CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

November 2014

Prepared by:
FOCUS 4/LEBLAQ JV

FINAL
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1 APPROVALS

Approval of this Crisis Communications Plan indicates an understanding of the purpose and content described in this document. By signing this document, each individual agrees that work should be initiated on this plan and necessary resources should be committed as described herein.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Prepared By:</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Signature</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ms Andisiwe Tingo</td>
<td>Project Manager Focus4 LeBlaQ JV</td>
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<td>21 Nov 2014</td>
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<td>Ms Fakazile Myeza</td>
<td>Project Manager AMCE</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. Mantlako Sebaka</td>
<td>Head of Marketing and Stakeholder Relations City of Polokwane</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ms. Mpumi Khumalo</td>
<td>Acting Director City of Polokwane</td>
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2 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The IRPTS is deemed to be the answer to road gridlock, and is poised to inject dynamism into public transportation system through an integrated network that will make easier its use from a user point of view. The integrated modal network is designed to promote the use of the passenger transport system in Polokwane.

The City of Polokwane has made progress towards the formulation of a responsive transportation network that will recognise mobility needs and improve the current spatial coverage. The Polokwane Integrated Rapid Public Transport System (IRPTS) being developed is designed to improve public transport efficiency.

As with infrastructural development undertaking of this nature that directly impacts the normal day to day lives and normal functioning of a city a number of challenges have to be envisaged and mitigation and management plans put in place before the likely scenario happens.

With the project entering the critical construction phase there will be enhanced visibility of the project, which will invariably attract attention across the broad spectrum of “affected stakeholders and interest groups”. While the Construction phase presents an opportunity to pervade the market with positive IRPTS messages that encourage buy-in, the actual construction by its nature also brings in risk factors such as labour issues, traffic disruptions, quality delivery, cost escalations and site incidents that could derail or cast a negative light on an already highly charged project.

Acknowledging, envisaging and planning for all likely scenarios is the most important undertaking in ensuring that all risks are minimised and adequately addressed when they do arise. It is also important that all work streams are on board and are ready to play their role in helping to mitigate and manage the risks.

Understanding the pattern of a crisis can help the MarCom stream anticipate problems and respond effectively. For communicators, it is vital to know that every emergency, disaster, or crisis evolves in phases and that the communication must evolve along with it. By dividing the crisis into distinct phases, the team can anticipate the information needs of the media, stakeholders, and the general public.

The Crisis Communication Plan is only but one of the tools in a highly integrated risk management apparatus and should be fully integrated into the overall emergency response plan of the project.
3 DEFINITIONS

There are many definitions of Crisis Communications, and most of them describe an organization facing a crisis and the need to communicate about that crisis to stakeholders and the public. Covello, 1995 defines a Crisis, as “A safety, health, or environmental crisis is an unplanned event which triggers a real or perceived, or possible threat to safety, health, or environment, or to the organisation’s reputation or credibility”. A crisis has the potential to significantly impact the organisation’s operations or to pose a significant environmental, economic, reputational, or legal liability.

The underlying thread in crisis communication is that the communicating organization is experiencing an unexpected crisis and must respond. Crisis also implies lack of control by the involved organization in the timing of the crisis event.

Risk Communication on the other hand deals with communicating the risk element to the various stakeholders and allowing them to make choices regarding what course of action to take. Risk Communication may for an example be necessary in the event that commuters’ lives are threatened by using the IRPTS transportation while there are ongoing protests.

4 PURPOSE

The Crisis Communications Protocols are designed to support the IRPTS, and will be used when Polokwane Municipality needs to respond to the information needs and concerns of their stakeholders in a crisis. At all material times, the Rapid Response Team will support emergency operations and take a pro-active role with regard to internal and external communications; including public and media relations.

Furthermore, the Crisis Communication Protocols are meant to gain public confidence by providing information that is:

-准确
-及时
-可信
-有同理心

To keep the internal and external stakeholders calm, by:

- Acknowledging uncertainty;
- Recognise and allay people’s fears;
- Affirm and not over-reassure;
- Explaining the process in place to find answers;
- Expressing wishes (“I wish I had answers....”);
Giving people specific things to do; and
- Asking more of people (to share the risk).
- To direct public action as determined by the Rapid Response Team;
- To meet the needs of the news media;
- To meet the needs of partners/stakeholders; and
- Communicate in a coherent and coordinated fashion (one hymn…different voices)

5 OBJECTIVES

The primary objective of the Crisis Communications Plan is to provide guidance regarding all communication to be disseminated during all stages of the project.

