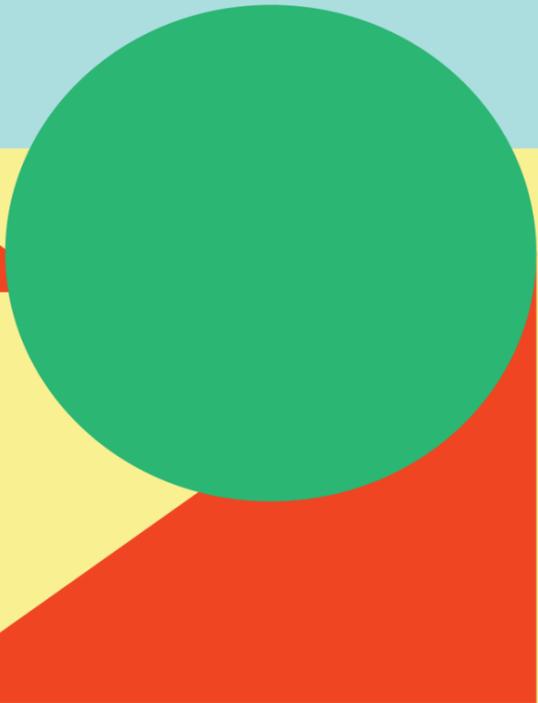


MALDIVES'  
JUDICIAL SERVICE COMMISSION



COMMUNICATIONS  
STRATEGY  
FRAMEWORK



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# Introduction

The Judicial Service Commission of Maldives (JSC) was established in 2008, following the ratification of the sixth Constitution of the Maldives, in accordance with Article 157.

This 10-member regulatory body is tasked with facilitating a **reliable** and **accountable** judiciary by ensuring the **independent** administration of **justice** through the following actions:

- Appointing, promoting and transferring judges (except the Chief Justice and Supreme Court Bench, although recommendations shall be made for these positions)
- Investigating complaints raised against judges and taking disciplinary action as needed
- Composing and enacting ethical standards for judges, and rules for dismissal/appointment
- Advising the President and the People’s Majlis on judicial matters, exercising additional powers and functions as prescribed by the constitution or law.

This communications’ strategy framework, specifically developed for the JSC under a UNDP funded consultancy project, follows a rapid capacity assessment and 6-day communications training sessions delivered to a number of key JSC team members.

The following chapters aim to provide a thorough understanding of the strategy’s various components as well as to justify the provided recommendations. Produced based on the research conducted, in addition to incorporating the input of Commission Members as well as JSC staff serving at managerial and junior levels, this framework takes a holistic approach to communications.

By weaving together messaging and actions within the organisation, to that of digital media and traditional public relations tools, the agency would be able to foster a singular and consistent identity.

## Communication Goal

While it is true that an eclectic mix of techniques, audiences, and channels must be considered with regard to JSC’s communication functions, they all share the same goal:

“Upholding the **integrity** of the government’s judicial branch by providing **reliable, transparent** advice, guidance and information to decision-makers and the public, to prompt **timely** action and foster **accountability** that protects the rights of individuals, families, communities and the nation.”

Over the last decade, JSC has become a subject of controversy and notoriety on numerous occasions; a fact that has severely impacted the relationship it holds with ordinary citizens, various local and international communities, and the press.

Hence, post-2020, JSC’s strategic communication goals may also be revised (or simplified) as;

“To restore **public trust** by strengthening **transparency** and **accountability** as well as re-establishing institutional **integrity**”

Commission staff based at JSC's administrative headquarters located in the capital city, as well as other offices that fall within the jurisdiction of the agency, must be committed to serving the judicial protection of the fundamental rights of all Maldivians.

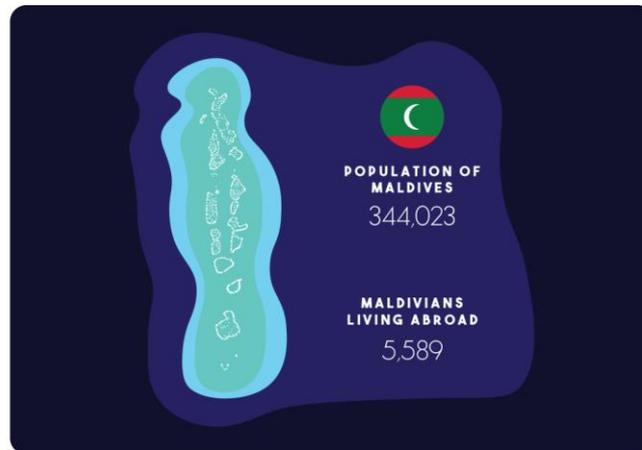
## Audiences for Judiciary Sector

This Framework focuses on communicating with **key audiences** in their respective capacity as legal decision-makers (access to justice).

Key audiences are the agents who use JSC's communications products to make a range of decisions with regards to the application of justice and include the following groups.

- Citizens (Individuals or groups of individuals) make decisions about seeking justice and assuring safety, recourse or compensation for themselves and/or their families (such as lodging a complaint about a judge, reporting judicial misconduct in/out of court, applying for a position in service of the judiciary and so forth).
- Judges are appointed by JSC to deliver fair and just rulings on cases lodged by a person, group or the state, based on evidence and in reference to the constitution or law; thereby personal and professional decisions made by magistrates and judges are not only reflective of the institution but fall under JSC's purview.
- Lawyers representing individuals or groups guide decisions made by individuals seeking justice, recourse or compensation for themselves and/or their families (such as lodging a complaint about a judge, reporting judicial misconduct in/out of court, acquiring times/dates for hearings and court proceedings, etc).
- Policy-makers with a responsibility to oversee (or ascertain the status of) the delivery of justice for their constituents.
- Certain communities make decisions about activities with consequences on participation in the judicial sectors (such as student organisations or the bar association).
- Civil society actors make decisions to advocate for judicial reform, elevating certain issues and acting as a watchdog of the sector as well as the regulatory body itself.
- International organisations such as donor agencies, training partners, global/foreign counterparts, with a vested interest in the delivery of justice across the island nation, make decisions to fund/implement various programmes to reform the judiciary.
- JSC employees make decisions about agency-led programmes, coordination, human and financial resources, press engagement and influence the way JSC is represented to external

partners and colleagues.



**U R B A N ISLANDERS**

	POPULATION PER ATOLL	% OF TOTAL POPULATION
Haa Alif Atoll	13,672	3.9%
Haa Dhaalu Atoll	11,101	3.2%
Shaviyani Atoll	12,636	3.7%
Noonu Atoll	11,199	3.3%
Raa Atoll	15,819	4.6%
Baa Atoll	9,601	2.8%
Lhaviyani Atoll	8,380	2.4%
Kaafu Atoll	14,092	4.1%
Alif Alif Atoll	6,475	1.9%
Alif Dhaal Atoll	9,086	2.6%
Vaavu Atoll	1,811	0.5%
Meemu Atoll	5,022	1.5%
Faafu Atoll	4,365	1.3%
Dhaalu Atoll	5,786	1.7%
Thaa Atoll	9,656	2.8%
Laamu Atoll	12,676	3.7%
Gaafu Alif Atoll	9,221	2.7%
Gaafu Dhaalu Atoll	12,690	3.7%

**C I T Y DWELLERS**

	POPULATION PER CITY	% OF TOTAL POPULATION
Male'	153,904	44.7%
Kuhdhuffushi	8,440	2.5%
Fuvahmulah	8,510	2.5%
Addu	21,275	6.2%

**MONIKER STATISTICS**

	POPULATION PER MONIKER	% OF TOTAL POPULATION
Generation X (40 - 59)	31,936	9.3%
Generation Y (25 - 44)	57,188	16.6%
Generation Z (10 - 24)	46,785	13.6%

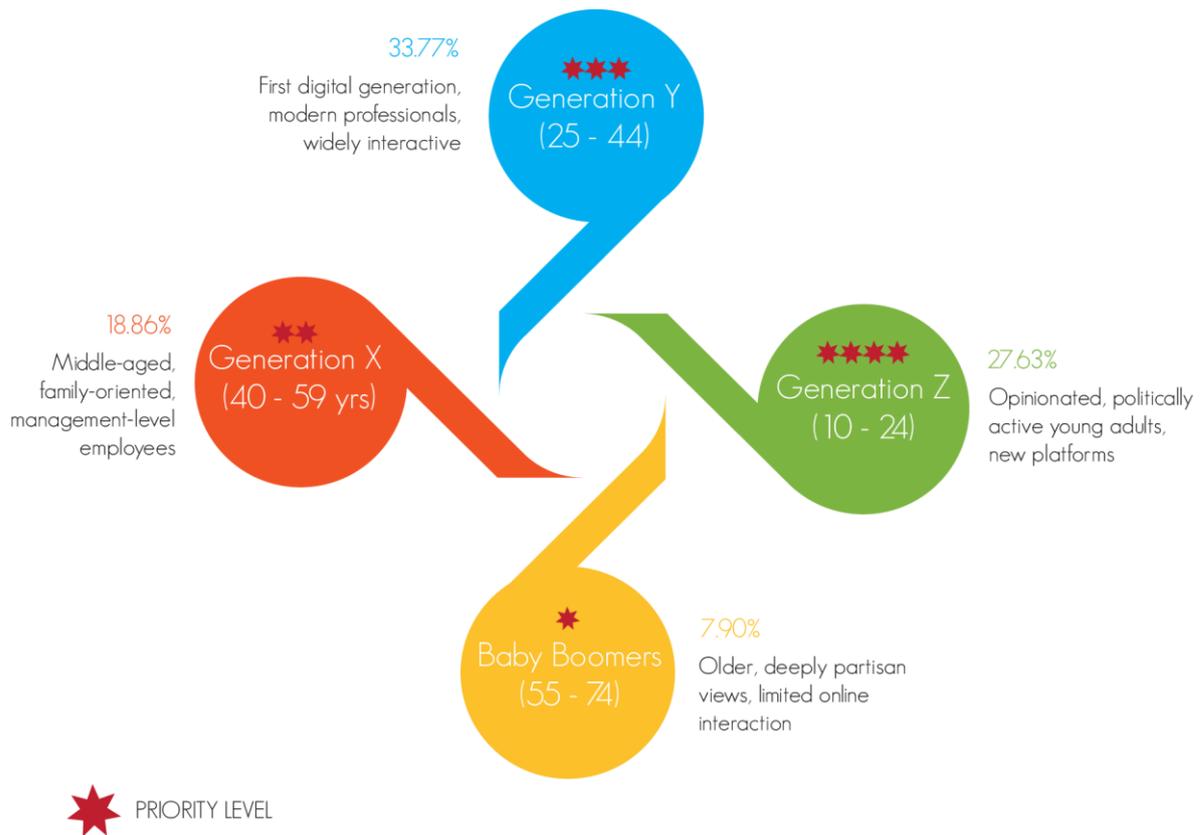
MALDIVES BUREAU OF STATISTICS, CENSUS MALDIVES, 2014

**1.1.1 Population Demographics**

To elaborate on audience members within the judicial community, it should be noted that JSC is charged with screening, recruiting and training judiciary applicants, as well as reprimanding behavioural violations and/or administering benefits. Therefore, when considering the improvement of communications products, activities and interventions, judges must be treated as a key audience that observes from a unique vantage; who are affected in a very specific way.

On the other hand, especially in terms of mass communications, the general public are certainly the most important stakeholder for a constitutional body such as JSC. So while the agency should opt for a citizen-centric course when determining communications strategy, with reference to growth

projections for key decision-makers/audiences, JSC is advised to prioritise efforts as below.



#### I.1.2 Table for Demographic Groups. (See Appendix; Statistics)

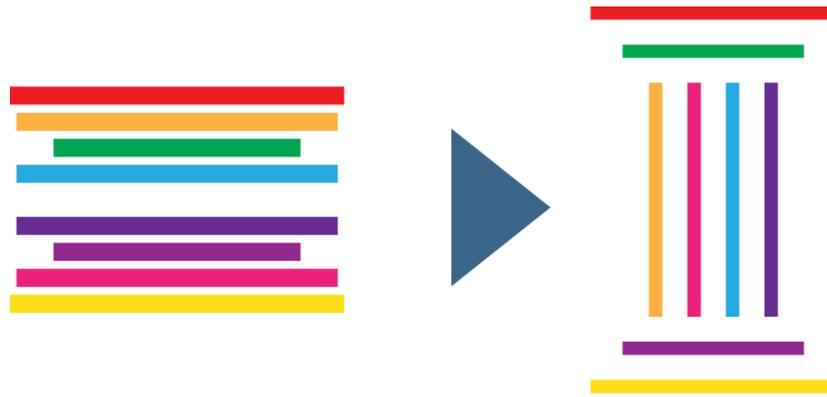
Commission Members supported the idea that Generation X and Y receive the highest priority (the priority order in the table puts Gen Z at the top) because both groups currently drive the majority of citizen/lawyer/civil society/community-led decisions, with increasing influence in the area of judges/policymakers/international organisations.

Meanwhile, Generation Z comes a close second as they prepare to take their seats at the leaders' table in the near future, especially because the majority of individuals are yet to set a specific course for their careers.

