handbook states that “communicating with stakeholders is essential for an OSO to promote its vision, objectives, plans and broader offer; seek sponsorship; and show that it is both transparent and accountable.”

The benefits of having an internal communications strategy is that it enhances faster responses to solving problems and emergencies. It also makes the internal stakeholders feel more valued and thus increases internal stakeholder contributions towards achieving set goals and objectives.

Internal communication has three different levels of effect for organization; it can be gossip talk, informal chat, and formal corporate communication that may include meetings (Welch, 2013).

2.2 Objectives of Internal Communication?

Effective internal communication is crucial for successful organizations as it affects the ability of strategic managers to engage employees and achieve objectives (Welch & Jackson, 2007).

Thomas et al. (2009) addresses that communication plays an important role in the development of trust within an organization.

According to the Rio 2016 Communications Strategic Plan, communications now play a fundamental role: to influence perceptions, engage audience groups, align expectations, change preconceptions, boost opportunities and minimise risks.

Some of the major objectives of an internal communications strategy include the provision of a strategic vision and roadmap of how their internal stakeholders would like information disseminated to them over the long term; to identify and implement a variety of communications strategies; to ensure effective encoding and decoding of information, to gauge communication areas that are in need of strengthening and strengthen them and to offer means of providing feedback once this information has been received and digested.

An internal communication strategy helps an organization map out a series of activities and programmes that not only help it engage with key stakeholders in an effective and streamlined way, but also help reach the organization's core objectives.

The most important objective of internal communication is to commit people to the organization and its goals, usually by strategy communication and participatory actions (Cornelissen, 2011).

2.3 Types of Internal Communications

Effective and efficient internal communication aids in ensuring that every individual of the organisation is aligned to the same goal and works in the same direction to achieve these goals. It revolves around creating an adequate flow of information and collaboration among the participants who make up an organisation.

Mentioned below is a list of different kinds of internal communication used by top organisations in executing internal communication:

2.3.1 Management to employee communication (Top-down)

Top-down communication process of a business organisation emphasises upon the managerial hierarchy and transfer of the information within the business organisation from the higher level of management to the staff in systematic manner (Haken, 2013).

The purpose of such communication is to inform about policies, procedures, programmes and objectives and to issue orders and instructions to the subordinates.

Some of the objectives of this type of internal communication are to train subordinates in performing the job; to motivate employees to improve their performance; to know how effectively a person is performing his job; to explain organisational policies, programmes and procedures; to give instructions about what to do and how to do and to highlight the areas of attention amongst others.

2.3.2 Employee up communication (Upward)

Upward communication is a process whereby an organisation's superiors get the chance to know how their subordinates feel about their work, their relationships with clients, colleagues, and the organisation generally. Accordingly, this helps to identify talents or skilful employees, productive employees and to enhance employee performance (Greenberg & Baron, 2008; Robbins, Judge & Campbell, 2010).

Upward communication is a good way for management to get the views of employees at the lower levels of the organisation (if allowed) and this may include providing management with the necessary feedback regarding operations on the ground; employees can provide constructive suggestions for promoting the welfare of the organisation; employees can express their grievances, complaints and/or satisfaction to management and it allows subordinates to convey their opinions in the decision making process since this communication is participative.

2.3.3 Peer-to-peer communication (Horizontal)

Horizontal communication involves colleagues and peers at the same level of the organisation and may involve individuals from several different organisational units. It is usually used to facilitate coordination since it provides the basis for cooperation. People need to communicate with each other in order to work effectively in joint efforts (Cornelissen, 2014: 30).

The purpose of this method is to transmit information between people, divisions, departments or units within the same level of organisational hierarchy. It is necessary to develop a collaborative and proactive culture in an organisation.

2.3.4 Diagonal communication

Diagonal communication is communication between managers and employees in different functional divisions (Wilson, 1992).

Diagonal communication makes information flow faster and more freely across the organisation as it eliminates bureaucracy. It improves the team's effectiveness which increases productivity whilst also eliminating the possibility of distortion or misinterpretation of information since the information may be received in its probable form.

2.4 Types of barriers to effective communications

The biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has been accomplished (Kanki & Smith, 2001). Just because you have disseminated information, it does not necessarily mean that the job is fully done as sometimes the recipients do not even acknowledge receipt of this information.

There are many factors that make it difficult to get messages across as intended, namely low motivation and interest, inappropriate language, defensive communication, dishonest dialogue and filtering, insufficient non-verbal communication, information overload, poor communication skills, and technological problems (Riege, 2005).

Bernard L. Erven (Overcoming barriers to communication) highlights a few barriers which could lead to ineffective communication at organisational level as follows:

- **Muddled messages:** these are a barrier to communication because the sender leaves the receiver unclear about the intent of the sender. These messages have many causes. The sender may be confused in his or her thinking or the message may be little more than a vague idea. The problem may be semantics.
- **Stereotyping:** is a barrier to communication when it causes people to act as if they already know the message that is coming from the sender or worse, as if no message is necessary because "everybody already knows."
- **Wrong channel:** Variation of channels helps the receiver understand the nature and importance of a message, i.e. A birthday card to an employee's spouse is more sincere than a request to the employee to say "Happy Birthday" to the spouse.
- **Language:** Each new employee needs to be taught the language of the organisation. Until the organisation's language is learned, it can be as much a barrier to communication as a foreign language.
- **Lack of feedback:** Feedback is the receiver sending back to the sender the message as perceived.
- **Poor listening skills:** Withhold evaluation and judgment until the other person has finished with the message.
- **Interruptions:** Regardless of the cause, interruptions are a barrier to communication.
- **Physical distractions:** Physical distractions are the physical things that get in the way of communication.

3. DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUES

Three types of methodologies were used to collect the data which is as follows:

- 3.1 Interview with the Eswatini Sport and Recreation Council
- 3.2 Interviews with the Secretary Generals of the NOC membership and SWOT analysis from each association
- 3.3 Benchmarking of communications methods for three NOC's, i.e. South Africa, New Zealand and the Czech Republic.

3.1 Interview with the Eswatini Sport and Recreation Council Communications Manager

Background:

The Eswatini Sport and Recreation Council (ESRC) is the mother body for all sport and recreation in the country and is a government parastatal under the Ministry of Sport, Youth and Cultural Affairs.

Similarly to the EOCGA, the ESRC also comprises of about 30 Olympic and non-Olympic Sports Organisations under their membership responsible for the regulation and promotion of sports and physical recreation in the Kingdom.

The ESRC has a Business Development and Communications department which is headed by the Business Development and Communications Manager, Mr. Zama Tsabedze. This Manager is responsible for providing extensive communication and support services on behalf of the Council and to avail any assistance and/or opportunities that may be beneficial for associations' development.

These were the questions that guided the interview:

- 1. Does the ESRC have a formal internal communication strategy in which you use to communicate with your membership? And if yes, how was it designed?
- 2. How is the flow of information between the ESRC and your member associations and what communication channels do you utilise when communicating?
- 3. What are your communication objectives and are you achieving these objectives?
- 4. What lessons have you learned throughout this journey communicating with your membership and what advice could you give for improvement internal communication?

3.2 Questionnaires with the Secretary Generals of the NOC membership

Background:

As stated earlier, the EOCGA has a membership of 22 sports associations under its membership. Because the Secretary General of an association is normally the first recipient/respondent of all correspondence related to the association, each association's Secretary General was sent a questionnaire with regards to their internal communication with the NOC.

