



REPUBLIC OF KENYA

MINISTRY OF INFORMATION, COMMUNICATIONS AND
THE DIGITALECONOMY

PUBLIC RELATIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS
MANAGEMENT POLICY

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FOREWORD

The Kenya Vision 2030 identifies information and communication as a significant economic driver with the potential to contribute to the growth and development of the Kenyan economy. The Vision, recognizing the great potential of the ICT sector in turning Kenya into a middle-income economy, is committed to making Kenya a knowledge-based economy where the information and communication subsector is a key enabler in achieving this by 2030.

It is my great privilege to present the Public Relations and Communications Management National Policy, which aims to guide the development and management of Public Relations and Communications Management (PRCM) practitioners in Kenya. Kenyans rely on links created by the public relations and communications functions of both the public and private sectors when searching for information required to make crucial decisions to improve their lives, communities, and the economy.

This aligns with the Bottom-up Economic Transformation Agenda (BETA) commitment in the ICT sector, which comprises five key areas for developing a knowledge-based society. These include: ICT infrastructure development, promotion of ICT and creative industries, capacity development, local digital content development, and innovation in economic and social systems.

The policy identifies three strategic objectives: developing a legislative framework for PRCM practice, standardizing PRCM practice in Kenya, and promoting PRCM practice in Kenya.

This policy on PRCM highlights the critical role the profession plays in connecting people to education, jobs, healthcare, and many other opportunities by providing and disseminating information. The government has the responsibility to ensure that information is available to help people make decisions effectively. It is on this

understanding that the ministry, in conjunction with the Public Relations Society of Kenya (PRSK), practitioners, and other stakeholders, has come together to develop this Policy that defines the practice, formalizes its structures, and guides the regulation of the profession.

The policy seeks to establish the Institute of Public Relations and Communications Management (IPRCM), a national professional organization to serve the communications community. The institute will be responsible for regulating the practice among public, private, and not-for-profit organizations operating in Kenya.

The PRCM Policy provides the required framework for developing a statutory, self-regulatory, and effective IPRCM that will serve as the centre of information for all matters related to the practice. The policy lays the groundwork for developing and enacting a legal framework to govern the profession.

To ensure the successful implementation of the Policy and the proposed programmes, the Ministry, in collaboration with the PRSK, will put in place a monitoring and evaluation framework to support the production of progress reports by the implementing entities.

ELIUD OWALO, EGH, FIHRM

**CABINET SECRETARY FOR INFORMATION, COMMUNICATION AND THE
DIGITAL ECONOMY**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Ministry of Information, Communications, and the Digital Economy, and the Public Relations Society of Kenya, through extensive consultations, has developed this PRCM National Policy, taking into account various ideas, interests, and best global practices. The policy will empower public relations and communication practitioners to create innovative solutions to ensure the availability of efficient, reliable, and affordable information and communication services nationwide.

The formulation of this policy was guided by an extensive review of literature, relevant surveys, and a critical review of the past and existing instruments relevant to the PRCM profession. This exercise enriched insights into the sector's policy evolution and the persistent challenges in policy implementation.

The reviews were guided by the aspirations and provisions articulated in the Constitution of Kenya and other legal instruments. Further, key input was provided through a consultative and participatory approach involving a technical committee with representation from various Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs), including the State Department for Broadcasting and Telecommunications, the Office of the Attorney General, the Department of Justice, and the Kenya Law Reform Commission.

The Ministry would like to extend significantly its sincere appreciation and gratitude to the Public Relations Society of Kenya, led by the President, Mr. Arik Karani, PRSK members, other individuals, and organizations that have contributed to the development of this policy.

The policy would not see the light of day without the PRSK Task Forces that have, over the years, worked tirelessly to develop the Policy. Their insights and wide understanding of the Public Relations and Communications Management practice really built on the specifics that will regulate the PRCM industry in Kenya.

Finally, we look forward to working together to advance an ethical PRCM profession in Kenya.

EDWARD KISIANGANI Ph.D.

**PRINCIPAL SECRETARY, STATE DEPARTMENT FOR BROADCASTING AND
TELECOMMUNICATIONS**

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

PRCM Public Relations and Communication Management

PRSK Public Relations Society of Kenya

IPRCM Institute of Public Relations and Communication Management

KEY POLICY DEFINITIONS

“Cabinet Secretary” means the Cabinet Secretary for the time being responsible for matters relating to information and communication;

“Code of Ethics” means the Code of Ethics setting out PRCM professional standards;

“Council” means the Council of the Institute;

“Disciplinary Committee” means a committee established to hear and determine any complaint referred to it by the Council against a practitioner;

“Examination Board” means the Kenya Accountants and Secretaries National Examination Board established under section 14 of the Accountants Act (No. 15 of 2008);

“Institute” means the Institute of Public Relations and Communication Management.