*Note: Throughout this version of JSC's Strategic Communications Framework, the terms 'decision-makers' and 'key audiences' are used interchangeably.*

### Principles for Effective and Efficient Communications

The organisational philosophy used to develop the four principles that govern JSC's communication strategy:



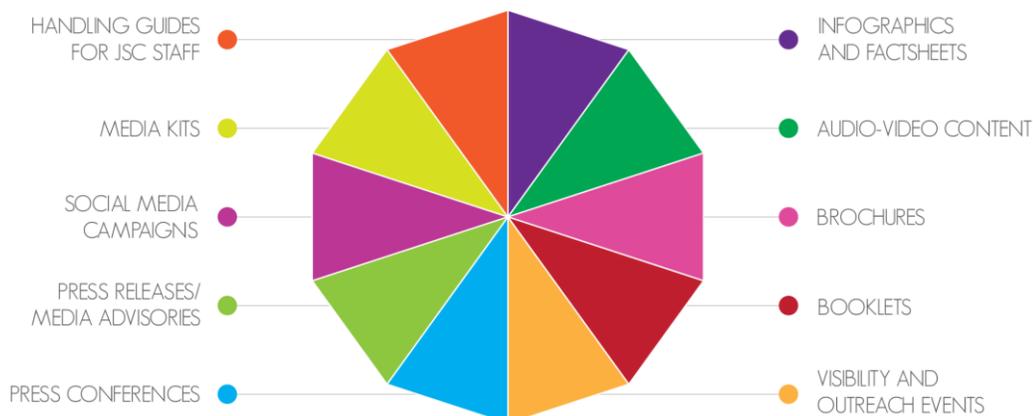
I.1.3 The Core Principles of JSC’s Communications Strategy.

It is vital that the JSC, at all times, strive to ensure that these principles remain active.



I.1.4 Integrating JSC’s Mission and Values with Communication Principles and Prime Audiences, to form an overarching strategy.

Placed at the core of this communication strategy, such values have been embedded into the various services and will be henceforth reflected across JSC's full range of materials/activities:



#### I.1.5 Collection of JSC's materials and activities

These principles were derived from the mandate set by the Judicial Service Commission, reiterated within its existing Standard of Operations (001) and the JSC Regulations (2011). The above texts were then considered against mentions of the Commission's purpose and function across the Judges Act (2010), Judicature Act (2010), and the Constitution of Maldives (2008).

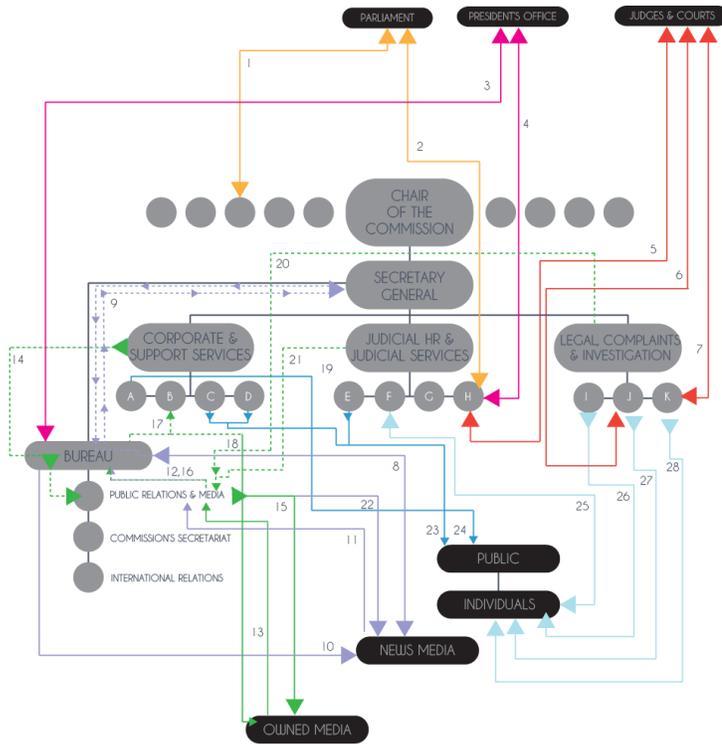
Further, the following best practices were taken into consideration, as per the significance rankings determined by JSC's commission members (*See Appendix; Consultation Meetings, Session I*).



#### I.1.6 Best Communications Practises for a Government Agency

## Communications' Task Force

The department responsible for JSC's Communications is the Bureau, where all information is delivered to the press or disseminated via owned channels (website, brochures, social media).



1. Reporting JSC Activities
2. Advising on legislation
3. New appointments, media issues
4. Advising on Supreme Court matters
5. Attending various Judicial HR needs and services
6. Dealing with complaints against judges
7. Regarding investigations about judiciary conduct
8. Receiving and responding to media queries
9. Acquiring quotes from spokesperson/commission
10. Issuing press releases and announcement
11. Monitoring news and acquiring data
12. & 16. Evaluation reports (data from news, social media, website)
13. Monitoring social media & website, acquiring data
14. Publishing announcements from JSC
15. Publishing and posting on social media and website (See No. 12)
17. Consulting technicians regarding Owned Media
18. Bringing discussed amendments to Owned Media
- 19, 20 & 21. Announcements to be made into social media posts and published as per No. 15
22. Announcements as per 19, 20 & 21 sent in the form of Press Releases to news media
23. Sent for publishing on the National Gazette
24. Procurement announcements
25. Issue submitted, response given
26. Issue lodged, response given
27. Complaint lodged, response given
28. Craft reported, update given

- A. General Admin & Procurement (07 staff)
- B. Information, Communications Technology (2 staff)
- C. Finance & Budget (2 staff)
- D. Human Resources Development (2 staff)
- E. Appointment, Retention & Retirement
- F. Performance Management (4 staff)
- G. Judicial Personnel Management (1 staff)
- H. Judicial Services (1 staff)
- I. Legal (1 staff)
- J. Complaints Management (2 staff)
- K. Investigations (5 staff)

—— EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION PATHWAYS

..... INTERNAL COMMUNICATION PATHWAYS

I.1.7 JSC's internal layout and communication pathways.

If a section/department within the JSC wishes to communicate a broad message to the public, is dealing with issues of a sensitive nature or must respond to an international query, they are required to first touch base with the Bureau.

According to JSC Regulations (2011), the Bureau falls under the direct supervision of JSC's Secretary-General. The authority of the Bureau, all four governing communication principles, and the communication devices and recommendations that follow, are powered from the controls and processes laid out in said Regulations. *(See Appendix; Regulations)*

## First Principle: Timely and Relevant

**As a government agency, JSC has a responsibility to deliver information, advice and guidance available in a prompt manner, so that stakeholders may access pertinent information in time.**

Similarly, to maximise impact, it is also necessary to suit delivery to the present-day needs of these audiences. This can be achieved by taking into account what audiences care about and connecting agency information with actions that apply to members of the public.

Communications that are both timely and relevant have the power to change long-held ill or false perceptions.

### Planning Questions

JSC Bureau should consider these questions when designing communications with this stratagem in mind.

- During a high-interest event, what are the best methods to engage priority audiences quickly?
- When are the audiences likely to be faced with a decision for themselves or others on the judiciary topic?
- What subjects are currently in dialogue among the public, and how do they relate to the JSC's annual goals and planned activities?
- How can messages be delivered so that the audiences have enough time to understand and act on the message?
- How can JSC best engage with the press to get messages to the public quickly?
- Are there times when JSC's messages will be crowded out by competing issues and concerns?
- Is there a way to deliver a sequence of messages over time that would increase the effectiveness of information and advice?
- What are the current response times for JSC queries and how can they be expedited?
- How can JSC support partners in ensuring timely and consistent dissemination of information and advice?
- What socio-demographic characteristics of the audience (such as age, education, geographic location, etc.) can inform message design and dissemination plans?
- What is the audience hearing about the judiciary from other sources that may affect their understanding of how JSC's information, advice, and guidance applies to them? Who are these messages from?
- What personal, community or national values - related to judiciary topics - could be associated with the need to interact with JSC's messages and activities?

## Background

Communicating in a prompt or timely manner refers to connecting with audiences during times when JSC's guidance is most required, or when the audiences will be most receptive to hearing and acting on such information.

The latter point is usually a time when individuals and policy-makers, or communities and civil society, should be or are poised to take decisive action.

### Example One

During a high-profile case or a judicial investigation with far-reaching consequences, the general public is likely to pay more attention than usual to court proceedings and other agency activities. This would be a good time to disseminate more material than usual, to maximise the impact and pave the way for further interest.

### Example Two

National current affairs also offer clues as to which times may be ideal to reshare material on particular topics so that key audiences will be prepared to take informed actions.

In either case, JSC must focus efforts on determining how to engage various audiences when they are most likely to pay attention.

It would be prudent to identify the best times to use specific channels (news media, social media, website) to disseminate facts, updates and complementary information, such as on the relevant processes.

These efforts are complemented by an increased sense of relevance to judiciary ongoings and JSC functions, which itself can be amplified by techniques such as referring to the personal experiences of the audience or explaining how the issue can affect family, friends or others they may know in their community.

For certain audiences, judiciary matters are perceived as relevant if they are represented as a high priority for constituents, or when linked to other national and community values, such as security and social prosperity.



I.2.1 Knowledge Hub: First Principle - Timely and Relevant.

Timely communications can be achieved by:

- making sure essential information is provided to the public and other decision-makers as quickly as possible;
- ensuring that audiences receive information when they are poised to take action, and
- sequencing or connecting messages to build a conversation - bolstering awareness and trust.

Relevant communications can be achieved by:

- Developing an understanding of characteristics typical to the target audience(s), then designing effective messages and strategies that suit the target audience.
- Creating messages and materials using examples from or references to the target audience's community, organisations, or other points of identification. Alternatively, examples and references could relate to entities similar to the target audiences.
- Listen to the audience and to stakeholders (certain media outlets, NGOs, etc) that work with that audience, in order to identify how to address the audience's concerns.
- Tailor content and messages to meet the needs of the audience, including use of language that they are receptive to and the specific knowledge that interests them..
- Design messages based on the audience's readiness to receive them.

## Communication Devices

***The Bureau can support **timely and relevant** communications at the JSC by incorporating the following when crafting key messages or goals, communication products, or developing yearly plans.***

### 1. Speed Up Workflow

The Bureau and other communicators must work at a fast pace to serve the public's right to know and publicise information, particularly during events in which broader stakeholder participation is desired.

Speedy delivery of accurate information bolsters the agency's reputation as well as its credibility and intersects with the principle of aiming to be 'transparent'.

While JSC cannot sacrifice accuracy, it can still aim to be proactive rather than reactive; sharing details that can be confirmed, initiating the conversation and explaining what is in process.

#### (a) Delegating Communications Roles

Declaring a spokesperson eases communication by helping structure media efforts and also allows other administrators to focus more on communicating with judges and stakeholders.

Instead of the Bureau Head filling various roles and producing all the work, reducing his/her to 'prepping' a spokesperson or 'overseeing' the drafting of press materials, will help save time considerably and allow the team a greater chance of sticking to predetermined schedules.

#### (b) Utilising Social Media

Twitter, Facebook and JSC's newest handle, Instagram, are platforms that help messages reach thousands of people in a very short time. It also allows operators to gauge reactions to content, live or otherwise, in real-time.

- Given the high volume of millennial and activist users on the platform, a Twitter-first approach speeds the dissemination of critical information that is verified, while more detailed information is developed and cleared.
- All three platforms are a useful way to reach different audiences and break down content in a more understandable, interesting way.

As new platforms are always emerging, the Bureau should judge and determine better ways to disseminate new information, particularly if it may improve the efficiency of communications.

#### (c) Keep News Media Close

JSC should regularly reach out to regional, national and international broadcast and digital news outlets; holding discussions, follow-ups and individual meetings once at the very least during each quarter of the year.

It is key that the Bureau connects with journalists during opportune times, for instance (i) pitching content related to current affairs subjects, (ii) issuing press releases before the news goes to print, or even in terms of (iii) anticipating prime publishing or broadcasting days/hours.

Tools for improving media relations:

- In-person and virtual press conferences
  - Conferences reach many journalists with the same message, which encourages consistency.
  - To speed up the release of emergency committee decisions, such as the results of a graft investigation, a press conference can be held on the same day the commission makes the decision, reinforcing JSC's transparency. This is, of course, limited to those decisions that may not change at commission level.
- Create press releases
  - News about judicial appointments/dismissals/shifts, committee decisions and amendments to regulations can be communicated through press releases.
  - The Bureau can post press releases on the News page (under the Media page) of the official website and share them on the Viber media group directly to journalists.
  - Press releases (in the same format as for news media) should not be shared on social media. Instead, craft smaller posts or infographics with a link to the webpage and affirming the information had been shared with the press.
- Expedite the process
  - Sticking to pre-cleared key messages, and finalised templates will accelerate the publicising.

## **2. Get To Know Audience**

In order to develop a communications strategy relevant to decision-makers, the Bureau must first thoroughly understand its target audiences.

To find useful information about a target audience, communicators can access community profiles, social media profiles for the location, population statistics or other existing research, perhaps from a popular movement or related organisations.

### **(a) Socio-Demographic Characteristics**

Age, gender, educational background, income, geographic location, cultural beliefs and civic structure all influence how people receive messages.

To develop relevant messaging, communicators must learn how these characteristics influence a target audience and craft materials and engagements that appeal to those individuals and communities.

#### (b) Communication Preferences

Messaging is most effective when it aligns with the specific preferences of target audiences.

Communicators should look towards:

- how the target audience prefers to receive messages;
- what communications channels the target audience uses;
- what messengers the target audience trusts; and
- any preferences the target audience has for format and design (styling press releases in a way that best suits the needs of journalists, using colours and fonts that certain generations enjoy, etc)

### 3. Enhance Emergency Communications

If information is delayed during an emergency then people may:

- fill the space with rumours and misperceptions;
- conclude that JSC is unaware of the issue or hiding facts (resulting in a loss of trust); and
- look elsewhere for false or incomplete information.

The 'Crisis Team' must designate a handler who will respond to media requests round the clock, seven days a week without preference or exclusion, as authorised or according to regulatory guidelines.