The communication and risk management protocol seeks to:
- Help identify and address critical potential risks and identify their management from a communications point of view.
- Help to ensure that all issues arising are addressed in a timeous and most efficient manner.
- Ensure that the project speaks with one voice and all relevant parties are on script especially when dealing with third external parties.
- Ensure that the integrity of the project is protected and enhanced at all times.
- Create a “halo” around the work streams in order to avoid external distractions and allow them to focus on their mandated tasks.
- Help to position the IRPTN as a transparent, accountable, responsible and responsive project amongst all key stakeholders.

6 TARGET AUDIENCES

The audiences to this Crisis Communications Plan are two-fold, those that are the recipients of the communication, and those that are responsible for sending out such communication. The receivers of the communication will be judging the content of the message, the messenger, and the method of delivery. Each of these aspects have been considered and will be activated during a crisis. The various platforms to reach different stakeholders have been identified and documented.

Key audiences for this crisis communication plan and their information needs include:

- **Public or communities within the circle of disaster or emergency** for whom action messages are intended. Concerns: Personal safety, family safety etc.
- **Public or communities immediately outside circle of disaster or**
emergency for whom action messages are not intended. These may be neighbouring communities that may be influenced or affected by incidents in other areas. Concerns: Personal safety, family safety, interruption of normal life activities.

- **Emergency response and recovery workers, law enforcement agencies** involved in their response. Concerns: Resources to accomplish response and recovery, access to information, personal safety etc.

- **Site Officials that may experience the disaster**. Concerns: Personal safety, equipment etc.

- **Family members of victims**. Concerns: Safety of the victims, and updates.

- **Political Principals**: Response and recovery resources, liability, leadership, and quality of response and recovery planning and implementation; opportunities for expressions of concern; public relations Messages and Audiences.

- **Media that communicates the crisis**. Concerns: Access to accurate information and spokespersons, deadlines.

It should be noted that only the authorised spokespersons as per the Rapid Response Team (RRT) should communicate to the public.

## 7 CRISIS MANAGEMENT

It is widely recognised that there are four stages of crisis management to contend with:

- **Crisis Prevention/Avoidance** - Addresses what the IRPTS can do to reduce or eliminate the risk to the project;

- **Preparedness** - Focuses on the process of planning for the worst case scenario

- **Response** - What steps to take during a crisis; and

- **Recovery** - How to restore normalcy and credibility to the project after the crisis.
7.1 CRISIS PREVENTION/AVOIDANCE

Media monitoring is the first layer of crisis management as it helps in identifying contentious issues that may lead to the crisis. Monitoring the media (both electronic and print) to measure and evaluate editorial coverage (both quantitatively and qualitatively) is the first step at preventing a crisis.

The Crisis prevention stage is where all of the crisis management planning is done. The MarCom team has predicted the types of disasters that the IRPTS is likely to encounter. Initial communication in the form of holding statements will be drafted with the help of the technical workstreams. Spokespersons and resources, and resource mechanisms have been identified. Media and Crisis Communications Training has been undertaken to ensure that experts are speaking with one voice.

The IRPTS Rapid Response Team includes:
- Executive Mayor (EM)
- Member of Municipal Committee (MMC)
- Director Transport
- Polokwane Municipality Communications Department
- IRPTS Marketing
A Champion usually Executive Mayor or MMC has to be appointed followed by a secondary spokesperson, which is a subject matter specialist, and the spokesperson of the organisation that will be a buffer between the organisation and the media.

7.2 PREPAREDNESS

The immediate task of the Rapid Response Team is to do an ‘audit’ of the news articles. Based on the ‘crisis audit’ it will be easy to create a detailed and comprehensive plan with possible scenarios. But what is critical is ‘agenda setting’ to help steer the media away from the present danger. Part of the plan is to acknowledge the problem and deal with it. Every statement that has to be issued has to be tested by a legal mind with a view to look at areas of vulnerability and exposure, which can further dent the reputation of the organisation.

Regular internal briefings need to take place including interdepartmental briefings. It is important for the staff to be kept abreast of activities and to sensitise them about the organisation’s channels of communication. The Rapid Response Team should provide stakeholders or the public with emergency courses of action including how and where to get more information. Importantly, the team should commit to stakeholders and public to continued communication.

7.3 RESPONSE

This phase is the litmus test of the Crisis Communications Plan. As the organisation experiences a crisis it important to anticipate sustained media interest and scrutiny. Unexpected developments, rumors, or misinformation may place further media demands on the organisation’s communicators. Experts, professionals, and others not associated with your organization will comment publicly on the issue, and sometimes contradict or misinterpret your messages. Expect to be criticized about your handling of the situation.