“member” means a person registered as a PRCM practitioner;

“Ministry” means the Ministry of Information, Communications and Digital Economy;

“Practicing certificate” means a practicing certificate issued by the Council.

“practitioner” means a person registered as a member of the Institute in good standing and holds a valid practicing certificate;

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1. CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Public Relations and Communications Management is a relatively new profession in Kenya, dating back to the 1960s. Public relations and communication management professionals worldwide have never had a formal roadmap, unlike other professions such as accountants and lawyers. That is, the Country has never had universally agreed descriptions of the range of skills, or documentation of workplace experiences and pathways that lead to the destination of career choice. Up until now, who a PRCM professional ought to be and what they ought to be able to do have remained undefined, unlike in other professions. This has encouraged diversity and creativity in the PRCM profession in Kenya.

Having a PRCM Policy will allow emerging practitioners to make informed decisions about future career directions, comparing their own existing strengths and identifying the competencies they need to develop to progress through each stage of their career. Similarly, a clear description of the work that professional communicators actually do will better inform their education and provide greater work readiness. This policy will also provide a Code of Ethics that will uphold professionalism, integrity, and ethics of the practice.

The profession's growth has been accelerated by the country's expanding economy and globalization. PRCM professionals in Kenya practice across a range of sectors, including development, public, and private.

In the early years of independence, the government was the main driver of public relations, using it to build relationships and maintain its image both locally and internationally. During this period, public relations activities focused on promoting government policies and projects and countering negative media coverage. The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (as it was) was responsible for managing the government's public relations

activities, including issuing press releases, organizing press conferences, and publishing information booklets.

The private sector began embracing public relations in the 1980s, with the establishment of the Public Relations Society of Kenya (PRSK) in 1971. Since its establishment, the Society has played a key role in promoting the profession and setting standards for its practitioners. It has also lobbied the government for the recognition of public relations as a profession.

Today, PRCM has become an integral part of institutional management in Kenya, with many companies and institutions establishing in-house public relations departments. In contrast, others outsource these services to public relations agencies. The social media landscape has also evolved with the emergence of a range of digital media platforms, presenting new challenges and opportunities for public relations practitioners.

1.2 Rationale of The Policy

There is limited understanding of PRCM's role in Kenya. Many institutions still view the profession as a promotional tool rather than a strategic function that can help build and protect organizational reputations. This negatively impacts the positioning of PRCM practitioners in organizations and reduces the budgets allocated to the role.

PRCM practitioners are critical to the success of organizations as they help to build and maintain positive relationships with key stakeholders, protect and enhance the organization's reputation, and communicate the organization's messages effectively to its stakeholders.

Their responsibilities include strategic corporate communications, digital communication, content generation and dissemination, media relations, advocacy and public education, stakeholder engagement and management, brand reputation and crisis communication,

customer relations, corporate sustainability, event management and media buying. Practitioners are also responsible for measuring the effectiveness of their communication strategies and initiatives and evaluating their impact on the organization's reputation and relationships with stakeholders.

This Policy proposes developing a legislative proposal to establish a regulatory body for the PRCM profession.

1.3 Objectives of the Policy

The objectives of this Policy are: -

- a) to standardize the practice of PRCM in Kenya.
- b) to develop the practice of PRCM in Kenya.
- c) to develop a legislative framework for PRCM practice.

1.4 Vision

Make PRCM professionals more intelligent, better prepared, and more connected throughout their careers.

1.5 Mission

To foster professional development and influence the PRCM profession through policy and promotion of ethical professional practices and standards.

1.6 Scope of the Policy

The scope of this Policy is the organization of the PRCM profession.

2. CHAPTER TWO: SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS OF THE PRCM PRACTICE

Globally, professionals and Public Relations associations continue to define the practice, formalize its structure, and seek to regulate the industry amongst public, private, and not-for-profit organizations within their respective jurisdictions.

The PRSK is registered under the Societies Act, Chapter 108 of the Laws of Kenya. However, the Society requires a statutory framework to enforce professional ethics and standards in the practice of PRCM in the country. In line with the statutory framework, the Society intends to transform into the Institute of Public Relations and Communications Management to regulate the PRCM practice in Kenya. The PRCM Policy will provide the required legal and institutional framework for the establishment of the Institute.