Each association's President was copied into the email and a detailed explanation was given to the recipients on what the purpose of this exercise was for and how it could potentially increase internal communication between the organisations.

The official email addresses of each association were received from the EOCGA together with all contact details of the President and SG. Of the 22 questionnaires and SWOT analyses sent out, 11 of the associations responded to both the questionnaires and the SWOT analyses.

The interview questions were as follows:

1. Are associations getting the information you need from the EOCGA - when you need it?
Please elaborate and give an example.
2. Kindly name all known communication methods (channels) between the association and the EOCGA in chronological order of importance.
3. Do associations receive applicable responses on time from the EOCGA and what duration would be regarded as suitable for feedback?
4. Do associations receive communication related training courses through the EOCGA? If yes, please state how often in a quadrennial; If no, kindly state if you would be interested in such courses.
5. How is the Association's Secretary General's relationship with the EOCGA Secretary General and kindly highlight any improvement recommendations?
6. What actions could be taken to enhance communications between the organisations?
7. Which communications methods does the association find most ineffective?
8. How effective is the NOC's social media platforms with its membership and please provide recommendations how associations can improve and leverage off these platforms?
9. Do associations have an internal inter-communication platform to share ideas and best practices amongst themselves and the EOCGA? If no, kindly provide suggestions.
10. Are the associations consulted on pertinent issues and decisions by the EOCGA prior to making information public and are associations asked for their input? If yes, kindly elaborate. If no, please suggest possible solutions.

SWOT analysis from each association

Apart from the interview questionnaire which was sent, each association was also sent a SWOT analysis template with an example for them in order for them to input how they feel the EOCGA could enhance internal communication across the board.

Below is an example of the SWOT analysis template that each association received:



EOCGA Internal Communications Audit – SWOT Analysis

SG's of Associations are kindly requested to fill in the **CONFIDENTIAL SWOT Analysis** based on their current interaction with the EOCGA. An example has been provided in the table below. Associations may place as many answers as each association may have different experiences in communication related matters with the EOCGA. This analysis shall then be collated and all answers shall be incorporated into one document with recommendations forwarded to the EOCGA.

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
1. <i>EOCGA and Associations have the capacity to utilise most communications channels such as email, social media, etc.</i> 2.	1. <i>No website, thus information for public consumption not readily available.</i> 2.	1. <i>Develop a website and place all public information on website for ease of access to information, programmes and scholarships, etc.</i> 2.	1. <i>Lack of communication framework may hinder communication between EOCGA and membership.</i> 2.

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3.3 Benchmarking of communications methods for three NOC's, i.e. South Africa, New Zealand and the Czech Republic.

A. Czech Republic NOC

The Czech Republic National Olympic Committee's communication strategy was sourced from the Czech NOC. This document provided a great opportunity to absorb some interesting information and to witness how other larger NOC's communicate with their membership.

The Czech NOC comprises of both winter and summer Olympic sports organisations, thus this literature was really helpful towards the development of the EOCGA internal communications strategy as they comprise of a large membership.

B. New Zealand NOC

Because the EOCGA is currently in the process of developing its website, numerous associations decried the lack of this important communication platform as a deterrent towards communication with the NOC.

Some associations feel that the website could also be used as another means of internal communication between the membership and the NOC, and it will eliminate tedious information sharing requests that could readily be availed on the website.

There are a number Olympic Solidarity quadrennial programmes that are available for NOC's to develop their different NF's. However, due to a lack of this comprehensive website where these programmes can be readily available to associations should the need arise, most associations forgo the opportunity to utilise these development programmes as the information is not readily available.

Whilst benchmarking with the New Zealand NOC website, <https://www.olympic.org.nz/about-the-nzoc/programmes-and-funding/>, most of the Olympic Solidarity programmes are available on the website for ease of access and as a reference point for associations should they want to make use of these programmes.

The editable Microsoft Word format document will eliminate the unnecessary use of paper as the organisations communicate amongst themselves and to ensure that we are the forefront of sustainability which is also in line with Olympic Movement's vision of "building a better world through sport" while using the power of sport to help raise awareness about today's sustainability challenges and showcase solutions to address them as enshrined in the Olympic Agenda 2020+5.

C. South Africa NOC

The third NOC that we benchmarked with was the South African Sports Confederation and Olympic Committee (SASCOC) which is a national multi-coded sporting body responsible for the preparation, presentation and performance of teams to all international multi-coded events. They are also our neighbouring country.

Apart from the multiple National Federations affiliated to the organisation, each of the nine (9) Provincial Sports Councils responsible for handing out provincial colours in their respective provinces are also affiliated to SASCOC.

The SASCOC website (<https://www.teamsa.co.za/>) has a designated drop down navigation bar on the main menu which is strictly designated for "MEMBERSHIP NOTICES". These notices inform members of pertinent occurrences such as upcoming General Assembly or extraordinary meetings amongst others.

4. RESULTS/EVIDENCE OBTAINED

4.1 Interviews (with Eswatini Sport and Recreation Council Communication Manager)

Being the mother body for all sport in Eswatini, the ESRC has about thirty Olympic and non- Olympic sports organisations affiliated to it. These are the very same sports organisations that are also members of the EOCGA thus we found it imperative to gain insight into how the ESRC communicates internally with its membership.

The ESRC Business Development and Communications Manager was interviewed in June 2022 at the ESRC head office and the result of the interview is summarised below as follows:

The ESRC does not have a formal internal communications strategy with which they use to communicate with their membership. The strategies they use to communicate with their members include emails, telephone, Whatsapp messaging and social media in particular Facebook.

Most associations are non-responsive to emails and according to the Communications Manager, this is because of a lack of official email addresses for each of the associations with a majority of the SG's submitting their personal email addresses to the organisation to receive formal communications.

To curtail this problem, the ESRC developed official Gmail accounts for each of the associations and provided accessibility to these accounts to the associations Secretary General, President and Treasurer in order for them to hold each other accountable with regards to communication related matters.

The Communications Manager highlighted that the email means of communications was one of the most non-responsive means of communication and that it took numerous follow-up telephone calls for them to effectively receive feedback.

The Whatsapp messaging platform has been exposed as the most preferred method of communication amongst the organisations due to it providing a means of feedback to the sender as it shows once the recipient has read the messages.

The ESRC has decried the manner in which they send and receive information across the organisation as often times than not, they do not receive the required responses unless the information directly touches on the concerned association thus they are not able to effectively fulfill their objectives.

The non-committal of those elected into these executive positions has also been denounced as a major setback as many of these executives take on these roles but are not competent to fulfill these roles due to competing responsibilities such as work commitments, not being able to attend meetings due to living far away and thus not being able to form a quorum, educational commitments and many more.

Similarly to the EOCGA, the ESRC does not have an active website where they can place information directed to their members and face to face meetings are almost non-existent.

4.2 Questionnaires (with Secretary Generals of NF's affiliated to EOCGA)

All twenty two (22) National Federations were sent questionnaires and eleven (11) associations responded to the questions posed which equates to fifty percent of the membership. These can be summarised as follows:

- ✓ The National Federations are content with the manner in which the NOC disseminates information to the membership but have complained that this information is usually received at very short notice thus they are not able to action appropriately and on time.

The NF's also complained that the NOC takes time to respond and/or action their requests and this usually leaves them in a dire situation as although they are autonomous, sometimes they need the endorsement of the NOC for them to effectively implement their activities.