Staying on top of the information flow and maintaining tight coordination become more essential amidst panic. Processes for tracking communication activities become increasingly important as the workload increases. The support of the technical workstreams as well as other departments within the municipality in ensuring a free flow of information is crucial during this stage.

7.4 RECOVERY AFTER THE CRISIS

At this stage, it is important for the media crisis plan to have transcended into a positive experience and this ultimately, requires ongoing monitoring of the situation.
To ensure that the crisis management plan has been effective is to continue feeding the media positive angles about the project. Bear in mind that at this point the media would like to keep the embers of reporting about your organisation glowing, to over graze the story. This is an unrivalled opportunity to continue with agenda setting, rebuild the project reputation and set the right tone through intensified Public Relations.

Once the crisis is over, it is important to evaluate the Crisis communication plan performance, document lessons learned, and determine specific actions to improve crisis systems or the crisis plan.

8 CRISIS COMMUNICATION PROTOCOL PERSPECTIVES

The primary output of crisis communication protocols is to rebuild trust and garner credibility by expressing:

- Empathy and caring
- Competence and expertise
- Honesty and openness
- Commitment and dedication

For any communication protocol framework to be effective there are a number of golden rules that should form the cornerstone of the spirit and values of the framework and should be embraced by all structures and parties who are part of the protocol. These are captured in the simple 4 T’s framework developed by Focus4/LeBlaq for crisis communication.

[TROUBLE > TRANSPARENCY > TIME > TAKE OUT]

Trouble
All potential trouble with the project should be envisaged and acknowledged beforehand and mitigated as best as possible beforehand. When the trouble does arise, it should be acknowledged immediately and put out into the public domain through the appropriate communication channels and framed in an appropriate risk mitigating messaging format.

Transparency
Transparency regarding the challenge being faced is critical both from an internal and external communications standpoint. Lack of transparency will invariably result in an inadequate response to the problem, which could have far reaching implications. Transparency will also buy empathy from external affected interest parties allowing for a conducive platform to manage and message the problem.
Time
The saying ‘time is of the essence” is highly applicable to communication protocol activation and crisis management. Timeous response to trouble in a transparent manner allows for effective messaging and situational management of the problem. Timeous response also mitigates a distorting of facts, which after time can become truths.

Take Out
"Once bitten twice shy"- At all times the protocol should strive for an amicable and satisfactory outcome for all affected parties and a positive take out message and long-term remedial action that ensures that the same trouble does not occur again.

9 CRISIS COMMUNICATION PROTOCOL

The following framework outlines the scenarios and communication flows together with the remedial action protocols.

Figure 2: Crisis Communications Protocol
Note:
- This is a live flow and also takes into account a flow for communication support requests from project work streams
- It is appreciated that in certain cases it may not be possible to fully adhere to the set protocols however adherence is highly encouraged in the spirit of "one project, one voice."

## 10 COMMUNICATION CRISIS SCENARIOS

With regards to the IRPTS the following scenarios have been identified as high risk and require top of mind attention at all times including collective risk mitigation plans.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Possible Scenario</th>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Mitigation</th>
<th>Responsible Party</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>HIGH RISK</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Taxi Industry stalemate</td>
<td>All Phases</td>
<td>Meaningful Engagement</td>
<td>Mpumi Khumalo</td>
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<tr>
<td>Taxi drivers protests</td>
<td>All phases</td>
<td>Meaningful Engagement</td>
<td>Mpumi Khumalo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violent Protests by public</td>
<td>All phases</td>
<td>Community participation, political mobilisation</td>
<td>Executive Mayor/ MMC Tjale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insufficient funding (IRPTS)</td>
<td>All phases</td>
<td>Prioritised budgeting and responsiveness</td>
<td>Director M. Rapetsoa</td>
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<tr>
<td>Construction-related disputes</td>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>Transparency and adherence to BCEA</td>
<td>Mannfred Gratz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>System related accidents</td>
<td>Operational</td>
<td>Public Awareness Campaigns</td>
<td>Mantlako Sebaka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changes in the Political Landscape</td>
<td>Operational</td>
<td>Legislation driven implementation</td>
<td>Executive Mayor/ MMC Tjale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boycotting of the system</td>
<td>Operational</td>
<td>Regular Marketing Campaigns</td>
<td>Mantlako Sebaka</td>
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<td>Non-compliance to Supply Chain Management</td>
<td>All Phases</td>
<td>Adherence to Supply Chain Policies and Transparency</td>
<td>CFO</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>All Phases</td>
<td>Consistent</td>
<td>Mantlako Sebaka</td>
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<td>vacuum and/or incorrect communication</td>
<td>Communication with accurate information</td>
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**MEDIUM**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vandalism of property</th>
<th>All Phases</th>
<th>Public Awareness Campaigns</th>
<th>Mantlako Sebaka</th>
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<td>Labour Unrest</td>
<td>All Phases</td>
<td>Continuous engagements</td>
<td>Municipal Manager</td>
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<tr>
<td>Incorrect reporting by media</td>
<td>All Phases</td>
<td>Media monitoring and management</td>
<td>Mantlako Sebaka</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leaking of sensitive information</td>
<td>All Phases</td>
<td>Confidentiality agreements, classification, and awareness</td>
<td>Municipal Manager</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sabotage (internal and external)</td>
<td>All Phases</td>
<td>Risk and Threat Assessments</td>
<td>Municipal Manager</td>
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<tr>
<td>Utility interruptions (water and energy)</td>
<td>All Phases</td>
<td>Cooperation agreements</td>
<td>Municipality Manager</td>
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<tr>
<td>Road Closures and Disruptions</td>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>Affected Stakeholder engagements and regular communication updates</td>
<td>Mantlako Sebaka</td>
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**LOW**

