



NORWEGIAN MINISTRY OF GOVERNMENT
ADMINISTRATION, REFORM AND CHURCH AFFAIRS

Central Government Communication Policy

Established by the Ministry of Government Administration and Reform
16 October 2009.





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”It is the responsibility of the authorities of the State to create conditions that facilitate open and enlightened public discourse.”

The Constitution of the Kingdom of Norway, Article 100, sixth paragraph.

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Communication for democracy and openness

Communication in modern times is demanding and exciting. This is also true for government employees. Every day government institutions, employees and managers are communicating with individuals and groups who are in contact with public authorities. The conditions for communication have changed considerably over the last few years. Today there are opportunities for direct dialogue and contact in a way that did not exist before. More than ever, good communication is a key to good quality in the public sector.

In 1993, the Central Government Information Policy was presented. As we in 2009 are introducing a new communication policy, the time is overdue for a revision. We have experienced a rapid and sweeping technological development, the quantity of information is greater than ever before, we have a more varied and diversified population, and the citizens have high expectations to the government. The new communication policy is marked by the many changes that have taken place over the last few years.

The purpose of the government communication policy is two-fold:

- 1) getting the message out to those who need it
- 2) establishing a dialogue between the citizens and the government

The government communication policy has as its fundamental values democracy, openness and participation. The government's communication should be characterized by openness. We shall have an active dialogue with the citizens on the development of our services and policies. Our communication policy should lay the foundation for democratic participation and public debate and provide for the citizens' ability to ensure their democratic rights.

In the encounter with citizens, organizations, businesses, other public enterprises and the media, government enterprises must compare their own communication practices to the objectives of the new policies. Government agencies should choose the policy instruments that to the greatest extent make it possible to reach the citizens. The communication policy will influence the implementation as well as the priorities of communication activities in the coming years. The agency for Public Management and eGovernment (Difi) will follow up on the policies and offer advice to the different government enterprises.

Oslo, 10.16.2009


Heidi Grande Røys

Introduction

The communication policy encompasses the central objectives and principles for the government's communication with citizens, businesses, non-governmental organizations and other public agencies.

The policy has three parts of equal importance:

Part 1 is the short version of the government communication policy; objectives, premises and principles. This is what we call "The government communication platform".

Part 2 is an elaboration of the principles, with a more detailed description of the principles in part 1. In the exercise of the communication policy, it is important to see the different principles coherently.

Part 3 is an elaboration of the policy in selected areas, describing more specifically some selected areas of special relevance for state agencies.

The term communication in this connection signifies a reciprocal exchange of information between two or several parties. The term information here means a one-sided communication of a message.

The term citizen is used for simplifying purposes. However, it is emphasized that in this connection, the term includes individuals as well as the business community, NGOs, organizations and other public enterprises. A number of public and government enterprises have business companies and organizations as some of their primary users.

This document is not intended as a manual in communication work. Hence, there is no referral to specific target groups for government communication.

Information and communication is not an objective per se, but one of several policy instruments being

used by the government in order to obtain its goals and solve its tasks in an efficient and satisfactory manner. These instruments (whether they be written documents, sound, pictures, film, design etc.) must be considered and used to the same extent as other types of instruments, like the financial, judicial and organizational ones.

The policy concerns all government administration agencies which are part of the state as a legal body. It does not concern enterprises which are legal entities on their own, even if they are fully or partly government owned. However, the ministries may decide whether the policy is going to concern independent enterprises within their areas of responsibility. The municipalities may, according to their own wishes, make use of the objectives and principles in the government communication policy and accommodate these to their own needs and use.

This policy document is intended as a starting point and framework for the formulation of local plans and strategies for information and communication. The target groups for this document are state managers and employees.

The Ministry of Government Administration and Reform (FAD) has the superior responsibility for this policy. The individual government agencies are responsible for the implementation of the policy. The different ministries are responsible for following up the enterprises within their sector. The Agency for Public Management and eGovernment (Difi) is responsible for information, advice and counselling on the policy.

The government communication policy applies to any form of external communication.

The electronic version of this document can be found on: www.regjeringen.no/en/dep/fad.