Further, there is a lack of information about Olympic Solidarity and other programs available to associations' and how to access programs.

Some examples given by the Cycling Association of Eswatini (CAS) is that they requested a route profile for the upcoming Commonwealth Games cycling route and received an incomplete route weeks after they had sent in their request. The CAS was also working on the cyclist's kit and asked the NOC to provide details with regards to the emblems to be placed on the kits but they received this very late which then disorients the federation's plans and preparations.

The communication channels in which the NOC uses to communicate with the NF's are: Emails, phone calls, newsletter and text messages (Whatsapp in particular). Most associations concurred that twenty four (24) hours would be deemed significantly appropriate as a response time period for feedback to requests or queries where the NOC has the information within the office and one (1) week if the NOC needs to source this information from elsewhere. What was highlighted is that the NOC annually requests an update of NF's details however they fail to update their own data base and still send emails to old or non-functional email addresses.

- ✓ The NF's would like to receive communication related training courses to enhance their overall communication objectives across the board. The NF's are keen on learning on new ways that they can utilise in order to market their association's activities which include social media management platforms such as Tik Tok, Instagram and LinkedIn amongst others.
- ✓ The associations have applauded the Secretary General's office for always being available and prompt when contacted by the associations. However, because the SG's office deals with numerous internal and external stakeholders on a daily basis, and the enormous amount of time that the SG spends out of the country attending

NOC duties, the office is bound to skip other requests that are sent by the associations. The membership has requested other proactive ways of communicating especially urgent matters so they may be addressed swiftly.

- ✓ To improve internal communication between the NOC and the NF's, some NF's have proposed that the NOC provide communication gadgets for those NF's who fully comply with the EOCGA. Most associations struggle financially thus this could serve as a form of motivation for all associations to enrich their internal communications with the NOC.

When emails are sent out by the NOC, the associations also recommend that a followup call or text is sent to each association ensure that the email is addressed. Most SG's have full time employment so they do sometimes miss out on certain details due to their work commitments.

- ✓ On ways to enhance internal communications between the entities, the NF's would like to meet with the NOC at least quarterly every year whether virtually or in-person. This would serve as an opportunity for the NOC to follow-up on what the NF's are doing whilst the NF's can share best practices with their counterparts. This will be an addition to the already proposed communication methods as presented in the research.
- ✓ With regards to receiving information regarding matters that touch directly on the NF's, the NF's requested that they receive a copy of the minutes of the Executive Board meeting(s) held by the NOC at least three (3) days after the meeting.

NF's would also appreciate to get quarterly reports which are usually only sent out to the NOC Executive Board as they feel that this could be another communication channel of informing NF's of NOC activities rather than waiting for the annual General Assembly which is normally the case.

SWOT Analysis from each association

Each of the 22 NF's Secretary Generals were asked to fill in a SWOT analysis based on their current interactions with the NOC. Of the 22 SWOT analyses documents sent out, we received 11 SWOT feedback from the associations with submissions and/or recommendations which are summarised below.





EOCGA Internal Communications Audit – SWOT Analysis

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> EOCGA is organized and the staff is goal oriented Having an international governance gives them the advantage of best practise and professionalism They are funded by an international organization and that helps them to be accountable and responsible. They have sporting professionals running the office. EOCGA is good at open communication of opportunities such as training. EOCGA SG Email communication is strength EOCGA is forthcoming with information and guidance when requested The CEO and President have an open door policy and are very willing to accommodate us for meetings whether necessary. The NOC has a budget to help national federations improve. They have facilities which they allow national federations access to for effective functioning e.g. Internet and printing. Timeous responses to emails. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> A lot of emphasis on individual sporting codes – leaves team sports with no one to assist them Capacitating local administrators has been slowed down in the past years. Does not have a central point of obtaining information easily without having to request from someone at EOCGA, for example a website Forms, templates etc. not readily available, need to be requested Communication needs a lot of work. Although budget exists, national federations do not acquire same due to ineffective communication. Emailing list does not seem up to date. There's no dedicated mobile office number that associations can call in case the usual available numbers are out of office. Not following the plan and inadequate feedback on this Website developed and not maintained Review of Communication Plan not updated and Marketing Plan not implemented No link to the Strategy on its operations. No website which means sharing of International Platforms difficult 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Advance support for administrators i.e. programs run by associations that are affiliated, individual aspiring administrators – coaching course, referring course. These courses are sometimes outside the country Improve presence on digital platforms Echo point 1, a website with all available information would be great. Calendar of events, application forms, templates, training opportunities etc. Host more than just the AGM for the coming together of minds. Collect and update emails at all meetings presented. Acquire an official mobile number to be dedicated to the office for all enquiries even after normal working hours as most NF's comprise of volunteers who have competing commitments thus they usually use their spare time to attend to NF related duties. Use the strategy to improve in the areas identified in the SWOT Analysis Develop a website with direct links to other websites Place on website and utilise the athletes Commission for dissemination to athletes 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Current political environment Current economic status, threatens Lack of facilities in the country, threatens growth of sports Cost of available facilities, that teams and associations don't afford Lack of set constant communication/updates between EOCGA and Associations could cause disjoint between the joint or result in both operating independently of each other, rather than aligning their operations and vision. Athletes with potential to bring medals home are not being presented with the best opportunities which may thereby result in their loss of interest. National federations may be discouraged from accessing the full opportunities available to them due to being tied up in bureaucracy. A lot of associations miss some important communications because they do not get the relevant emails. Landlines may take long to get connected and they may not record missed calls thus no means of responding to missed ..
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Regular phone calls as follow-ups to events or queries. A strategic plan has been compiled with the intent of improving the business in the areas identified as being weaknesses or threats. EOCGA has access to International Platforms EOCGA has a newsletter NFs have email addresses Inexperienced staff on technology Dedicated staff member to ensure good communication. Social Media interaction. EOCGA has motivated/ dedicated staff. EOCGA has a very simple-no various departments. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Intermittent distribution and not getting out to the clubs from Associations Information on social media is not shared to the NF email Traditional operations that do not take advantage of new technology Lack of knowledge on the role and responsibilities of EOCGA including the role & responsibilities of NF,s the Ministry and the Council Limited exposure on social media of less popular sports. No activity, no visuals, with Commonwealth games coming up there should be visuals and teasers to create hype about the games. Not every employee is equipped to act as the organisation ambassador Too many communicators 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Information posted on social media should go to the NFs as official communication Maintain the database of NFs and their emails. Train/employ staff with the skills for best utilisation of new technology and ensure the tools are easily available. Develop a Sport System. Create regular content on all sports and development activities. Tag associations on EOCGA's activities to be easily visible for all associations and stake holders. EOCGA offers workshop to the employees to keep them motivated Proactive and transparent CEO involvement for clarity Workplace offers resources to improve communication 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Continued disregard for implementing and monitoring the Strategy Low maintenance of website Low maintenance of Website and lack of athlete Focus Continued use of social media as the platform for information Continued disregard for formal communication No policies on rotation and procurement of new technology. Continued current operations. Using Communication Interns could create lack of continuity thus should be hired on a full-time basis. Losing an opportunity to tap in a large platform of engaging with its stakeholders. Competitors may hire the motivated employees CEO maybe having other commitments i.e. meetings, therefore no other dedicated person to do duties on CEO behalf when unavailable. Associations not participating.