Crisis SOP's, checklists and planning documents, state rules for timely engagement during emergency or risk communications. *(Read on to Chapter 13; Crisis Management).*

### 4. Actively Leverage Partners

When and where applicable, the Bureau should try to work with partners and reach the target audience quicker via combined media resources or customised channels.

In addition, staff designated to manage media relations must maintain an up-to-date, detailed contact list of individuals representing or working with partner organisations, media outlets, community leaders

and policymakers. The table below illustrates the components that should be included in a simple database; selections can be modified to reflect entries most relevant to JSC's 'press engagement' goals.

JOURNALIST	OUTLET	DESK	DESIGNATION	HIGHLIGHTS	EDITOR	BACKGROUND
Eg. Ali Ravi	D.News	Court	Junior Journo	Link to JSC Report	Aisha Ilyas	2019 Award for Aduvas

I.2.2 Sample list of media contacts.

Press kits help synchronise communications with partners so the target audience hears the message frequently and from multiple trusted sources.

## 5. Communicate At The Right Time

Timing can influence how a certain group reacts to messages. People may get overwhelmed with information coming from many sources and channels.

The Bureau must direct messages to audiences when they are most receptive. This can involve assessing public interest, referring to high traffic periods on social media or news media.

### (a) Leverage Awareness Days

The Bureau can produce messages that suit specific calendar dates that commemorate local or international awareness events. These products can be crafted in advance, but lose relevance if they cannot be published on a particular day.

Special events help draw the attention of media, policymakers and the public, towards recommendations and new information. Capitalising on related keywords, hashtags and content trends are especially useful if the subject of the occasion shares common ground with JSC's goals and services.

### (b) Build The Conversation

In most cases, for messages to be remembered well and make the necessary impact, they need to be repeated frequently. However, in public relations, content is not often re-used as an article or conference is not produced multiple times over a single event.

Therefore, since a campaign's goal is to change behaviour, the Bureau must plan the timing and sequencing of messages along a continuum leading from awareness to action. *(See Chapter 4 on the 'Engaged and Actionable' principle, for more details on the communications continuum).*

After analysing the relevance of the issue at hand, if the target audience appears ready to accept new information, then communicators can identify a particular series of messages, and an ideal mix of channels, that can be utilised to move audiences step-by-step towards change. With this, ideal timing for specific channels and audience segments must also be considered.

### (c) Producing Newsworthy Content

Journalists are drawn towards newsworthy stories, the value of which depends largely on factors like timing, proximity, significance, prominence or emotive appeal. New information or activities create opportunities for media attention but receive a significant boost from current local ongoings and trending interests.

- Use JSC's media group to alert journalists to upcoming news events/briefings and encourage them to cover the topic.
- Speed-up article production and increase the likelihood of coverage by providing journalists with press kits that contain extra footage/information to make a story more interesting.
- Promote JSC's Media/News webpage, which should be regularly updated. Easy access to new press releases, photos, infographics, videos and an archive to the old, alongside links to other resources such fact sheets, regulations and FAQs, aid journalists to compile news faster.
- Post different (yet in-theme) content on social media to keep the conversation going amongst the public. Sharing the exact press releases given to journalists on social media slows entry into the news cycle, as the information is overexposed. Instead of repetition, such announcements or posts should be focused on summed up facts, to sustain interest/further understanding among the public, groups or communities and push users to seek more information.
- Encourage interesting and timely content by sharing well structured new coverage using either the official or complementary handles, for example, quoting important points from a good article with its link.

### (d) Time Stories To Show Momentum

Push compelling reports or editorials for release at different times within a year to maintain interest. These stories can:

- underscore progress made towards achieving the agency's goals,
- foster positivity by showcasing change and demonstrating success,
- show the impact of JSC's work in different contexts,
- focus on how a citizen may directly benefit from a JSC recommendation, policy or action,
- emphasise the public need (and benefits) if more individuals pursue a judicial career and,
- include quotes to shape more authentic narratives.

## 6. Monitor journalism and public conversation

When curating social media campaigns, pitching stories to the press, or even determining how to release sensitive information, it is necessary to analyse the manner of discourse presented both on social media platforms by public users, as well as the type of news or reports being crafted by journalists.

Notice that both can be reflective of one another.

What should the Bureau look for?

The volume of mentions, or keywords used in conjunction with the institution's name, are all clues indicating how JSC is currently perceived, and how relevant it is considered in the decision-making process. It is also useful in identifying which resources need to be amplified to reach certain audience categories and the time periods during which such attempts prove more effective.

Monitoring can be conducted by:

- compiling detailed weekly reviews of news coverage (then monthly/annual reports);
- reviewing social media analytics, or using platform-specific tools or software that records and groups data together (See Chapter 9; Recommendations); and
- manually scouring social media platforms using identified, relevant keywords.

*For more details on monitoring practises, read on to Chapters 5 and 6 on Implementation and Monitoring and Evaluation, respectively.*

#### Schedule Webinars and Virtual Meetings

Encourage partners, policymakers and other decision-makers to share ideas on how to overcome barriers and motivate people towards recommended behaviours. This can include timely events such as workshops based on an identified need, focus groups for scheduled monitoring, consultations with civil society to hear recent concerns and other interactive affairs.

Virtual get-togethers are an economic way to get more people engaged and widen the agency's network. Those who participate are more likely to follow and promote campaign-related social media posts and hashtags.

### **7. Tailor The Message**

Customising communications refers to developing messages that are directly relatable to specific audiences. This technique is particularly useful when creating awareness messages intended to provoke action from the public.

The way messages are crafted directly correlates with how effective it will be.

For example, if the target audience has ethics/values that are consistent with the content being disseminated, adding data can multiply its impact. On the other end of the spectrum, if the target audience's beliefs oppose the messaging, emotive stories may prove more effective.

## Second Principle: Trustworthy and Transparent

**The perceived integrity of JSC rests on its reputation. Together, these elements embody the key factor that determines whether an audience will validate the Commission's role and choose to rely on its services. Once large portions of the public affirm their trust in JSC, it prompts others to similarly believe information that is communicated and/or support the Commission's decisions.**

For an independent agency, trust demonstrated by citizens is a direct source of power; institutions backed by the public can affect broader change. Therefore, the Bureau must use every opportunity to increase public interactions and reinforce JSC's trustworthiness - in doing so JSC can strengthen its democratic mechanism.

The terms “trusted” and “reliable” are considered synonymous and used interchangeably within this Framework.

As a government agency, JSC is also committed to transparency, which is a mode that drives trust. In the past, JSC has been accused of reluctance not only to act on circumstance but also in terms of withholding information. It is therefore paramount that both values are married together, as they are in principle, when planning and executing future action.

## Planning Questions

Communicators should consider these factors when deciding how to communicate with the aim of building and maintaining trust.

- What is JSC’s role as a national oversight body in this judiciary issue?
- What does JSC know about the issue?
- What questions are being asked and which need to be answered immediately?
- Do the affected populations find JSC to be credible? How well do they judge JSC’s authority on such issues?
- What other organisations are perceived by the audiences as trusted on this issue? How can JSC align with them?
- Are partner organisations’ messages aligned with those of JSC?
- Are there any reputational risks related to the judicial issue? Should these be considered?

## Background

The components of this principle focus on strategies to reinforce public trust by demonstrating:

- competence: JSC has technical expertise in the issue and its information is accurate and consistent with that of legal experts and existing laws;
- openness and honesty: JSC is transparent in its work and is honest about what it knows, and what it does not know;
- commitment and caring: JSC is committed to its mission and cares about the status of justice; and
- dependability: JSC does what it says it will do/is powered by reliable people.



**KNOWLEDGE HUB**

**MEDIA METRICS:**  
 Coverage : 17% Negative  
 Feedback: 50% Negative

**Social Media**  
 Current Audience : 1.08K  
 Potential Audience: 389-409K  
 Keyword Result: Negative

**Media Focus Group:**  
 „JSC has nothing to offer media but publicly available  
 press releases - there is no relationship with media in any other form”

I.3.1 Knowledge Hub: Second Principle - Trust and Transparency.

## Communication Devices

***The Bureau can help JSC build a trustworthy image and ensure communications remain transparent by addressing the following concerns when crafting key messages or goals, communication products, or developing yearly plans.***

### 1. Ensure Technical Accuracy

JSC’s Bureau and ICT departments must work together to ensure that all communications products are accurate and deliver a consistent message.

The Bureau is responsible for ensuring that every update of JSC’s owned media (from collateral such as its official website to the various infographics and visual content produced for social media) undergoes a thorough cross-checking and clearance process.

#### (a) Clear And Cross-Check Content

Communicators and technical units follow procedures to ensure the technical accuracy and appropriate presentation of JSC information.

- Technical departments must verify all data in the information products that are developed.
- The legal office must clear products that contain legally sensitive material.

- The JSC Branding Manual (*see Chapter 7 on Presentation; Branding*) describes the correct use of logos on communication products and explains the design process for planning campaigns, content development and production.
- The JSC Style Guide (*see Chapter 7 on Presentation; Styling*) instructs staff on how to present information, such as the ‘voice’ of written products or the consistent presentation of references. Adhering to common style protocols contributes to a united, professional image of JSC. By ensuring consistency in content, the Bureau can increase credibility and confidence in the information.

#### (b) Keep Collateral Up To Date

Fact sheets or brochures provide an easy understanding of JSC’s composition as well as its functions and processes. For instance, the criteria by which candidates are determined for judicial positions.

Decision-makers are more likely to trust information relayed by JSC when materials are easy to understand and up to date. At present, JSC’s official website is set to carry a total of three booklets; one on recruitment, another about the appointment and dismissal of judges and the third regarding the complaint lodging process.

If a topic is found to be of widespread concern, then communicators may wish to produce further material similar to the above, such as a detailed pamphlet on the Commission’s process to determine whether an issue merits investigation, and share it on the website platforms and/or other JSC-run channels.

Content does not have to take the form of booklets either, for example, relevant fact sheets or infographics or even animated short videos can be highlighted on the JSC website based on topics that are currently popular in news with links to the detailed information booklets.

Brochures and fact sheets should allow the public to:

- identify whether they can lodge a complaint against a member of the judiciary,
- apply for a position within the judiciary,
- understand the scale of the problem,
- learn more about checks and balances that govern JSC functions,
- see how JSC actions work to reform judicial processes,
- recognize the barriers to improvement, and
- follow the overall progress of a JSC investigation.

#### (c) Establish Version Control

JSC should keep track of all inbound and outbound communication; including earlier versions of press releases, media/public queries, letters to judges and other pieces of content that have been disseminated.

This helps to ensure that the messages presently displayed or being shared are the most current and relevant information. To expand, these ‘tracking systems’ should be used to:

- sustain consistency across internal information,
- manage and update content on all digital platforms, and
- maintain document translations on the website.

## 2. Prioritise and Elevate Transparency

The transparency demonstrated by the JSC cannot simply exist within the expectations set by its mandate. JSC must stand apart from lax cultures typically associated with state-run bodies.

To build the desired level of trust, the Bureau must be transparent about how JSC acquires and analyses data and the process by which it makes decisions and recommendations.

When dealing with a sensitive issue, such as a report of judicial misconduct, JSC needs to acknowledge uncertainty and quickly address any misconceptions or errors. With such matters, the process must be transparent while also considerate of the impact on those involved (a judge, per the above scenario) particularly before any certain verdict or outcome has been determined, if not, the institution risks a loss of trust among key stakeholders as well.

In particular, the following events require that the Bureau rapidly and publicly report the participants, processes and conclusions.

- Judiciary Summons and Investigations
- Dismissal, Appointments and Shifts
- Reports of Misconduct and Investigative Proceedings
  - The frequency of investigation or verification updates are dependent on the urgency of the public’s right to know.
- Emergency Commission and Committee Meetings

The aforementioned claims are supported by Section X, Y, Z, in JSC’s regulations (*See Appendix; Regulations*).

### (a) Quick Access to Information

JSC must provide the public and media with concise and timely information.

If communication is delayed, audiences may conclude that JSC is either unaware or not in control of the situation or is withholding information. This creates an opportunity for scrutinizers to push false narratives or distract the conversation.

When JSC works with a crisis team to quickly publish urgent updates, taking an approach specific to the situational context, it reinforces leadership and instils trust in the agency.

*(For details on emergency plans, see Chapter 8; Crisis Communications).*

The heart of JSC's communications to the press (and public) is the 'media' page on the official website, although many real-time interactions take place using the media chat group, over a phone call or via email. Hence, the website must strive to prominently display or differentiate the page, which should carry:

- Press statements (Showcase new to recent and archive old)
- Footage, recordings or transcripts of press briefings
- FAQs, Booklets and Factsheets
- Infographics and How-To Videos
- Photo and Video Gallery (organised by Topic, with captions)
- Situation-specific webpages (if applicable)

Availability of JSC communications products (especially the website) in the English Language would also heighten views of transparency, although JSC is held accountable in the Maldives'. Information about JSC and its activities would be useful to foreign decision-makers as well as media (particularly, fact-checking) and younger generations may trust in such 'a demonstration of' openness.

#### (b) Meet Uncertainty with Honesty

Transparency is particularly important during times of high uncertainty. While an investigation is in progress, for example, the Bureau may have to make announcements before all facts are known.

In similar situations, JSC must ensure transparency and provide:

- details on the handling process/stage of the investigation, emphasising that status may change as new information becomes available;
- preliminary findings (such as whether an information leak is possible/claims are legitimate) while informing the public about the limitations of the conclusions;
- clarification about what facts have been determined and what is not known; and
- steps left to acquire answers for remaining questions.