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<th>Peaceful demonstrations</th>
<th>Pre/Operational</th>
<th>Community participation, political mobilisation</th>
<th>Executive Mayor/ MMC Tjale</th>
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<td>Employee Turnover (Institutional memory)</td>
<td>All Phases</td>
<td>Retention Strategy, Business Continuity Planning</td>
<td>Municipal Manager</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of critical skills</td>
<td>All Phases</td>
<td>Skills capacitation</td>
<td>Director Rapetsoa</td>
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**11 ASSUMPTIONS**

The Plan enjoys full support of the Client and its primary stakeholders: The successful implementation of the protocols contained in this Plan depends to a large extent on the support of the client and its primary stakeholders. This is important in ensuring compliance to the protocols.

**Adherence:** All parties to the Crisis Communications Plan will adhere to its
provisions as far as possible. Parties should familiarize themselves with the information response flow to allow for immediacy in responses. The Client will avail details of all relevant personnel that form part of the Rapid Response Team.

**Enforcement:** The Client will ensure enforcement as far as possible. It is important that only those persons authorised to speak to the media do so. The Client has a prerogative to enforce this Plan.

### 12 CONSTRAINTS

There are a few foreseeable constraints that may affect the enforceability of these protocols:

**Emergency Situations:** Some situations may be so urgent that there is virtually no time to follow the entire process flow. In such situations, it is important that the most senior member of the Rapid Response Team such as the Executive Mayor or the MMC are the ones to communicate to the media/public.

**Unavailability of Key Personnel:** Even with a Rapid Response Team in place it is not always possible to follow this plan. Key personnel may at times not be available to deal with the crisis. In such situations, it is important that holding statements are in place to buy some time. The MarCom team will develop generic statements that may be used in such instances.

### 13 SUCCESS INDICATORS

While a few success indicators will show that the Plan is succeeding in averting or mitigating against crises, the primary objective should be to prevent such crisis from happening in the first place. The success indicators include:

- A Rapid Response Team that understands its role
- Quarterly dry-runs to simulate a crisis
- A seamless communication response flow
- Speed of information release
- The campaign reaching a large number of people
- Less to no “high and medium” risk incidents
- Fewer media queries

### 14 RISKS

There are a few risks where Crisis Communications is concerned including:

- Communication of inaccurate information
- Inconsistencies in information communicated
- Delayed Communication
- Communication vacuum
- Unauthorised personnel unwittingly commenting to the media
- Media publishing incorrect information

**15 MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

As is standard practice where plans are concerned monitoring, and evaluation (M&E) will be undertaken during all crises management and communication. This will assist in making timely interventions towards the realization of the set objectives. This detailed plan allows for an effective post-crisis evaluation. Using the determined indicators as per figure below, both successes and failures will be evaluated. The success indicators will also help understand what worked and what did not and will contribute towards the review of the crisis communications plan.

**Figure 3: M&E Model**

**16 CONCLUSION**

A good crisis plan is the one that is constantly reviewed and updated. The plan should be updated every six months to one year to keep the information as up-to-date as possible. It is important for the members of the Rapid Response Team to
receive regular media related training sessions in order to imbue themselves with knowledge and trends in the evolving media environment. A mock crisis exercise preferably using a case study relating to the IRPTS industry will assist a great deal in keeping the crisis plan alive.