4.3 Benchmarking of communications methods for three NOC's, i.e. South Africa, New Zealand and the Czech Republic.

A. Czech Republic NOC

The Czech Olympic Committee's (COC) communication strategy was sourced from the Czech NOC. The Director of Communications is responsible for all communications within the Czech NOC. Since this research paper is about internal communications, only the internal communications aspect of the document was utilised. Some of the internal communications strategies employed by the COC include the following:

- Email
- Telephone
- Olympic Magazine
- Photographic outputs
- Graphic design, creative
- Meetings
- Social Media such as Whatsapp and Slack
- Website

B. New Zealand NOC

There are two types of Olympic Solidarity programmes, namely Continental Programmes and World Programmes. These programmes main aim is to increase global assistance to the athletes, to optimise the management of National Olympic Committees and to simplify administrative procedures, in order to adapt to the National Olympic Committees' requirements and needs (Olympic Charter).

During the 2021-2024 quadrennial, the New Zealand Olympic Committee made these programmes available for all their National Federations on the Olympic Programme to have access to Olympic Solidarity financial and technical assistance through the National Olympic Committee.

This significantly simplified administrative procedures as all the information regarding these programmes were readily available on the NZOC website at the click of a button. Simplifying matters even further is that all the documents and applications were developed in such a manner that they are electronically editable thus there is no need to first download the document, print it, then fill in the document, before scanning the document and resending it to the recipient via email.

The EOCGA also receives these Olympic Solidarity documents and they currently use the tedious method stated above. The development of the EOCGA website and placement of the documents on this platform similarly to the NZOC will eliminate all these time consuming methods thus increasing administrative processes for both the NOC and the NF's.

C. South Africa NOC

The South African Sports Confederation and Olympic Committee (SASCOC) has a drop-down menu on the website named “MEMBERSHIP NOTICES” which is strictly designated for notices for all their membership.

One of the setbacks with regards to internal communication with NF’s, as per the case study done with the Communications Manager of the Eswatini Sports and Recreation Council (ESRC) was that most associations do not action on the communication between them and their mother body.

To circumvent this, every notice emailed to associations shall also be placed on the NOC website. A link to the website shall also be placed on the NOC official social media pages and the NF’s shall be tagged in order for them to go to the NOC website to see this information.

This will also serve as an accountability means for the SG’s as many sports stakeholders such as athletes, coaches, administrators etc. will also see this information and may be able to follow up with the SG of the NF as to what they have done with this information.

5. DISCUSSION

Based on all the research gathered, we can develop the following arguments from the research:

- According to the ESRC Business Development and Communications Manager, one of the major hindrances of internal communication between the ESRC and their membership is the lack of commitment of the individuals who get voted into executive positions such as President or Secretary General amongst others, of their respective NF's.
- The trend in the past was for associations to vote the most popular individuals into executive positions based on their popularity and not giving thought or precedence to what these individuals may actually do for the development of their sport.
- Most of these individuals avail themselves for election not because they have a clear roadmap as to how they may add value to their associations' development, but rather for titles, power and numerous travelling opportunities associated with positions of such nature.
- The ESRC Communications Manager highlighted that although this trend is slowly changing due to their collaboration with the EOCGA in capacitating associations on best practices, this is one of the drastic challenges which limit the overall development of sport at national level as each association is autonomous in its operations thus the ESRC and the EOCGA cannot be seen to be interfering in the elective processes of their membership.
- The SG's of these associations with regards to internal communications are of the view that it is the mother bodies (both EOCGA and ESRC) that should take the lead and do more to enhance internal communications between the associations and mother bodies through strengthening of internal communication strategies as well as making all information readily available for associations.
- The associations feel that there has been too much secrecy and bureaucracy that has existed between themselves and the NOC, with a number of associations choosing not to entertain the NOC as they feel that only selected NF's are normally assisted, especially those individual sports such as athletics and boxing at the expense of others.
- A majority of the associations are so far pleased with the new NOC administration and from the questionnaires' answers, most of them believe that the creation of an internal communication strategy which highlights exactly how they shall communicate with each other, will be beneficial for relationship building and information sharing. They do however wish to meet at least quarterly as associations together with the NOC and not the current status quo which is during the AGM.
- This is a first of its kind in the history of internal communications between the NOC and NF's and the NF's are sincerely hoping that the EOCGA Executive Board will implement some of the recommendations given by them through the SWOT analyses in which they highlighted their thoughts as to what strategies could augment internal communication across the board.
- Many of our associations were specifically critical of the NOC not having an interlinked website and social media platform, and believe that the development of this would be a major boost towards amplifying communications. We are fortunate to have already received funding approval from ANOCA/Olympic Solidarity so I am confident that most of the suggestions stated in the research shall be taken into consideration, dependant on funding parameters

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Priority	Recommendation	Action	Lead	Resources	Timescale	Critical Success Factors
1	Development of a comprehensive website where all information regarding available programmes and funding is readily available for NF's to complete online. Also include links of other relevant websites as well as contact details of all NF's affiliated to NOC for ease of access/reference should need arise.	As part of my MEMOS Project, which is to develop an internal communications strategy for the NOC, the NOC has appointed me as the Communications Consultant to develop this website working together with the approved service provider.	Communications Consultant/Communications Intern	Funding to pay for website design and annual hosting services.	May-Aug 2022	An application for funding was sent together with justifications for the website development to ANOCA/Olympic Solidarity for approval. The NOC was granted approval and working together with the office of the SG/Communications, we are now collating all the information required to bring the website to reality.
2	Fulltime hiring of Communications Intern. This position can also serve as a press officer when attending international games such as Commonwealth Games and because this would be an internal appointment during Games, the association can rest assured that there would be no negative reports being sent to the media as all reports will have to be approved by the SG before being sent to various local media.	To make the Communications Intern position a full-time position in order to create continuity with regards to communication and information sharing between NOC and NF's.	Executive Board/Secretary General	The Secretary General and/or Treasurer could explain to the Board where the funding to hire this position full-time could be derived from.	The current Communications Intern contract expires in April 2023.	It is imperative that this position be provided with the relevant tools in order to effectively execute the tasks. These tools may include camera and video camera, graphic design and videography training courses in order to create relevant content to market the NOC and NF activities.