2.1 Structure of PRCM Practice in Kenya

Currently, there are more than 14,000 PRCM professionals in Kenya, of whom only 4,000 practitioners are registered by PRSK. This policy will harness professionalism in PRCM practice and address any malpractices thereto. The PRCM profession plays a strategic role in the social and economic development of the country, as the practice entails, amongst other roles, the following:

- a) Stakeholder management;
- b) Media relations;
- c) Strategic Corporate communications;
- d) External relations;
- e) Internal relations;
- f) Digital Communication;
- g) Crisis Management and Communication;
- h) Government relations;

- i) Event Management;
- j) Advocacy and Public Education;
- k) Internal Relations;
- l) Public policy affairs;
- m) Research and information management;
- n) Community relations;
- o) Regulatory affairs;
- p) Political advisory and parliamentary affairs;
- q) Consumer Relations;
- r) Investor & Shareholder Relations;
- s) PR Consultancy;
- t) Marketing Communications;

2.2 Challenges Facing the PRCM Profession in Kenya

Challenges affecting the PRCM in Kenya stem from the fact that the country lacks a policy and legislative framework to govern the profession in the following respects—

- a) A regulatory body for PRCM practitioners
- b) Regulation of PRCM practitioners
- c) Examination body for PRCM
- d) Complaints mechanism to handle disputes arising from the practice of PRCM
- e) Regulation of PRCM firms
- f) Accreditation of membership to the profession

2.3 Analysis of Existing Legal and Policy Framework

The following instruments inform the development of this Policy: -

a) The Constitution of Kenya, 2010

The Constitution of Kenya, 2010, provides the foundation for PRCM in Kenya. Article 10 of the Constitution prescribes the national values and principles, including participation, inclusiveness, transparency, and accountability.

Article 35 further outlines that every citizen has the right to access to information, and the State is obligated to actualize this right.

b) The Access to Information Act, 2016

The Access to Information Act, 2016 requires all public bodies and private entities to proactively disclose information that must be made available to the public, provide a mechanism for access to information upon request by any person, and protect from disclosure information deemed under the Act to be exempt. PRCM professionals play a crucial role as Information Access Officers in their respective organizations and must therefore adhere to the requirements of the Act.

c) The Data Protection Act, 2019

The Act provides for the manner in which personal data relating to a data subject should be processed. PRCM professionals handling personal data must adhere to the data protection principles set out in the Act.

d) The Computer Misuse and Cybercrimes Act 2018

In the practice of PRCM, practitioners will be required to abide by the provisions of the Act, which provides for offences related to Computer Systems, which are vital to their role in the processing and dissemination of information.

e) The Public Relations Society of Kenya (PRSK) Constitution, 2016

The objectives under the Constitution include the establishment and promotion of a high standard of professional ethics and learning in PRCM, and the education and information of the public regarding the purpose and practice of PRCM.

There are various codes of ethics and professional standards that PRCM practitioners in Kenya are expected to adhere to. These include the PRSK Code of Ethics and the International Public Relations Association (IPRA) Code of Ethics.

3 CHAPTER THREE: POLICY ISSUES AND INTERVENTIONS

This chapter discusses the policy objectives, strategies, interventions, and measures to develop a policy framework guiding the development of the PRCM profession. The key priority areas for policy intervention are as discussed.

3.1 Lack of regulatory framework for the PRCM profession

The Government shall enact legislation to regulate the PRCM profession. The proposed legislation shall address the following issues—

- a) A regulatory body for PRCM practitioners
- b) Regulation of PRCM practitioners
- c) Examination body for PRCM
- d) Complaints mechanism to handle disputes arising from the practice of PRCM
- e) Regulation of PRCM firms
- f) Accreditation of membership to the profession

4 CHAPTER 4: POLICY COORDINATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

The existence of a cohesive and well-functioning institutional framework is essential to achieving all the objectives of this policy. The aim is to ensure that the various institutions within the PRCM sector effectively play their respective, yet interdependent, roles to provide an efficient and sustainable PRCM practice.

The following institutions will play essential roles in the development of the Public Relations and Communications Management practice: -

- a) the Ministry of Information, Communications, and the Digital Economy;
- b) the Regulatory Body of the PRCM profession;
- c) PRCM practitioners.

4.1 Role of the Ministry of Information, Communications and the Digital Economy

The Ministry will: -

- a) Coordinate the Implementation and review of the PRCM Policy;
- b) Develop a legislative proposal to govern the practice of PRCM;
- c) Create an enabling environment for the development of the PRCM profession; and,
- d) Create awareness of the PRCM Policy

4.2 Role of the PRCM Regulatory Body

The Regulatory body will: -

- a) Organize all PRCM practitioners in Kenya;
- b) Ensure professionalism in the practice of PRCM;
- c) Create awareness of the Policy;
- d) Advise on emerging issues in the practice of PRCM;
- e) Offer capacity building on the PRCM profession.

4.3 Role of Public Relations and Communications and Management practitioners.

The role of the Public Relations and Communications Management Practitioners will include:

- a) Upholding the ethical codes of conduct of the profession;
- b) Adhere to the professional standards set out in the legislative proposal.

5 CHAPTER 5: MONITORING AND EVALUATION MECHANISM FOR THE POLICY

This policy shall be reviewed from time to time to incorporate emerging issues and identified needs in PRCM practice. Monitoring and evaluation shall be based on measurable, observable, and verifiable indicators in line with emerging developments in the Public Relations and Communications Management practice.