*(See Chapter 8; Crisis Communications, which outlines goals, tactics, and assessments that guide a government agency to address high visibility, emergency events with transparency.)*

### (c) Address Errors

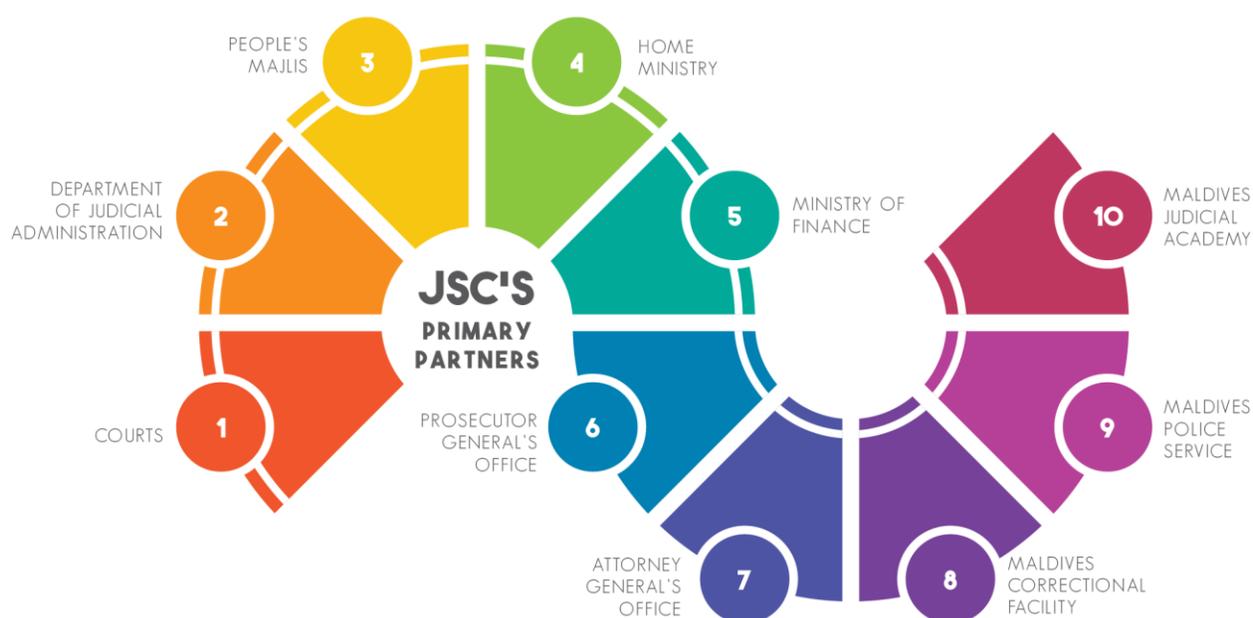
It is the responsibility of JSC to ensure that communications with the public and media are clear and open when an error has been made, and as it deploys rapid efforts to resolve the issue.

Depending on the context and magnitude of the situation, the Bureau should prepare the designated spokesperson to address the miscommunication. They must also determine media channels and social platforms that would help bolster media efforts and expedite sharing of correct information.

### (d) Be Clear About Relationships With Non-State Actors

Government collaborations and the purpose of those relationships are required to be transparent by law.

JSC's primary partners are related to governance or state-run:



#### 1.3.2 List of partners with whom JSC is likely to collaborate.

JSC also engages with foreign partners to strengthen judiciary services, reform efforts and overall awareness. The following list is adopted from a list of significant collaborations.

- UNDP, supported by collaborators such as the UK Government and the Australian High Commission
- American Bar Association with various partners, including USAID
- The European Union

- Indian National Judicial Academy (INJA) via the Indian High Commission

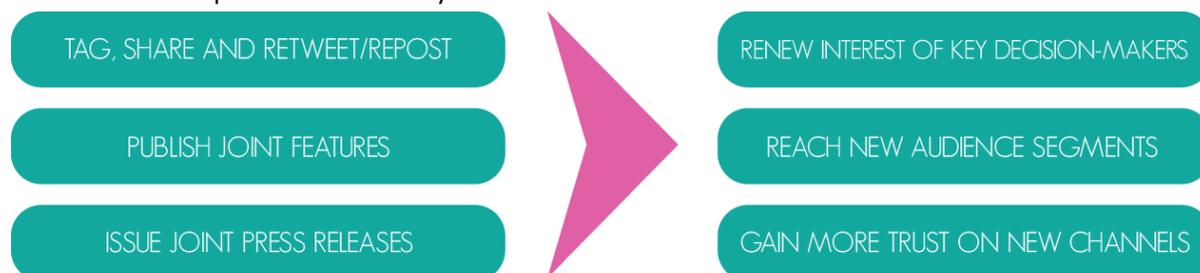
Coordinating messages with these partners, as well as others in the future, can raise the visibility of accurate information and advice.

It can be highly beneficial to work with non-state actors such as nongovernmental organisations (NGOs), private sector entities, philanthropic foundations and academic institutions. Yet relationships can raise questions about potential conflicts of interest (a potential reputational risk, *see Chapter 8; Crisis Communications*), therefore engagements must follow ethical standards, and accountability can only be ensured through transparent communication.

### 3. Coordinate With Partners

Fortunately, the number of external bodies that have worked with the JSC to develop and strengthen Maldives' judiciary continues to grow.

Partnerships with other trustworthy institutions have a 'communicable' effect. When the relationship is handled in a transparent, timely manner it can enhance credibility, especially when messages are coordinated and possess consistency.



I.3.3 The benefit of positive collaboration between partners.

#### 4. Internal Policies

As mentioned, consistent messaging, coordination among divisions, and good internal communications, all contribute to effective communications. At JSC, the Bureau is responsible for guiding technical content, key messages, narratives and media responses across all four divisions.

Fostering a workplace culture based on the principles within JSC's communication framework, sharing key messages and purposes can unite departmental teams and help better focus public engagement efforts. Similarly, when news breaks or activities are launched, having well-informed staff helps to ensure consistency, avoid conflict, and coordinate messages.

Commission employees are its first ambassadors, and their confidence in JSC's institutional integrity enhances public perception. This practice of 'open-ness' is encouraged for all high-priority issues.

##### (a) Meet With Technical Experts

To promote the accuracy and consistency of JSC messages and materials, the Bureau must work closely with internal technical experts to improve communications; make the delivery of services and messages more precise, effective, and efficient.

To support these types of internal and external collaborations, Bureau staff must:

- participate in regular meetings with the respective focal points;
- integrate communications considerations from the beginning of discussions (on research, policies, interventions and initiatives); and
- act as JSC's midpoint to develop communication services – such as web, media relations, training, and audiovisual support – coordinating goals and needs to serve the agency's mission

##### (b) Maintain A Visible Calendar

Every year, JSC releases a comprehensive report that details the initiatives that had taken place across the concluded year, and lists goals and activities planned for the upcoming year.

By making these items public, the agency holds itself accountable to enact said goals. It also;

- increases awareness of upcoming events;
- offers opportunities to leverage channels and broaden outreach; and
- reveals a tentative schedule to avoid scheduling conflicts.

*(More information on expanding this report to a more visible on Chapter 9; Recommendations)*

##### (c) Branding For Optimum Impact

The public wants to receive guidance from trusted institutions with a reputation for competence. Hence, JSC's communications are guided by principles that will ensure information is delivered in a way that protects and enhances its reputation.

In this digital age, it is important that the public is able to decipher the validity of their information and/or credibility of its source.

Consistent branding of JSC content across traditional media and digital platforms helps maintain trust.

Visual identity guidelines (how to use logos and motifs etc), editorial styling (using suitable language and formats) as well as social media policies, teach staff how to avoid negatively affecting the agency's reputation by helping produce high-quality content that becomes synonymous with the JSC in the future.

(d) Prepare And Support Spokespeople

Per JSC regulations (*See Appendix; Unofficial Translation of JSC Regulations*) the Commission President may appoint the Secretary-General or specific Spokespeople to act in their stead.

According to research (*see Appendix; Perception Study*), journalists have experienced some degree of confusion regarding the identity of JSC's spokesperson. Therefore, JSC must clarify an individual, not the President or Vice President, who is able to be more accessible to the media and other stakeholders.

A Spokesperson should be prepared to represent the agency and speak to the media or address conferences, on short notice.

The Bureau must provide the following support services.

- Talking points: Brief statements written in speaking style, to help convey key messages and facts. These often include answers to anticipated questions.
- Media training: Guidance on engaging with media, opportunities to practice interviewing for a variety of platforms, including television, radio, podcast and online papers.
- Journo Folder: Background information on journalists and media outlets to help spokesperson prepare for interviews. Spokespeople should be informed of discussion topics, relevant previous coverage, journalists' coverage history (concerning JSC) and media outlet's bias or allegiances (if any exist) - prior to the interview.

## Third Principle: Fair and Just

**Even by definition, JSC must embody the values of fairness and trust above all. The monumental task of serving as a pantheon of justice across all 1900 administrative islands falls to a single independent agency. When the integrity of JSC's decisions are called into question, it shakes trust in governance as a whole.**

Since its initiation over a decade ago, JSC has ushered in several positive changes in varying degrees. Nevertheless, controversy continues to overshadow good work and progress - an effect that poses a great disadvantage to the public if they continue to misunderstand the functions of JSC or are hesitating to engage its services.

Thus, JSC must plan communications to amplify the entwined roles of JSC and the public in holding the 'third branch' to account, and the importance of working together to prevent misconduct, misuse of public resources and pave the way for a more reliable, fairer Judiciary.

Local media, in particular, play an important role in disabusing old prejudices. It is vital that JSC develop better media relations, not only in the interest of transparency but to assure influential voices that Commission actions are, and will remain, equitable.

### Planning Questions

- What type of independent decisions does JSC make daily that can affect the lives of decision-makers?
- At present, what mechanisms are in place to prevent political/personal/financial bias from trickling into JSC's decision-making process? How do Commission members avoid conflicts of interest?
- What are the top issues that cause people to cast doubt over JSC's actions and decisions? How does the media contribute to negative perceptions?
- When JSC engages media over communication products, or directly, are all outlets given equal opportunity to ask questions/interviews/etc? Does the media group cater to a varied range of outlets?
- Local media have close relationships with the legal community. How often do lawyers raise questions of wrongful action on the part of JSC and how are their concerns addressed?
- Are the public adequately aware of such checks and balances, is the evidence being communicated to a wide audience?

- If JSC chooses to reprimand a sitting magistrate (for example), are other members of the judiciary likely to perceive it as a threat? Does that correspond to an actual degree of risk?
- What proportion of the population may have had previous experiences that cast doubt on the (just) nature of JSC's actions/decisions? How can JSC course-correct and assure these audiences of positive changes and judicial reform?
- Have JSC staff been adequately trained to disclose information as mandated by the Right To Information Act (2014)? Do the general public or members of the press frequently engage in this practice, have there been any issues in this regard?
- Does the audience know that there are steps (such as using the RTI mechanism, keeping abreast of amendments) they can take to assure themselves of JSC's institutional integrity?

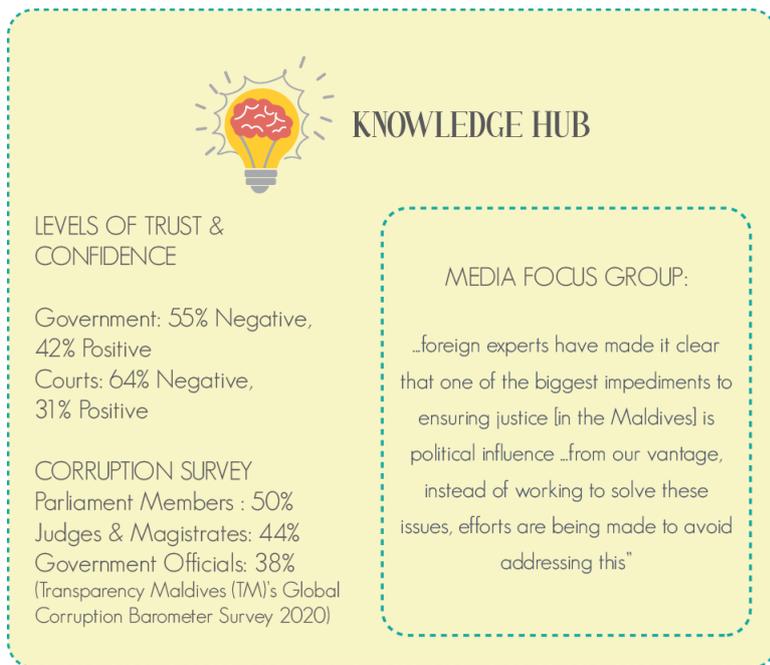
## Background

The Bureau can facilitate communications' accountability by providing pertinent information from publishing audit reports to relevant commentary on due process, details on unfolding special investigations and so on, tying these functions to participation from the citizenry.

Justice, or the state of justice, is relevant to everyone in the Maldives - communicators cannot wait for opportunities to demonstrate fairness. Instead, JSC can illustrate how the prescribed measures are in place and functioning, by showing fairness in the manner it communicates, the choice of messengers, while amplifying measurable improvements due to active adherence to the law or via recent procedural amendments.

Communicators can start the planning process and consider how to create relevant messages by following these points.

- Create messages and materials that deal with real situations, and demonstrate how individuals, communities, advocates from the target audience can measure fairness.
- Follow best practises and rely on honesty - tie messaging with the 'Trustworthy and Transparent' principle.
- Listen to the audience and to stakeholders that work with that audience, in order to identify how to prioritise and address concerns that drive doubt.
- Design content with an aim to educate; knowledge bridges equity and access. Informed audiences are better equipped to gauge fairness and are likelier to partake in the process.
- Focus on positive change, at present and in the future and amplify improvements by presenting tangible, quantifiable outcomes.