3	<p>Creation of a Secretary Generals Forum between NOC and NF's for both live and virtual sessions.</p> <p>To promote internal communication amongst SG's, a SLACK communication account (which will serve as an intranet) should be created and the NOC should procure every NF SG a tablet communication device every quadrennial together with a limited data monthly package. The numbers for these devices could also be used as official contact numbers for each National Federation.</p>	<p>The NOC could create a Secretary General's Forum which would include all the NF SG's and would be chaired by the NOC SG.</p> <p>This SG Forum could occur quarterly with an annual live session where the SG's get to exchange ideas and share best practices amongst themselves. The SLACK account would allow inter-communication amongst all NF's and the NOC and the procurement of these tablet communication devices would showcase how seriously the NOC is taking internal communication with their NF's.</p>	NOC SG and NF SG's.	Procurement of communication tablets for every NF SG. Monthly data package with telecommunications company for each NF SG.	Procurement of communication tablets should occur after every quadrennial immediately after election of new NOC Executive Board.	<p>Because the new website design will come with a new email address for every NF with the NOC domain name, it is critical that every time new NF executive boards are elected, they are capacitated on how the NOC works and the programs and policies in place to help them thrive.</p> <p>To eliminate the use of personal emails, the old SG should do a hand-over to the new NF SG and allow them to be able to change the NOC domain email specified for the NF.</p>
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4	<p>Establish official email addresses for each NF with NOC domain name, i.e. rugby@eocga.org.sz</p>	<p>Every NF affiliated to the NOC will have an email domain with the NOC name.</p> <p>So every time communication and information is sent out to NF's, these official email will be used and the secondary email addresses of the recipients will be used as optional. Because we propose that each NF SG be given a communication tablet together limited amount of monthly data, this will promote inter-communication between all the NF's and the NOC.</p>				<p>Once the tablets are procured for each NF SG, this will serve to be cheaper in the long run as we shall be paperless as all documents shall be sent electronically.</p> <p>It is therefore very critical that all documents and notices etc. be uploaded on the recommended platforms so that this could possibly serve as one (1) solution of being at the forefront of sustainability which is in line with the Olympic Movement's vision of "building a better world through sport" while using the power of sport to help raise awareness about today's sustainability challenges as enshrined in the Olympic Agenda 2020+5.</p>
5	<p>Have an Associations Liaison Officers who will be responsible for all communication and follow-ups to associations requests received after working hours and on weekends since most SG's are volunteers and are normally doing their respective work related duties during working hours.</p>	<p>The NOC website contact section should allow for all stakeholders' requests or queries that come in after working hours or on weekends and public holidays to immediately be directed to the designated officer's cell phone and laptop within the NOC. This officer will then peruse the information and direct it to the relevant officer for action.</p>	<p>Secretary General to designate which officer will serve as Association Liaison Officer.</p>	<p>The Association Liaison Officer will require the necessary equipment in order to implement this suggestion such as a tablet that will inform and beep every time an email comes in via the website as well as the necessary data and</p>	<p>Once the NOC website is officially launched, this feature should immediately be available as another means of communicating after working hours.</p>	<p>It is critical that the website contact section has an auto reply function which will inform every person who requests information via this platform that their request has been received and shall be actioned within a stipulated time-period. It is also highly important that those who enquire via the website are responded to within the period stated in the auto-reply period to ensure consistency and build trust via this platform that their requests shall be attended to timely.</p>

				communication tools to effectively disseminate information to the relevant officers once perused.		
6	Develop NOC official proactive social media platforms and tag NF's when content concerns them.	The Communications Intern is to get all NF's official social media platforms and every time the NOC posts something that includes a particular NF, they should tag that NF's platform so the reach can go as far as possible.	Communications Intern and NF social media specialists	Should the proposal for the procurement of communication tablets for each NOC be approved, together with limited data per month per NF, this should not require any resources except for the collaboration between the NOC and the NF.		NF's should share the quarterly calendar of events with the NOC so that the NOC can market and follow-up on all activities initiated by their membership.
7	Include a "MEMBERSHIP NOTICES" drop down menu in the NOC website which will specifically be for all membership notices similar to the SASCOC (South Africa) website with which we benchmarked.	Every time the NOC has uploaded updates for NF's on the website, the NOC should send out communication to this effect via its official communication platforms such as email addresses, social media pages and SLACK accounts with the link that will reroute all NF's to the NOC website so they may see these notices timely.	Communications Intern; Administration Manager/NF SG's	No resources required should the recommendations be followed.	This should be made available on the website immediately website is launched.	It is very critical that all information that is directed to NF's be made available on this platform the minute it is disseminated to NF's via the official communication platforms. In this way, even the SG's of associations can be held accountable as their members may enquire as to what the association is doing about the information that the NOC sent out for its members' attention.

8	To apply for Olympic Solidarity funding at the beginning of every quadrennial and get expert to come and educate all NF SG's on what these programmes are and how you may apply for them	<p>The NOC should apply for this funding which is part of the aim of Olympic Solidarity to provide assistance to all National Olympic Committees (NOCs) for athlete development programmes, in particular those with the greatest needs of it.</p> <p>This assistance is achieved through multi-faceted programmes prioritising athlete development, but also training of coaches and sports administrators, and promoting the Olympic values.</p>	Executive Board/NOC SG	Resources required would be to bring the expert to the country and to host the NF SG's at this function.	Beginning of every quadrennial.	<p>In order for this to be a success, it would be critical that all NF executive boards attend this seminar so as to get an informed perspective of these programmes.</p> <p>Also, it is important that the NOC avail these programmes applications readily on their website for ease of access and application.</p>
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8. APPENDICES

8.1 Interview with ESRC Communications Manager via interview

A. How many sports associations are under your membership?

We have 30 sports associations under our membership comprising of both Olympic and Non-Olympic sports.

B. What type of communications strategies do you use to communicate with the associations and what communication barriers do you come across?

We use email communication, Whatsapp messaging and sometimes social media like our Facebook page. I have found Whatsapp to be the most effective for us as you can monitor if information is being received through the read receipts option provided in the application. The associations are usually non-responsive or respond late to email communication and it takes numerous follow-up phone calls for associations to eventually respond to us.

We decided to create official Gmail accounts for all the associations and we then send communication through these emails. The personal emails are then copied in as secondary addresses.

We also realised that we should capacitate our membership on communication at least once a year.

In my experience, we have seen that most of the Executive Board positions are usually occupied by the most popular individuals who have a huge following. People who genuinely have a love for sport are not elected and once these popular individuals have to start implementing what the duties of the office require, you find that they are overly committed or they do not understand what the position requires. The entire association then suffers and in turn, we also cannot assist as we would like as all associations are autonomous in their dealings.

Also, we should do lots of networking at regional and international levels in order to ascertain best practice models of communication at these levels.

One of the biggest barrier to ineffectiveness of communication is that most SG's have competing responsibilities thus the association work always takes a back seat. I always advise that people who cannot commit to sport should not take on the added responsibility of wanting to lead an association because this is a full-time job that needs dedicated people and if there's no communication, then the whole association suffers.

8.2 EOCGA Internal Communications Research Questions for Associations



SG's of Associations are kindly requested to fill in the CONFIDENTIAL Research questions based on their current interaction with the EOCGA. This analysis shall then be collated and all answers shall be incorporated into one document with recommendations forwarded to the EOCGA.

- | |
|--|
| <p>1. Are associations getting the information you need from the EOCGA - when you need it? Please elaborate and give an example.</p> |
|--|

Athletics: Yes we do and promptly.

Boxing: Yes, although at times we receive it in a short notice period with not enough time to prepare adequately.

Cycling: We do get information that we need. At times it takes some time to reach us. We had asked for a route profile for the Commonwealth cycling route, and we got it after some days but it was not complete. We are working on the cycling kit for the Commonwealth Games right now, we have requested some details for the emblems, and till now, we are still awaiting that detail.

Gymnastics: Not always. There is a lack of information about programs available to Associations and how to access these programs.

Hockey: Yes, but there's room for improvement. Emails should be sent to NF emails and then copied to personal accounts.

Judo: Not the best at sending communication.

Rugby: Yes, through email and voice calls if it's on short notice although they should consider that we are volunteers therefore we usually do our NF work in our spare time.

Shooting: Yes, although it is mostly at short notice and sometimes sent to the wrong email or the former SG's email which does not help us.

Swimming: Yes, we do get regular information from EOCGA on various topics and always before any deadlines if applicable.

Tennis: The information dissemination is there but there is much room for improvement using new technological methods.

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| <p>2. Kindly name all known communication methods (channels) between the association and the EOCGA in chronological order of importance.</p> |
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Athletics: Email, Telephonic, Face to Face, Website, Social Media.

