

COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

28 May 2020

Introduction

The Gouritz Cluster Biosphere Reserve's (GCBR) image and reputation are sensitive to the communications that occur in the public domain whether through direct placement via multiple types of interactions or through media. This policy focuses on the GCBR's strategy and approach to communication with both its **members** and the **general public and stakeholders** and serves to govern how those communications are managed, that they are relevant and appropriate and accurately represent the organisation.

Policy scope

This policy distinguishes between two types of communications and is therefore separated into two parts for the sake of clarity:

Members

The GCBR is a membership-based Non Profit Company (NPC). Valid members have a statutory role in its governance. Consequently, communication about issues related to GCBR's members are the prerogative of the Board. For operational reasons this responsibility can be delegated within the organisation. While membership promotion is encouraged, no third party can, in the name of the GCBR, communicate with members on matters pertaining to their membership.

From the above and to avoid ambiguity, existing Forum Meetings will no longer be labelled as, or equated with, Members' Meetings.

General public and stakeholders

The GCBR strongly encourages information sharing and dialogue with and between all persons interested in the domain, its activities, its people, and its ecosystems. The GCBR strives to have a strong presence across all relevant national and international communications' platforms where it seeks to accurately convey GCBR stories and messaging to its different and diverse audiences.

Again, it is within the ambit of the GCBR only to generate and drive communications to the public and no third parties, except those who have an agreement with the GCBR, may do so without the prior consent of the company.

This is not to be confused with publicity which is where the GCBR creates public awareness for its business activities, its brand and its projects through media coverage and other forms of communication. The GCBR actively encourages this form of public relations and consequently continues to cultivate sound media relationships.

Practical application

Members

It is the prerogative of the Board to determine where and how communication with the members should occur, whether via authorised GCBR staff or otherwise. However, no third party may communicate directly with members or on any membership issues.

GCBR membership may be developed and expanded through various campaigns handled by the Media and Marketing Team or as otherwise determined by the company. The management of this resulting database will be the function of the Secretary to the GCBR Board.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the **Membership Policy**.

General public and stakeholders

All staff and contractors are strongly encouraged to communicate with each other, with the Board, with individual members of the GCBR, with stakeholders and with the broader public.

All written and visual communications by GCBR Directors, staff and contractors to be made to the public including, but not limited to, press releases, e-newsletters, presentations and social media, must adhere to the standards set out in the Company Identity Policy and related Brand Manual.

It is therefore incumbent on any Director, staff member or contractor planning to communicate with the broader public, to familiarise themselves with and use the Company Identity Policy and Brand Manual. If there is any doubt about the application of these, the Media and Marketing Team Leader should be contacted prior to the release of such communications.

No third party may communicate directly with stakeholders or the general public in as much as this communication pertains to the GCBR's work and activities, without prior engagement with the GCBR as to its intended content. The GCBR shall at its discretion approve or deny such intended communication. This decision remains the mandate of the Board, although it may be delegated within the company.

Promotion by third parties of the GCBR and its work is an essential part of the company's outreach. Within available resources, the Marketing and Media Team is encouraged to provide support to communications by third party initiatives that are, by agreement, associated with the GCBR and ensure that they meet GCBR standards.

In maintaining its reach to the public and stakeholders, the GCBR will compile and manage its own subscriber database. This will be managed by the Secretary to the GCBR Board.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the **Company Identity Policy**.

General

This policy should be made known to all GCBR staff, contractors, members and interested and affected stakeholders, and shall be subject to annual review.