**KNOWLEDGE HUB**

LEVELS OF TRUST & CONFIDENCE

Government: 55% Negative, 42% Positive  
 Courts: 64% Negative, 31% Positive

CORRUPTION SURVEY  
 Parliament Members : 50%  
 Judges & Magistrates: 44%  
 Government Officials: 38%  
 (Transparency Maldives (TM)'s Global Corruption Barometer Survey 2020)

MEDIA FOCUS GROUP:

...foreign experts have made it clear that one of the biggest impediments to ensuring justice [in the Maldives] is political influence ...from our vantage, instead of working to solve these issues, efforts are being made to avoid addressing this"

I.4.1 Knowledge Hub: Third Principle - Fair and Just.

Ensure communications are Fair and Just by

- Improving access to and dissemination of messages;
- encouraging media and public participation to ensure accountability, and
- publicising clear and concise information about current activities and decision-making processes.

## Communication Devices

***The Bureau can establish a just and fair approach to and in JSC communications by referring to the following in crafting key messages/goals, communication products, or developing yearly plans.***

### 1. Letter of Law

To establish a just and fair image, JSC communicators must be vigilant about following laws and regulations. This means sharing 'unfiltered' information when it serves a public need. In this context, a filter refers to messages that are redacted or built in a way that significantly alters perception.

It can also refer to notifying the public of new laws or changes to regulations/laws/programmes at the earliest opportunity.

Any information that may impact or impede judicial function, should be shared by the Bureau. Once JSC confirms its decision based on those facts, the actions it has taken or will follow, must be conveyed to all audiences with haste.

### 2. Capitalise on Media

Utilise all available media channels; print, broadcast and digital. The influence wielded by these platforms is different and often more persuasive than social media or other entertainment-focussed sources.

When JSC teams engage with journalists directly and frequently, they challenge misconceptions about issues like composition. Communicators are able to shift the narrative to recent reform activity and provide affirmations of fairness.

In the public court of opinion, news media serves as counsel - and can sway the jury's opinion with little effort. However, it is important to observe the different sway held by different organisations or editors and exercise discretion when offering exclusives, live interviews and other avenues that involve close, collaborative work.

### Equal Opportunity Coverage

To reflect the ethos of this principle, it is necessary to:

- engage as many media outlets as possible,
- proactively seek participation from small and/or regional news,
- be welcoming to opposition-aligned journalists and outlets,
- make accommodations for disabled reporters or those serving niche audiences, and
- disseminate essential/key announcements to everyone at the same time.

### **3. Utilise Physical Platforms**

Face to face communication is the most effective choice to convince decision-makers of any change. When an institution has been as silent as JSC was the last five years or so, entering public spaces can give the impression of moral fortitude; acting with conviction.

Possible platforms for physical interaction:

- Conventions, seminars, conferences, summit, panel discussions etcetera
- Job or education fairs (promoting a career in the judiciary)
- Stakeholder consultations
- Press conferences
- Workshops and training (especially with learning exercises with journalists)
- Partner/affiliate meetings (live-broadcasted events)

The Bureau must stay aware of the risks involved with any physical event, any employee representing JSC must be briefed prior to participation and debriefed afterwards (to prepare for responses or fallouts, if any).

Yet, involving politically-neutral members and employees (who genuinely believe in and represent this principle) to act as JSC ambassadors, can contribute to a very positive image.

In addition to the opportunity to shift ideas, communicators can also gain valuable insight on audience knowledge, attitudes and concerns.

#### **4. Listen To Public Opinion**

As there are no local sources that track public opinion and formulate reports, in order to remain aware of the perception of the institution as well as the judiciary, JSC communicators must keep track of media reporting, social media conversions themselves and design actions to enhance services or mitigate detrimental situations.

Methods to improve such efforts:

- Monitoring owned digital media (see Chapter 6; Monitoring for more details).
- Being up to date on public opinion surveys conducted by NGOs, and media outlets covering judiciary-related topics.
- Holding informal stakeholder consultations with key players in different audience segments.
- Scouring social media channels using keywords (such as independent, biased, ethical, honest, corrupt, judge, justice etc) alongside JSC tags or mentions (accommodating for entry error) and without, can also paint a picture of opinion.

##### **(a) Clarify Irrelevance**

As it has been noted that a large amount of the negative commentary surrounding JSC has to do with misconception and misunderstanding, communicators can focus on informing audiences and in doing so, demonstrating its just actions.

This can include content that explains the composition of JSC, and which policymakers can affect change in that regard, the process for appointing/dismissing judges, candidate criteria, code of conduct, how to file a complaint and so on.

When audiences better comprehend processes, they will focus on solutions rather than pointing fingers at judicial issues outside of JSC's mandate or scope.

##### **(b) Non-Urban Populations**

Although JSC's digital platforms (See Appendix; Social Media Insights) suggest that many of its scrutinizers are based in urban centres, several of JSC's organisation goals look to non-urban areas.

For example, the Annual Report for 2019 and 2018 both claim difficulty with attracting viable candidates for Magistrate Courts based in far lying atolls/islands (at a considerable distance from a city). Engaging with a more traditional form of media like a radio talk show, can help disseminate information to new audiences.

Similarly, visiting and speaking with local residents can also help understand why people are not keen to engage with the judiciary, nominate themselves for a magistrate position, or to try and resolve judicial issues specific to the court district and provides an opportunity to showcase the impartial nature of Commission activities and encourage involvement to strengthen its 'fair and just' principle.

A fair and just JSC will take a decentralised approach to informing and educating the public, as well as training and oversight activities. The Bureau must organise more efforts targeting citizens outside of the capital and administrative centres.

### (c) Ableism and Accessibility



I.4.2 Disabled population in the Maldives.

By making communication products available or accessible to people living with various impairments, JSC becomes more fair and just. Communicators can consult with disability advocates to acknowledge ableism and improve operations internally and externally.

Some ways to improve accessibility:

- Front Office: Making (at least) administrative areas wheelchair accessible
- Website: Offer Alt Text (in place of images) and optimise keyboard navigation for Braille readers
- Website and Social: Enable font enlarging and avoid high contrast colour palettes
- Videos: Adding in native signing (preferable to subtitles) and transcripts for interviews

As disabled people are often marginalised in society, extra effort must be made to ensure that they enjoy equal access to justice, and feel welcome to partake in the judiciary process; whether that is reporting unethical treatment or even applying for a magistrate position. It is not just an important audience to engage, it is the morally correct way to proceed.

## 5. Lean on AV Channels

Historically government agencies, JSC included, have relied on text-based content with few design elements, if any. Thanks to the popularity of AV platforms such as Instagram and Tiktok, JSC communicators can utilise audio and visual content, in a widely accessible fashion, to improve understanding of JSC's functions and awareness for its activities.

Such platforms are also a good way to interact with audiences and gauge what topics need further clarification. The idea that JSC is not ethical or holds political bias can be challenged by celebrating the spirit of shared knowledge and illuminating discourse.

These informative animations, how-to-videos, talk sessions can also be tied in with press activities; used to support relevant editorials as well as pitch completely new articles. As above, they can also be prepared in a way that does not hinder access for populations that consume information in different ways due to impairments.

## **6. Focus On The Outcome**

The Bureau needs to develop messages that focus on the 'just and fair' principle, and the overall theme of institutional integrity. This focus will help communicators make sure to:

- engage the target audience,
- achieve desired outcomes, and
- communicate risk effectively.

When creating messages, communicators should identify three key supporting points, each with supporting facts, statistics and examples, to accomplish that outcome.

Public audiences usually retain a small number of ideas, but overall, are not likely to retain complex messages like detailed steps, actions, or reasons for change. So, even though some content (such as how-to videos produced for the website, youtube and IG reels) may be lengthy, simplified versions can also be made available and/or featured more prominently.

### **(a) Promote Knowledge Of Solutions**

Where applicable, JSC messages should include a recommended action or behaviour, related to the issue under discussion and reference a widely trusted source. This could include;

- placing call-to-action messages in locations where decision-makers will notice them
- and incorporating visuals in messages to support the different ways people learn.

Research barriers that reduce the audience's confidence in an institution. With this in mind, JSC communicators should create messages to increase target audience confidence. For instance, messages can reinforce beliefs that the public can take action against unfair treatment, their complaints will be fairly considered and just action will follow.

### **(b) Promote Public Involvement**

Utilise community leaders or well known/respected figures, to practice and model desired behaviour. Encourage advocates who have a large number of followers to utilise RTI and other tools to access information, show a willingness to collaborate with a wide range of audiences.

Traditionally expected behaviours may present a barrier to changing attitudes. So, by demonstrating that ‘unofficial’ ambassadors are willing to engage, a new norm can be introduced.

Thorough guidelines should be developed on how to determine which personalities can be designated for such work, and how to collaborate in an ethical manner. In January 2020, JSC staff received training to better acquaint them with the RTI Act (2014).

Not only should such training be put to the test, but similar training should be given to ensure that all communicators (including outside of the Bureau) are informed on which information to disperse and how to phrase query-answers, and so on.

## Fourth Principle: Engaged and Actionable

**In summary, the JSC is responsible for holding the judiciary accountable, ensuring those serving as judges are fit to administer justice, and advising the government on improving judicial efficiency. Proper communications are essential to achieving these goals.**

The Bureau should retain a considerable understanding of target audience awareness, attitudes and behaviours, and use that knowledge to curate messages that target barriers faced by the agency, encouraging decision-makers to support the work of JSC.

### Planning Questions

The following questions may help the Bureau identify whether audiences are ready to engage/take action. Using this insight, communicators can craft interesting campaigns or activities that can change partisan or preconceived notions, moving people towards acceptance and forming new ideas about JSC.

- What is the behaviour or action JSC wants audiences to take to protect their rights and contribute towards a better judiciary? Are there behaviours and/or actions that need to be either encouraged or discouraged?
- Do the target audiences understand the current situation, JSC’s policies and practises?
- Do target audiences perceive JSC’s functions as relevant to them; do they feel personally engaged with judiciary-related issues?
- Are target audiences aware of recent changes made to the JSC and that the agency has implemented across the judiciary?

- Do audiences understand the benefits of the aforementioned amendments? Do they understand the consequences of not adopting such a change?
- What are the barriers preventing participation from the public (For example, reporting judicial issues or nominating themselves as judicial candidates)?
- Are decision-makers confident that issues brought to JSC's attention will be independently and fairly handled, in a timely manner? Would they endorse this claim?
- Can societal norms or contemporary discourse be utilised to complement JSC's actions?
- Do available messages adequately describe what support might be available for them from the JSC, or communicate where to find additional information?

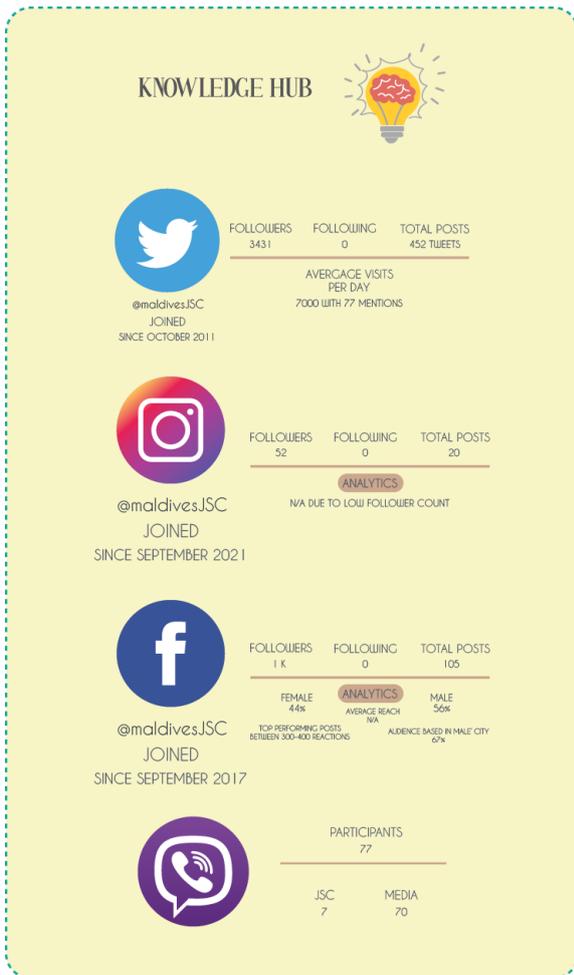
## Background

Open dialogue on both sides, the guardian agency and the public, is vital to the health of a judiciary. The agency enacts accountability and the public reports unseen misconduct; individuals must be vetted by the agency before they can serve a judiciary role.

This Strategic Communications Framework seeks to reform negative/false views held by individuals, communities, civil society actors, the press and other decision-makers nationwide, and garner support for various functions and activities, thereby strengthening JSC's role and ability to deliver on its mandate.

This principle comprises several components aimed at helping communicators to develop messages and campaigns focused on behaviour change by understanding the audiences:

- level of awareness;
- feelings of personal relevance;
- knowledge of appropriate actions to mitigate threats and promote justice;
- confidence about their capacity to be an active participant in judiciary reform;
- sense that engaging with JSC is an action endorsed by their community; and
- belief in the agency's institutional integrity, and the benefits of an accountable judiciary.