Boxing: WhatsApp, email, cellphone calls, telephone, reports, training, events, memos.

Cycling: Email, Phone calls, Text Messages (Whatsapp).

Gymnastics: Email, Social media (Facebook, Instagram),

telephonic.**Hockey:** Email, Phone calls.

Judo: Email. The NOC annually requests an update of our details however they fail to update their own data base and still send emails to old or non-functional addresses.

Rugby: E-mail, SMS, voice call, social media platforms like Whatsapp and Facebook.

Shooting: E-mail, telephone, Whatsapp.

Swimming: Yes, Email, Whatsapp, Phone.

Tennis: E-mail, but sometimes we don't receive; phone calls, but we sometimes miss these.

Volleyball: We always use email. Calls are used as a follow up to what has been sent on email.

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| <p>3. Do associations receive applicable responses on time from the EOCGA and what duration would be regarded as suitable for feedback?</p> |
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Athletics: Yes promptly, responses should be 24hours or less.

Boxing: So far EOCGA personnel are prompt at giving responses and 24 hours should be reasonable.

Cycling: Responses are indeed timely if the information is straight from EOCGA office. It usually takes time if EOCGA needs to source it elsewhere externally.

Gymnastics: Yes. 24 hours would be acceptable for feedback.

Hockey: Responses are prompt and timeous and 24 hours would be acceptable.

Judo: In our experience, we do not receive responses. Recently, by a live meeting we were informed of a budget at our disposal. We requested the form at their office and we were told to request it by email. The email address provided kept bouncing back. A WhatsApp message was written to the CEO requesting him to alert the Secretary of our request as he had been copied in the email. He responded in the affirmative however to date there has been no response from the NOC. It's been about 3 weeks.

Rugby: It is prompt, quick and reliable, especially from the CEO and communication officials.

Shooting: The response time could be better but it seems that they usually respond to those associations whose members also sit on the NOC Board first.

Swimming: Not always, depends on who exactly you needing feedback but from 72hrs would be suitable.

Tennis: Yes we receive responses but sometimes not to our satisfaction which then makes it difficult for us to give responses to our International Federation.

Volleyball: Yes we receive timely responses, within a day normally.

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| <p>4. Do associations receive communication related training courses through the EOCGA? If yes, please state how often in a quadrennial; If no, kindly state if you would be interested in such courses.</p> |
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Athletics: Yes we do at least once a year, sometimes more.

Boxing: Yes, we do, this quadrennial we received information on training courses twice. We are

interested in such courses.

Cycling: We do receive training courses invitations. We have received anti-doping training and two Master's Degree opportunities from two different countries.

Gymnastics: We do not receive communication related training. This could be beneficial.

Hockey: There are none that we are aware of although we would be interested in any, if available.

Judo: The last training communication received was in 2020 wherein we were invited to attend an international online course on match fixing presented by Interpol. It was a very good course.

Rugby: Yes, we have been on training courses, at least once a year.

Shooting: No, we have never heard of any communication related training courses but this could help strengthen communications if it could be made available.

Swimming: Yes. New to Association so cannot speak to quadrennial but so far we have had at least 4 notifications of courses and training opportunities.

Tennis: No, never heard of communication courses but could be very helpful.

Volleyball: Yes we receive training information – we have been disturbed by covid but have seen a return of these trainings.

5. How is the Association's Secretary General's relationship with the EOCGA Secretary General and kindly highlight any improvement recommendations?

Athletics: It is very good.

Boxing: I work very closely with EOCGA CEO, always supportive where possible.

Cycling: The relationship is good. It can be improved if the EOCGA office can be proactive in matters especially that are urgent so they can be addressed swiftly.

Gymnastics: It is professional but efficiency should be improved within the office.

Hockey: The relationship is good and professional. There's been a lot of positives, visibility and support from the new team and new CEO.

Judo: The EOCGA Secretary General is very receptive and answers good phone and messages promptly.

Rugby: The SG has a professional relationship with EOCGA.

Shooting: It is cordial with mutual respect although we would appreciate more promptness.

Swimming: Good, we communicate well and have a positive relationship.

Tennis: We have a very good relationship and their door is always open.

Volleyball: The relationship is great; no improvements required. The office is always open to communications

6. What actions could be taken to enhance communications between the organisations?

Athletics: It is good so far, they should just keep it up.

Boxing: Some organizations like ours are struggling financial to afford the gadgets for communication. If there can be a form of motivation to those NFs which faithfully are in constant in touch with EOCGA.

Cycling: When emails are sent, it will be a kindly appreciated that a follow up call or text is sent to ensure that the email is addressed. Some of us have a full time job so we try to sacrifice time for the association.

Gymnastics: Provide regular updates on what is happening within the NOC and Olympic Movement.

Hockey: Emails can be followed up by phone calls just to note if they have been received.

Judo: They ought to update their information data of associations and confirm that all relevant parties are on the mailing list.

Rugby: Association secretaries should be trained and informed on the strategies of EOCGA.

Shooting: At the start of every quadrennial, an international expert on communications or from Olympic Solidarity should come and train the associations on the Olympic Solidarity programmes and how they can be accessed.

Swimming: Perhaps a bi-annual meeting to “touch base”. Quick turnaround on email communication, request etc. from both parties.

Tennis: The EOCGA should provide communication gadgets for each association with relevant email and contact number and use this as official association details.

Volleyball: So far it is great – no improvements required.

7. Which communications methods does the association find most effective?

Athletics: Email, and depending on the nature of the subject matter, Face to Face.

Boxing: All the channels used are very effective although training and events are very scarce this quadrennial.

Cycling: For us all the communication channels are very effective and important.

Gymnastics: Emails are most effective but these should be beefed up with placing information on website as well as on social media.

Hockey: The most effective is email, but it should be supplemented with something just as effective like website.

Judo: E-mail is ideal but there should be more channels for communication.

Rugby: Email is relevant but to formal emails and not personal emails.

Shooting: Email is effective but this information should not only be sent to one individual, so placing it on social media and websites would also help for transparency and accountability.

Swimming: Phone call work – but be nice to have paper trail or writing trail to refer back to in case calls are missed.

Tennis: A website with a page dedicated to association updates would be most ideal then this information should also be copied to association’s official emails and social media pages.

Volleyball: Emails and calls, but not only to one person in the association.

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| 8. How effective is the NOC's social media platforms with its membership and please provide recommendations how associations can improve and leverage off these platforms? |
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Athletics: It is very effective, NF should share links within their own platforms.

Boxing: Some social media we are not aware of, some we know but don't know how to use them, let the NOC assume we know them but should have a program on capacitating the NFs on the communication social mediachannels.

Cycling: It's currently not effective or impacting Cycling. It will be essential that the NOC can tag our association across our social media and we will be able to see what is happening and also our stakeholders can be able to witness what is happening.

Gymnastics: They use social media platforms well. More about development sport would be nice, not just a few sports and athletes.

Hockey: I do not have enough information to make a comment.

Judo: In the past the newsletters provided an efficient method of passing information. A Facebook page is recommended.

Rugby: The EOCGA social media pages are not consistent and they should tag associations when information is relevant to them.

Shooting: They only showcase the popular sports and they do not showcase less popular sports. They should ask for our calendar of events and follow up on our activities.

Swimming: Facebook page is active, Instagram is not as much, so perhaps have Instagram activity mirror the Facebook activity. Might be nice to request monthly update from each association on their operations, activities, results etc. that EOCGA could publish on their social media and tag associations.