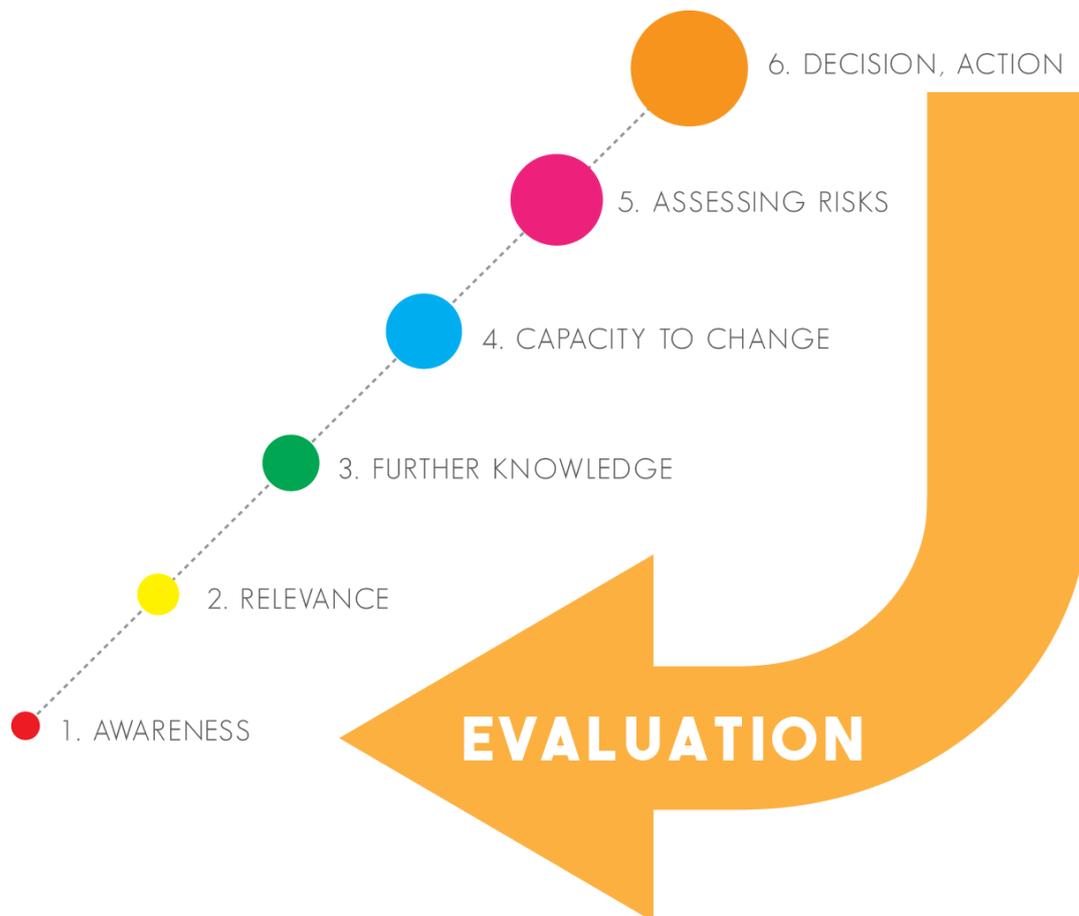


I.5.1 Knowledge Hub: Fourth Principle - Engaged and Actionable.

## Communication Devices

**The Bureau ensures audiences are *engaged* and messages *actionable* by addressing these points when crafting key messages or goals, communication products, or developing yearly plans.**

### 1. Inspire Audiences To Act



#### I.5.2 The Communication Continuum

JSC's Bureau can design messages and strategies to steer people towards interacting with the judiciary and drawing attention to the good work done to restore and modernise the system.

Public criticisms or expectations are usually varied, therefore these need to be dealt with individually, in different ways.

Given the institution's complicated history, partisan politics and anti-government strains, Maldivians have trouble changing their views regarding any particular state-affiliated body.

One way to counter these prejudices is by adopting a step by step approach that follows a specific sequence (as above), so communicators can move audiences towards the desired actions or decisions at a gradual pace. People are more likely to be convinced by messages that are presented to them using different mediums and platforms, which they've repeatedly seen/interacted with/heard about.

##### (a) Increase Awareness

The Bureau's first priority has to be building awareness on:

- Judiciary functions attributed to JSC versus other institutions/state departments
- Improvements made by JSC during its current leadership

- The processes to evaluate, appoint and penalise judges
- Criteria for judicial candidates, code of conduct for sitting judges/magistrates
- How to report misconduct, make inquiries
- Expected wait times and levels of response

By increasing audience awareness about JSC and its activities, communicators can better focus the conversation.

An engaged citizenry can vastly improve the democratic function of an oversight agency, and increase its ability to deliver a judiciary that meets public expectations. Similarly, public support grants agencies added power, which translates into expanded action.

To achieve these elevated interactions and increased influence, communicators can:

- Increase the level of understanding on the role of JSC (as detailed above) and promote the idea that public support and inquiry strengthens its processes
- Widely disseminate messages that are simple, easy to recall, repeated and which attract more attention.
- Utilise mass media and social media channels, freshen approach based on changes to platforms and consider emerging mediums.
- Work with new and emerging news media, utilise their resources to develop exciting modes of content.
- Widen the reach of social media by designing messages that can be shared by partner organisations and networks of friends, family members and co-workers.
- Compete for attention by using credible influencers and message sources. For each issue, identify which personas or sources the target audiences will believe are credible. These sources are not necessarily JSC members or staff: they may be global entities, NGOs, religious leaders, or young activists.
- Highlight JSC's unique expertise, establish the agency as a trusted information source.

#### (b) Elevate The Relevance

Audiences don't often consider the judiciary, or think about judicial issues until the risk is real and they find themselves in a vulnerable position.

Therefore, most people will not take action or interact with the JSC unless they are convinced of the relevance and importance to them and their loved ones.

The Bureau can rely on the following approaches to increase personal relevance across its communication efforts:

- Create a connection to a judiciary matter at a personal or community level.
- Show the judiciary's effect on people who are like the target audience.
- Create a sense of urgency to prompt decisions and action.

- Direct media attention to an incident that the target audience can relate to. For example, to engage potential judiciary candidates, direct media attention to the issue of lower candidates, social benefits of moving outside the city and serving as magistrate, and the reward of contributing to the judiciary especially in terms of developing a small island community.
- Use messages to show judiciary-related issues are 'close to home' by highlighting community members who have experienced or are susceptible to the problem. For instance, when people stop offering bribes and instead report morally corrupt behaviour, that helps the system at large. Or, if everyone fails to report judicial misconduct, then the system remains broken and could result in irreversible damage to an innocent.
- Consider the target audience's perspective when planning messages about a particular issue. For example, when promoting judiciary as a career path, (with more people choosing to have children at an older age per census studies) focusing on how island environments are a better place to raise children, is likely a more effective argument for people in their late twenties than teenagers.

### (c) Lean On Knowledge

People with a passion for law, or a personal reason for involvement in legal matters, are more likely to be interested in messages about the judiciary.

However, at the end of the day, anyone could find themselves in a court.

Unless the Bureau expands awareness on its function, if an undesirable situation occurs, the target audience may not be able to utilise the resources available to ensure a just and fair trial.

Communicators can assist in these areas to ensure the target audience knows all pertinent information and are aware of avenues available to help them.

- Support decision-makers as they implement protective measures by using messages that describe the desired action and explain where to find information and resources that support implementation.
- Consider which sources the target audiences trust as experts. For example, they could be legal experts, former judges or religious leaders.
- Use interpersonal communication channels to enhance the learning of protective skills.
- Encourage interactive conversations with the target audience so people can ask questions.
- Take into consideration the following when communicating with the target audience:
  - People learn in different ways.
  - People have different levels of education and different socioeconomic backgrounds.
  - Plain language and visuals enhance understanding of solutions and speed adoption of the recommended behaviours. For example, photographs and infographics can show a sequence of required steps, and probability statistics can be presented in more understandable formats.

## 2. Building Public Confidence

When people have confidence, whether in the institution or in knowing more about the services, engagement becomes possible on different levels, because of the belief that their actions can make a difference.

There are various ways communicators can ensure individuals and organisations trust in JSC's functions, partake in judiciary roles and support its overall function(s).

- Use narratives about individuals or organisations that model the desired behaviour.
- Employ popular strategies to influence audiences' confidence. For example, promoting the ability to reach out anonymously or without risk, observing someone else who is respected in the field, using a credible source to encourage positive engagement and self-empowerment messages.
- Have a clear call to action that breaks the desired outcome into simple steps. It could be about reasons why people apply for a magistrate position, or how to file a complaint. Ensure that each step in the call to action is actually attainable for that target audience.
- Teach skills, where necessary. Begin with behaviours that have minimal skill requirements and continue working on others that require more complex effort. For journalists, communicators could provide training that requires very little effort from JSC (relies on internal resources and know-how), but that reap visible rewards for both parties (information for reporters, valuable networking time for the Bureau), to motivate towards the next step (perhaps better reporting on judicial issues).
- Create opportunities for individuals to practise skills or develop plans with someone who has already mastered them. It could be a mentorship program for students or a Q&A with judicial experts for stakeholders.
- Enhance confidence and feelings of control by showcasing the benefit of a developed and improved judiciary, and how individual people contribute to such progress. This could be executed in a spread-out series, as part of a larger campaign.
- Show that taking action will make a difference. Design messages that clearly show that supporting JSC, or even being a part of the judiciary, is worth their time and effort.

### (a) Sway Culture

Cultural norms are the unwritten rules of beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours shared or practised across social groups or communities. They are influenced by peer attitudes, belief systems, work contexts and mass media. Individuals may resist messages that are not in harmony with their social expectations.

Taking cultural or social norms into account can result in content that is much easier for audiences to embrace. The following ideas may help align messages to cultural norms:

- Encourage trusted advocates and influencers who are close to the audience to act as champions for the institution and its function.

- Identify areas in which audiences feel pressure to contradict JSC. Work with impacted groups to develop tactics that ease the tension by leaning on other shared similarities.
- Increase credibility by bringing judicial actors that model the desired conduct to the forefront of campaigns and activity.
- Craft messages that describe how groups, communities and organisations can help support the judiciary and JSC's activities.

(b) Boost Advantages Over Barriers

If audiences believe that JSC's obstacles to independence, accountability, or accuracy are too high, they may not bother understanding its progress and will hesitate to engage in other ways.

The Bureau can lower communication barriers and usher audiences toward acknowledging JSC's good work by:

- Increasing confidence in JSC's institutional integrity and thereby that of the judiciary, lowering barriers by encouraging people to reach out and engage, as well as in terms of direct interactions like pursuing a career in judgeship.
- Design communications materials and activities at individual and community levels to address barriers such as lack of awareness, slow response times, problems with logistics (for those located outside the capital) and lack of urgency.
- Reduce the time between when the target audience adopts a recommended behaviour and the reward. Any significant time gap can disrupt this connection. For instance, if journalists are responding positively to JSC's new and upgraded press releases, then on the tail of this development, they must receive training and/networking opportunities aligned with their desires.
- Promote all obscure benefits that result from the recommended behaviour, not just the evident or typical ones. For example, presenting the move to live on an island and serve the judiciary as a magistrate as a healthier and more affordable way of life *versus* leaning on remuneration and benefits.

(c) Campaign For Positive Change

A social media awareness campaign follows a specific sequence that moves the target audience from knowledge of an issue towards behaviour that results in a specific outcome, like a positive change in outlook or increased engagement over agency initiatives.

To be effective, a campaign must adapt to local contexts, and consider the community's present 'mood'.

In general, people respond well to optimistic, wholesome messaging that takes on a subtle pattern, increasing intensity over a reasonable period of time.

### 3. Bring On Partners Early

Any campaign can benefit from the support of other organisations that are already actively promoting the same issue.

Presenting a consistent message from multiple sources increases the likelihood of action.

When communicators involve partners at the beginning of a campaign, the partners can:

- prepare their own collateral (promotional content),
- conduct complementary public engagement activities,
- utilise their press networks and
- engage their constituency.

However, the ethos of such affiliates and their respective campaigns or representatives must also be taken into consideration.

### Reliable Ambassadors

Trusted messengers and high-profile personalities can add their voices to the campaign and:

- help overcome barriers, such as fear of stigma, to behaviour change
- address social norms that conflict with the desired behaviour
- model the desired behaviour.

The ethos of such affiliates and other campaigns that they may be involved with, their immediate partners and/or upcoming content schedule must also be taken into consideration.

## **4. Ensure Availability Of Community Resources**

Some recommended actions (that build towards increased trust, relevance and faith in the justice system), such as exercising public rights (filing RTIs, safely lodging complaints, etc) and participating in the judiciary (applying for positions), require institutional resources.

To ensure that the target audiences are aware of and have reliable access to these resources, the Bureau should:

- create materials and activities to direct people to the resources;
- produce that promote the safety of using such resources,
- check resource availability or service status before recommending action; and
- collaborate with other departments to provide information on available (or underutilised) resources.

## **5. Assess The Crisis Climate**

During an emergency situation, there is always an urgent demand for information, even while intelligence is still being gathered and assessed.

Various audiences will have different information needs; for example, people affected in a crisis will want regular updates whereas news media may need information on processes and clarification on source information as well.

For effective emergency messages, Bureau communicators must:

- Evaluate the target audience's level of concern or fear. Messages should:
  - highlight the procedural checks and balances in place;
  - make visible the roles of JSC and partners in taking action to resolve the matter;
  - use clear calls to action to direct people towards actions (where needed); and
  - demonstrate how recent amendments have been making a difference.
- Direct special attention to the needs of those who may be more vulnerable. Show how officials are protecting their rights and/or ensuring safety.
- Provide frequent updates primarily through news media, with regular information packets available on the website and social media. Late announcements not only deteriorate trust, but also allows rumours and non-credible information to fill the void.

*(See Chapter 8; Crisis Communications for more information on recommended actions during emergencies).*

#### (a) Plan For Risk

JSC Bureau staff must plan, execute and evaluate emergency communications in a regular cycle to ensure a rapid, regular, and comprehensive flow of information.

The cycle also integrates the practice of effective risk communication principles into the protocols (transparency, rapid announcements, listening, and building trust).

When approaching a crisis, communicators must:

- Analyse rapidly changing communications needs.
- Incorporate results of past media monitoring into communication planning.
- Create and broadly share talking points and FAQs.
- Organise key messages into categories for easy information retrieval.
- Coordinate communication planning and execution with partners and affiliates.
- Develop proactive messages for news media.
- Create specific social media content and develop multi-channel dissemination tactics.
- Respond to media enquiries.
- Update website content with the most recent information.
- Sequence messaging to ensure the rapid release of key details. For example, a news-first model creates more trust, and when moving to social media, prioritising Twitter would engage key audiences, allowing a release in short bursts of facts.

*(See Chapter 8; Crisis Communications for more information on planning for PR emergencies).*

(b) Coordinate InHouse Messaging

The JSC should speak as one voice to maintain trust and encourage appropriate action. This can be achieved by informing staff of the situation, actions being set into motion, and a brief plan ahead.

Educate all employees on what information can be released when and why. With their cooperation, leaks or false narratives caused by misunderstandings can be prevented.

The appointed Crisis Team (*See Chapter 8; Crisis Communications*) should be deployed to control the situation, including the flow of information within the institution as well as that which is shared from the JSC to the public. They may increase capacity as needed, use expert knowledge of risk communications, and shall serve as liaisons between various audiences and the Commission itself until the problem is resolved.

(c) Support Community Engagement

Timely community engagement is particularly significant during emergencies. To support community involvement, communicators can:

- coordinate with institutions, community networks and partner organisations to reach the target audience; and
- use toolkits to create well-timed local messages.

## Implementation

**With the aforementioned principles in mind, there are a number of changes, activities, and initiatives that can be implemented - or if already active then regularised - to assure that JSC's communicators and communications are functioning in the most advantageous capacity.**

The identified actions have been divided across the following three categories:

- (i) internal communications,
- (ii) communications products that are publicly displayed or internal to external, and
- (iii) entirely external communications such as social media, press engagements etc.

### Action Tables

#### I. Internal

Decision Makers	Goals	Tools	Constraints	TimeTable
Bureau; Social Media Staff	Alert on potential crises, check if publishing is on schedule, consider mentions and repost where applicable	Publishing Checklist, Internal Communications SOP, Crisis Communications SOP, Social Media SOP, Crisis Communications Checklist	If an emergency arises, Bureau Head needs Crisis team to authorise action	Daily; Peruse
Bureau; Media Staff	Alert on potential crises, record news mentions	Communications Monitoring SOP, Crisis Communications SOP, Crisis Communications Checklist	If an emergency arises, Bureau Head needs Crisis team to authorise action	Daily; Peruse As needed; Record
Bureau Head, other HODs	Introduce communication's plan and familiarise with new SOPs/flowcharts Coordinate media efforts with other departments; inform and be informed on ongoing and upcoming communications within and outside the agency	Internal Communications SOP, Media Interaction Guidelines, Communications Monitoring SOP, Social Media SOP, Spokesperson Guidelines	Scheduling conflicts, workload	Once; Familiarisation Weekly; Brief Review As Needed; During campaigns or events
Bureau Head, Bureau Media Staff	Reflecting on media coverage, deciding which areas (topics, outlets) need more focus; does anyone need to be contacted for corrections Planning regular activities, updating media database	Communications Monitoring SOP, Media Interaction Guidelines, Internal Communications SOP, Publishing Checklist	Scheduling conflicts, workload	Weekly
Bureau Team, IT Department	Selecting and beginning use of social media management software, integrating new handles and channels, initiating keywords for analysis	Social Media SOP, Publishing Checklist, Internal Communications SOP	Time for training/tutorials, learning adjustments, slow beginning process	Once; Within 30 days of approval
Bureau Head,	Reviewing channels and comparing with	Social Media SOP, Communications	Scheduling conflicts,	Weekly

Bureau's Multimedia / Copywriter (Social Media Staff)	awareness/information goals; what are audiences enjoying and disliking, how can engagement results be incorporated to new campaign ideas and overall targets Evaluating needs for a CRM, ensuring branding is up to par	Monitoring SOP, Branding and Editorial Guideline	workload	
Bureau Team, IT Department	Implementing WORK OS, CRM and/or Digital Media Management softwares	Social Media SOP, Internal Communications SOP, Communications Monitoring SOP	Learning adjustments, slow beginning process	Twice; within 30 days of approval, within 30 days of initiation
Bureau Team	Delegate tasks and review what's working, needs adjustment and so on	Internal Communications SOP, Communications Monitoring SOP, Publishing Checklist	Daily tasks, commission approval for projects	Monthly
Bureau Team, Judicial HR and Services	Meet with department, figure out changes that public need to know, data that can be used for social media and public relations activities	Internal Communications SOP, Social Media SOP, Publishing Checklist, Spokesperson Guidelines	Scheduling conflicts	Twice yearly
Bureau Team, Legal, Complaints and Investigations	Meet with department, prioritise content ideas by importance to public; which data the public struggles with most, then utilise to design better communications products	Internal Communications SOP, Communications Monitoring SOP, Branding and Editorial Guideline	Scheduling conflicts	Twice yearly
Bureau Head + Bureau Multimedia, Collaborators	Connect with graphic designers, illustrators, musicians, photographers, videographers, animators, copywriters, influencers for content creation, brainstorm ideas and instruct drafts/samples based on brief	Branding and Editorial Guideline, Social Media SOP, Communications Monitoring SOP, Publishing Checklist	Bureau must vet any collaborator, Commission must approve of project and artist	Within 10 days of project approval; as needed
Bureau, SG, Financial Dept	Propose new plans (changes, events) for the upcoming year	Internal Communications SOP, Media Monitoring SOP, Publishing Checklist, Branding and Editorial Guideline	Obtaining data, time constraints, scheduling conflicts	Annually; Within 90 days of budget planning
Bureau, SG, Financial Dept	Continue and/or enhance funding for projects	Internal Communications SOP	Annual plan finalisation, obtaining data and approval	Annually; Within 90 days of budget planning

I.6.1 Regarding communications' activities that take place within JSC and within the Bureau.

## II. Internal To External (Collateral)

Decision Makers	Goals	Tools	Constraints	TimeTable
Bureau; Social Media Staff	Publishing posts on social media platforms (not including press releases), updating	Social Media SOP, Publishing Checklist	If software malfunctions,	Twice weekly

	pinned content		publish manually	
Bureau; Social Media, Multimedia Staff	Creating and scheduling content for social media	Social Media SOP, Branding and Editorial Guideline, Publishing Checklist	Changes to platforms and/or algorithms	Every Sunday
Bureau; Social Media, Multimedia Staff	Updating page header/footer, profile picture, checking new features, planning new content as per annual plan and outside of it	Social Media SOP, Branding and Editorial Guideline, Internal Communications Guideline	Changes to platforms and/or content sizes and trends	Monthly
Bureau Head, Multimedia, IT Department	Launching website calendar, making recommended adjustments to copy and layout	Branding and Editorial Guideline, Internal Communications SOP, Publishing Checklist	Scheduling conflicts, workload, translation time, third party application integration, commission approval for calendar events	Within 90 days of approval
Bureau Head, Multimedia, IT Department	Updating website; adding/adjusting or removing features and tweaking SEO strategy	Branding and Editorial Guideline, Internal Communications SOP	Workload	Quarterly
Bureau Head, HODs, Procurement Bureau Multimedia	Updating existing brochures and other printed content, designing and printing new collateral	Branding and Editorial Guideline, Publishing Checklist	Collaborations, workload	Quarterly
Bureau Head, Bureau Multimedia, Procurement, Bureau Media Staff	Preparing and designing press-kits	Branding and Editorial Guideline, Media Interaction Guideline, Spokesperson Guideline	Media attention, bureau workload, timely delivery	Within 60 days of approval; disseminate and follow up (one week after next press release, analyse coverage)
Bureau Head, Multimedia and Collaborators	Major components for campaign content	Internal Communications SOP, Social Media SOP, Publishing Checklist	Collaborator availability, budget	Draft 1: Within 20 days of approval Final: Within 10 days of feedback

I.6.2 Regarding communications' products that are wholly internally held/controlled but publicly displayed.

### III. External

Decision Makers	Objectives	Tools	Constraints	TimeTable
Bureau Media Staff, Journalists	Touch base with journalists informally (virtual, phone, email), learn more about news-world concerns, find out what audiences are saying, pitch ideas for coverage	Media Interaction Guideline, Spokesperson Guideline	Scheduling conflicts, workload, journalist mindsets	Monthly
Bureau Head,	Formally interact with journalists and	Media Interaction Guideline,	Scheduling conflicts,	Quarterly; Press

Bureau Media Staff, Journalists	collect business cards, conduct 'focus group' style consultations to gauge public perception & media needs Disseminate press kits, announce spokesperson (SG) + media focal point (Bureau Head), share stories and upcoming events Create debriefing reports to colour goals and future interactions	Spokesperson Guideline, Internal Communications SOP, Internal Communication Flowchart, Publishing Checklist	workload, journalist mindsets	gatherings
Commission Members, Bureau	Sharing and publishing press releases Creating breakdowns for social media	Publishing Checklist, Social Media SOP, Branding and Editorial Guideline, Media Interaction Guideline	Workload	Within 2 hours of approval
Crisis Team	Managing and enacting crisis communications; press conferences, press releases, social and web content	Crisis Communication SOP, Crisis Communications Checklist, Spokesperson Guideline, Media Interaction Guideline, Social Media SOP, Internal Communications SOP, Publishing Checklist, Branding and Editorial Guideline	Legal issues, chain of command, crisis protocols	Within 30 minutes of approval
Bureau, Complaints, Judicial HR, Procurement	Checking brochures and infographics for approval before publishing and sending for printing (and finalising production specifications)	Branding and Editorial Guideline, Internal Communications SOP, Social Media SOP	Scheduling conflicts	Min. 5 days before campaign / product launch
Bureau, Complaints, Judicial HR, Procurement	Reviewing audio-visual content for approval before final rendering and/or going live	Branding and Editorial Guideline, Internal Communications SOP, Social Media SOP	Scheduling conflicts, production timeline	Min. 15 days before campaign / product launch
Bureau Head, SG, Partners and Stakeholders	Promote ideas for collaboration and/or current program progress/success	Branding and Editorial Guideline, Social Media SOP, Publishing Checklist, Internal Communications SOP	Scheduling conflicts, meeting authorizations	Quarterly
Bureau, Other Depts, Partners	Finalise content for a physical event such as video, standing/hanging banner/post, back wall display/backdrop	Internal Communications SOP, Branding and Editorial Guideline	Scheduling conflicts, production timeline	Annually; Within 20 days post-approval
Spokesperson/Representative, Bureau	Prepare the individual or group of individuals, for a public appearance Polish their speech, appearance and provide talking points	Spokesperson Guideline, Internal Communications SOP, Media Interaction Guideline	Lack of practice, shortage of time, emotions	Min. 2 hours before event
Commission, JSC Staff, Bureau, Partners	Create content during and for JSC led activities and initiatives	Social Media SOP, Internal Communications SOP, Branding and Editorial Guideline	Shortage of time, access to internet (if travel involved), branding misuse (partners)	Annually (One day before event, during event and post event)
JSC staff, Bureau, Journalists, Partners (DJA, etc)	Provide training opportunities for media personnel, to build quality of judicial reporting and foster better relationships with media	Internal Communications SOP, Branding and Editorial Guideline, Social Media SOP, Media Interaction Guideline, Publishing Checklist, Spokesperson Guideline	Legal restrictions (judges, media), miscommunication, branding misuse (partners)	Annually

I.6.3 Regarding communications' products that are widely publicly disseminated and/or interactive.

## Customising Objectives

As noted across the communications principles that form the foundation of this Communications Strategy Framework, it is important to take these broad ideas and tailor them to the specific requirements of JSC and its communications department.

Take, for example, the very first activity listed on the first action table (internal):

Decision Makers	Goals	Tools	Constraints	TimeTable
Bureau; Social Media Staff	Alert on potential crises, check if publishing is on schedule, consider mentions and repost where applicable	Social media plan for the year + publishing SOPs, platform usage SOPs, digital media guidelines, brand/style guide	If an emergency arises, Bureau Head needs Crisis team to authorise action	Daily; Peruse

I.6.5 Snapshot: Action Tables, Internal, Activity One.

In practice, this activity outlined should be further developed from the overarching goal to specific, measurable objectives.

For instance:

Decision Makers	Goals	Tools	Constraints	Objectives	TimeTable

Bureau; Social Media Staff	Alert on potential crises, check if publishing is on schedule, consider mentions and repost where applicable	Social media plan for the year + publishing SOPs, platform usage SOPs, digital media guidelines, brand/style guide	If an emergency arises, Bureau Head needs Crisis team to authorise action	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Set email alerts on search platforms to decrease activity time by 50 per cent</li> <li>2. Make a list of daily social media mentions, compare them monthly, and aim to increase weekly mentions by 10 per cent before calendar year-end</li> <li>3. Increase reposting to 3 posts per month on all 5 social media channels and measure changes in audience engagement. Reduce and maintain as per results over a 3 month period.</li> <li>4. Create a list of keywords for social media observation and refer to stakeholders (journalists, public focus group and partners) for ideas</li> </ol>	Daily; Peruse
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I.6.6 Snapshot: Adding customised objectives to enhance action tables.

### Using a SMART system

As earlier highlighted, there are a number of applications to consider when planning for or enacting an overarching digital management strategy.

The S.M.A.R.T. acronym framework can be useful here for evaluating goals and objectives.

A SMART goal is Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Results-focused, and Timebound.

For example, if the task is “communications need to increase overall awareness”, the following questions are a good start to approaching a SMART digital strategy.



I.6.7 Explaining the meaning and usefulness of planning under the SMART system.