Tennis: There is room for improvement given the number of associations affiliated to them.

Volleyball: Digital platforms are still growing in the country therefore we all have a responsibility to grow and harness its opportunities. EOCGA can improve depending on activities that happens across all associations, however we have noticed that currently what they communicate via the social media is mostly what they sponsor.

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| 9. Do associations have an internal inter-communication platform to share ideas and best practices amongst themselves and the EOCGA? If no, kindly provide suggestions. |
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Athletics: No, that is something that they should work on and it will benefit all associations.

Boxing: We do not have any at the moment, having such would be great.

Cycling: Yes we do, we have our Club Principals whom we share communication with through email and whatsapp and that information is shared to the clubs. We also have our social media pages across all platforms where we share all information to all general cyclists.

Gymnastics: No, but we would welcome this.

Hockey: None I'm aware of. This is a great idea, and we would like to be part of it.

Judo: No. I suggest a quarterly virtual meeting to achieve this.

Rugby: No. We would suggest a communication link for emergency issues, like google or zoom platforms.

Shooting: No, a quarterly meeting as SG's of associations would be ideal.

Swimming: No, not to my knowledge. Not entirely sure on suggestions.

Tennis: No, maybe a quarterly meeting with the EOCGA would be ideal rather than wait for AGM.

Volleyball: No associations currently work in isolation – there are areas of improvement.

10. Are the associations consulted on pertinent issues and decisions by the EOCGA prior to making information public and are associations asked for their input? If yes, kindly elaborate. If no, please suggest possible solutions

Athletics: Yes depending on the level of the issue.

Boxing: Yes, associations are consulted, asked to make inputs. What is lacking is that some of the NFs do not submit the inputs. Constant reminders are needed, and some sort of incentives are needed to encourage all the NFs to comply.

Cycling: We are notified in general issues that the office will be doing.

Gymnastics: Not always.

Hockey: Yes. There's usually a forum at meetings to discuss concerns. There's also been a couple of meetings to discuss way forwards to successful sporting activities, e.g. team sports meeting and back to play meeting.

Judo: No. Again, a virtual meeting would be ideal.

Rugby: Yes, however, constitutional issues need to be addressed.

Shooting: Not really, they did not consult us when drafting their strategic plan thus it does not feel like we are pulling in the same direction.

Swimming: Yes, we do get regular information from EOCGA on various topics and always before any deadlines if applicable.

Tennis: Even if they do not consult us, they should give us quarterly reports on what is happening within the EOCGA so we are on board with their decisions.

Volleyball: Again, new to Association so do not have extensive experience but for example, yes, on team selection, they had input from numerous associations on selecting proposed team.

8.3 EOCGA SWOT analyses for Associations (complete)



EOCGA Internal Communications Audit – SWOT Analysis

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> EOCGA is organized and the staff is goal oriented Having an international governance gives them the advantage of best practise and professionalism They are funded by an international organization and that helps them to be accountable and responsible. They have sporting professionals running the office. EOCGA is good at open communication of opportunities such as training. EOCGA SG Email communication is strength EOCGA is forthcoming with information and guidance when requested The CEO and President have an open door policy and are very willing to accommodate us for meetings whether necessary. The NOC has a budget to help national federations improve. They have facilities which they allow national federations access to for effective functioning e.g. Internet and printing. Timeous responses to emails. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> A lot of emphasis on individual sporting codes – leaves team sports with no one to assist them Capacitating local administrators has been slowed down in the past years. Does not have a central point of obtaining information easily without having to request from someone at EOCGA, for example a website Forms, templates etc. not readily available, need to be requested Communication needs a lot of work. Although budget exists, national federations do not acquire same due to ineffective communication. Emailing list does not seem up to date. There's no dedicated mobile office number that associations can call in case the usual available numbers are out of office. Not following the plan and inadequate feedback on this Website developed and not maintained Review of Communication Plan not updated and Marketing Plan not implemented No link to the Strategy on its operations. No website which means sharing of International Platforms difficult 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Advance support for administrators i.e. programs run by associations that are affiliated, individual aspiring administrators – coaching course, referring course. These courses are sometimes outside the country Improve presence on digital platforms Echo point 1, a website with all available information would be great. Calendar of events, application forms, templates, training opportunities etc. Host more than just the AGM for the coming together of minds. Collect and update emails at all meetings presented. Acquire an official mobile number to be dedicated to the office for all enquiries even after normal working hours as most NF's comprise of volunteers who have competing commitments thus they usually use their spare time to attend to NF related duties. Use the strategy to improve in the areas identified in the SWOT Analysis Develop a website with direct links to other websites Place on website and utilise the athletes Commission for dissemination to athletes 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Current political environment Current economic status, threatens Lack of facilities in the country, threatens growth of sports Cost of available facilities, that teams and associations don't afford Lack of set constant communication/updates between EOCGA and Associations could cause disjoint between the joint or result in both operating independently of each other, rather than aligning their operations and vision. Athletes with potential to bring medals home are not being presented with the best opportunities which may thereby result in their loss of interest. National federations may be discouraged from accessing the full opportunities available to them due to being tied up in bureaucracy. A lot of associations miss some important communications because they do not get the relevant emails. Landlines may take long to get connected and they may not record missed calls thus no means of responding to missed ..
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Regular phone calls as follow-ups to events or queries. A strategic plan has been compiled with the intent of improving the business in the areas identified as being weaknesses or threats. EOCGA has access to International Platforms EOCGA has a newsletter NFs have email addresses Inexperienced staff on technology Dedicated staff member to ensure good communication. Social Media interaction. EOCGA has motivated/ dedicated staff. EOCGA has a very simple-no various departments. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Intermittent distribution and not getting out to the clubs from Associations Information on social media is not shared to the NF email Traditional operations that do not take advantage of new technology Lack of knowledge on the role and responsibilities of EOCGA including the role & responsibilities of NF's the Ministry and the Council Limited exposure on social media of less popular sports. No activity, no visuals, with Commonwealth games coming up there should be visuals and teasers to create hype about the games. Not every employee is equipped to act as the organisation ambassador Too many communicators 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Information posted on social media should go to the NFs as official communication Maintain the database of NFs and their emails. Train/employ staff with the skills for best utilisation of new technology and ensure the tools are easily available. Develop a Sport System. Create regular content on all sports and development activities. Tag associations on EOCGA's activities to be easily visible for all associations and stake holders. EOCGA offers workshop to the employees to keep them motivated Proactive and transparent CEO involvement for clarity Workplace offers resources to improve communication 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Continued disregard for implementing and monitoring the Strategy Low maintenance of website Low maintenance of Website and lack of athlete Focus Continued use of social media as the platform for information Continued disregard for formal communication No policies on rotation and procurement of new technology. Continued current operations. Using Communication Interns could create lack of continuity thus should be hired on a full-time basis. Losing an opportunity to tap in a large platform of engaging with its stakeholders. Competitors may hire the motivated employees CEO maybe having other commitments i.e. meetings, therefor no other dedicated person to do duties on CEO behalf when unavailable. Associations not participating.

8.4 Benchmarking of three NOC's, i.e. Czech Republic, New Zealand, South Africa

8.4.1 Czech Republic

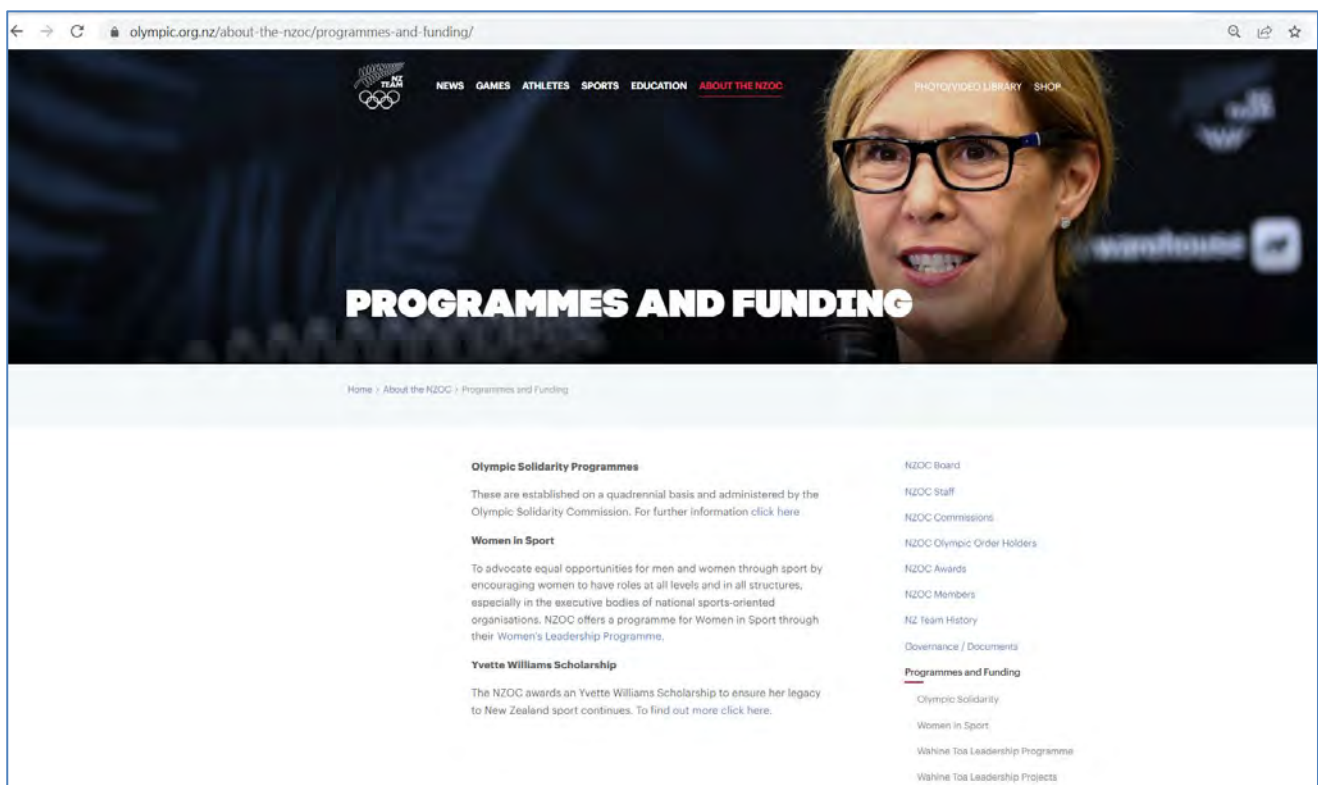
Communication with associations and athletes

- Any communication of an event or athlete, even within a project, which is not related to his/her performance but is connected with commerce or marketing performance, must be communicated with the relevant association, the athlete's manager or the representing agency.
- With large and more complex associations (tennis, biathlon, etc.) the communication director or digital communication manager communicates, otherwise the project manager or content creator is responsible.
- We only communicate basketball in conjunction with the I



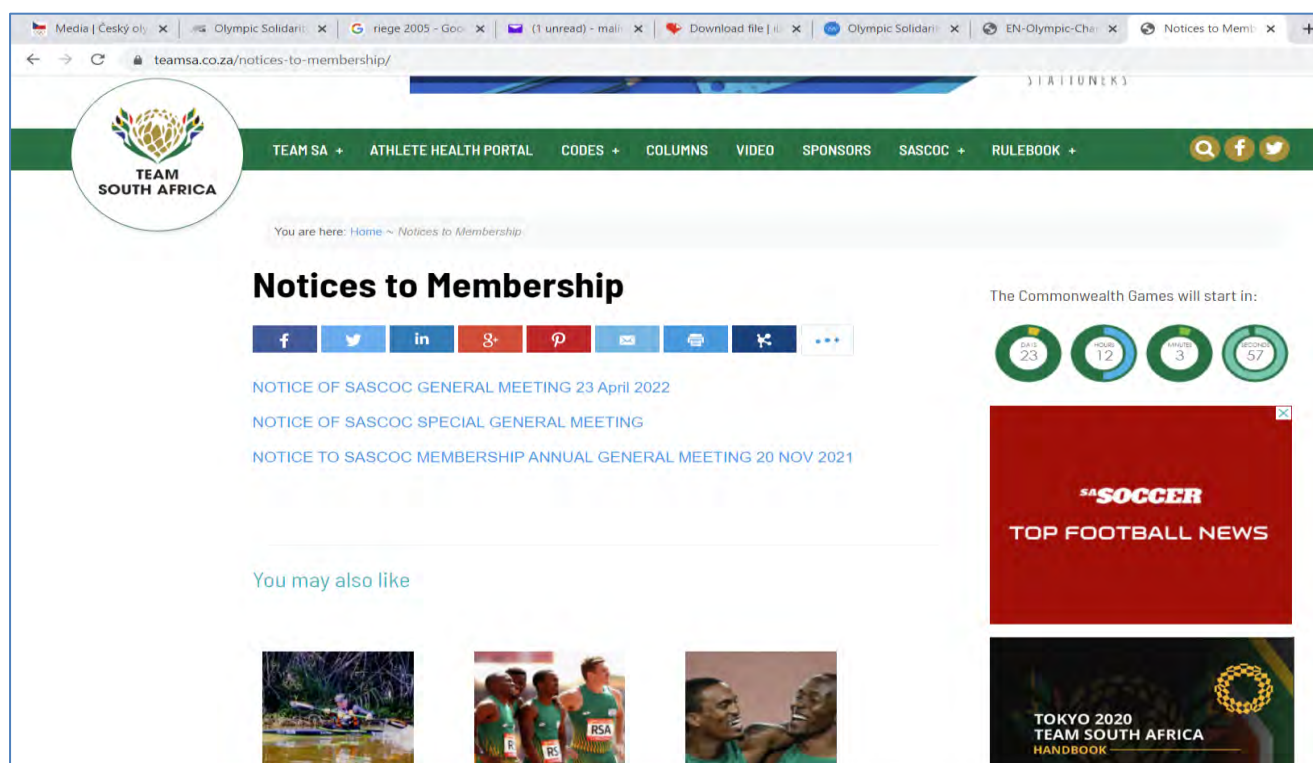
This is an extract of the Czech NOC communications strategy.

8.4.2 New Zealand NOC Website



Above is a screenshot of the NZOC website where all Olympic Solidarity programmes are placed under the programmes and funding drop-down menu. These forms are editable online and there is no need to download first and resend.

8.4.3 South Africa NOC



Website

The South African website has a section solely dedicated to its Membership. We will place all the NOC notices on this platform and send links via email and social media to the NF's informing them of website updates.