The above framework is really just a simple checklist. But it is one step closer to crafting a successful plan that contains key elements, shared by strategies that have proven successful in the past.

Because being relevant to the institution's situation, authorizations or protocols and the task at hand is so crucial to the success of the said activity, it is, unfortunately, impossible to provide a set of meaningful objectives in advance.

Hence, this document aims to provide the necessary information so that any team placed at the helm of JSC communications are able to specialise objectives based on the aforementioned action tables, as well as bolster the tables with more relevant activities in the near future.

## Mapping Out Plans for Digital

Every aspect laid out in this Communications Framework, apart from the core mission and four governing principles, is subject to change and evolution, based on the atmosphere and circumstance at the time of implementation.

The nature of digital communications is to continually grow, stretch, evolve and it does so every single minute of the day. There is no such thing as an end-all, one-stop solution for managing online media - but there are ways to ensure that JSC stays ahead of the curve.

### (a) Schedule Training

Given the above, this framework can list only a handful of techniques, tools, tricks, tips or formulas, guaranteed to be accurate or relevant in 6 months, let alone 12.

However, there are hundreds of free courses offered by social media platforms, social media management platforms and online educational faculties, which can be utilised to keep the skills of Bureau communicators freshly honed and up to date.

One way that JSC can measure up to this expectation is by designating two people from the Bureau (so as to maintain necessary resources) to participate in training or short courses within the first half of the year, so the remaining two can follow suit in the latter duration.

As a variety of subjects are on offer, courses can be chosen on relevance or to serve an immediate need. For optimum value, it should be designated based on interests as well as capability.

It may be challenging to integrate such activities in addition to the numerous daily tasks and duties, particularly as the efforts may need to take place during official hours. Yet there is an undeniable and marketable advantage for the employees themselves, as most of these courses do provide certificates and can be used to boost individual portfolios.

Moreover, building internal capacity over time, in this way, is the most sustainable move for the Bureau. As earlier mentioned, trainings help bolster delegation efforts, as more staff will be able to easily take over shared responsibilities such as social media posting and monitoring.

### (b) Management Software

It is possible to run agency communications without a social media management platform.

However, if the goal is to minimise time spent on posting, scheduling and monitoring efforts, or direct that energy towards campaign creation, networking and other tangible targets, then such software is very useful.

Newer, better organisational software keeps popping up all the time - just as new platforms are continually emerging or new types of content, new features on old platforms, and so on.

A number of Client Relationship Management (CRM) Software also incorporates social media management, in addition to providing a number of other features useful to a communications department with a heavy focus on public relations like JSC's Bureau.

Important features to look for in 2022:

- Multi-platform Posting and Scheduling

- Website and Email Integration
- Measuring Effectiveness and Sentiment

*(See Recommendations; under Organisational Software for more information on an OS solution deemed suitable for comprehensive management of JSC's communication activities.)*

Future amendments will certainly be necessary. By 2023, all of the devices listed above should be considered as simple guidance, and be deeply scrutinised based on results.

## Monitoring and Evaluation

**Routine monitoring and evaluation play an important role in communications throughout all levels of the institution.**

In this chapter, monitoring refers to recording data that measures the performance of JSC messages, communication products, and engagements.

The act of evaluation involves taking this data and judging the effectiveness of JSC messages, communication products, and engagements based on their effectiveness at representing the guiding principles and reaching specified goals.

## Purpose

It is important that JSC implement a protocol specifically stipulating periodic monitor activities and thorough evaluation of communication messages, materials, audience engagements, social media interactions and news media coverage.

Enacting the above will aid and empower JSC's Bureau to:

- Track any improvement or decline with regards to JSC's overall reputation  
*Monitoring discourse across local communities on social media and tracking coverage (or lack thereof) on traditional and digital news channels, helps understand public perception and thereby identify areas for growth, subjects that demand further clarity, pinpoint sources of misinformation and so on.*
- Measure public receptiveness to JSC's messages, materials and activities  
*Evaluation can chart how the devices and recommendations outlined in this Framework can act to improve JSC communication products, messages, activities, to make them more trustworthy, transparent, fair, just, timely, relevant, engaged and actionable.*
- Determine specific effects of communication products on targeted audience groups  
*By tracking engagement levels among the general public and terms of specific groups, communicators can measure changes in awareness, attitudes, behaviours, positions, and utilise these insights and alter future programmes to JSC's advantage.*
- Increase skill and competency of JSC and especially Bureau staff  
*Periodic evaluations can encourage JSC employees to learn more about best practices, acquire new skills, suggest better tactics or assess the effectiveness of old routines.*
- Re-route decision making for communications through the proper channels  
*When the evaluation results are incorporated into future plans, it becomes easier to identify areas that require change. For example, formalising a process that requires the Bureau to sign off on related material will help establish a cohesive communications culture throughout the agency.*
- Gauge the effectiveness of communications interventions  
*Evaluation results that follow regular monitoring are useful when placing value to specific communications tactics or approaches. JSC can then utilise this data to direct human and/or financial resources and support interventions that demonstrate desirable outcome(s).*
- Use data gained by the aforementioned activities to enact various meaningful changes.

Currently, JSC does not conduct routine communications assessments.

To some extent, communicators have measured page analytics for the official website and social media handles, as well as keeping a minimal record of coverage during potential crisis scenarios - yet these activities fall short of optimum levels and observations have not been utilised to benefit goals.

Monitoring data can be put to better use by establishing steps leading from evaluation to amendment.

Once communicators develop the habit and skills to compare reach, exposure and impact, they will be able to link findings to the Framework principles; making communications more timely, relevant, fair, just, trustworthy, transparent, engaged and actionable.

Instead of laying out all possible forms of communication assessment and methods, this strategy concentrates on three areas;

- monitoring public discourse regarding JSC and judicial concerns
- measuring whether JSC communications fulfil the guiding principles
- evaluating the performance of communication assets and interventions

**Deciding which communications fulfil the principles laid out in this framework:**

Assessments related to the principles of effective communication may be conducted for particular products; for example, issuing more rapid press releases (timeliness).

Alternatively, they may be applicable to ongoing practises; for example, writing communications products targeted to the public in plain language (increasing understanding).

## Monitoring Tools

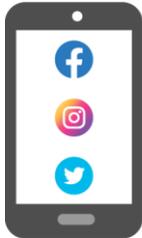
Varied methods and tools for setting goals, developing objectives, creating indicators, and measuring progress can be found in the resources of the Framework's Evaluation section.

The seven-step process presented below is suggested as one possible model that may be used to improve communication in relation to the principles set out in the Framework (Figure 2).



### NEWS MEDIA

- Setting up keyword alerts on search engines like Google for daily or weekly updates
- Set up an RSS feed, connect with news sites, filter using (English, Dhivehi) keywords
- Manually, on a day-to-day basis, scour coverage on digital news/streaming sites
- At least once a year, conduct media focus groups or surveys for journalists
- Subscribe to news monitoring services (not available in Dhivehi) for daily updates



### SOCIAL MEDIA

- Compare monthly analytics for JSC's own handles which are provided by platforms
- Use an RSS feed to monitor social channels with (English and Dhivehi) keyword filters
- Add social media management applications to CRM or organisational software
- Acquire social management software to monitor all channels on the same interface



### WEBSITE

- Use applications like Google Analytics to measure website performance
- Have web professionals conduct a thorough site audit once a year
- Compare the performance to an official website run by a similar institution

I.7.1 Breaking down the tools available, and their particular use for monitoring purposes.

It is not feasible for any agency to take stock of its communications assets after an extended interval, due to the sheer volume of data and the frequent changes to communications platforms.

Further, it becomes even more unlikely that such information will be converted into actionable plans within a recommended timeframe.

The ideal way to ensure that JSC adheres to Framework principles is by enforcing the following monitoring activities and mandating its regular practice.

News Monitoring → Conducted daily → Culminating in monthly reports and an annual overview

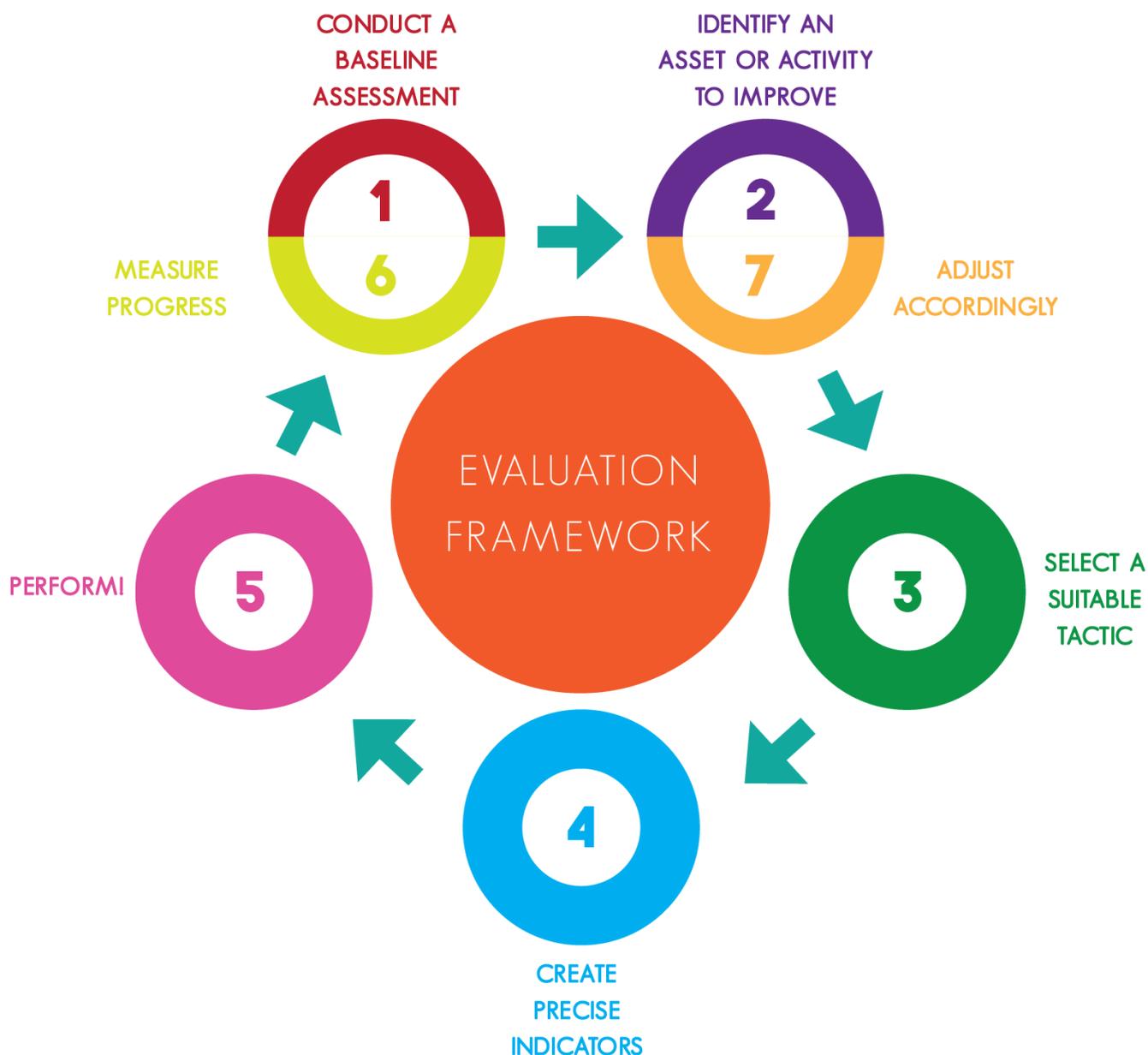
Social Media Monitoring → Conducted monthly → Presented to Commission in an annual overview

Assets Monitoring → Conduct monthly → Assess the performance of the website, JSC's own social media handles and determine ways forward at the end of the calendar year.

## Evaluation Protocol

There are many ways of translating the collected data into meaningful observations that can be used to produce compelling or engaging communication materials and strengthen dissemination activities.

The seven-step process presented below is suggested as a possible model that takes into account the aforementioned monitoring activities and can be effectively employed to improve JSC's communication efforts, in relation to the principles set out in this Strategy Framework.



I.7.2 An efficient, circular process for assessing and amending communications.

#### **Step One: Conduct A Baseline Assessment**

Baseline assessments are used to measure how well the institution, a department or an asset is currently performing, from a set of predetermined indicators such as the size of the audience, incoming traffic, rate of engagement, amount of interaction time, associated keywords, response time, production time, degree of skill, capacity range, number of available resources and so on.

Typically, assessments such as these are recommended once a year.

The documents produced annually as monitoring tools will comprise a large portion of this data alongside department-centric appraisals, reviewing of SOPs/guidelines, and other relevant measurements factored by the section managers.

In the event of a specific campaign (delivery period notwithstanding), if the data gathered in such annual efforts prove insufficient, communicators may wish to conduct a smaller baseline study that relies on narrower, specific parameters.

The Rapid Capacity Assessment conducted during Stage 1 of this Communications Strategy Framework project, provides the basis for many assumptions discussed in the following sections of this document.

This assessment uses nearly the same method as shown later in Step 6, which aims to find out whether the performance of a new activity or asset has improved or declined.

These are examples for areas of concern, that may be highlighted in a baseline assessment:

Principle	Baseline
Timely	Measure amount of time taken to deliver a response for public query
Relevant	Analyse follower demographics for each online channel
Trustworthy	Check public perception of partners using news and social media
Transparent	Count daily visitors to website's media page and/or press awareness of JSC activities
Fair	Conduct accessibility audit of current office and communication assets
Just	Track incorrect perceptions regarding JSC using surveys or keyword searches
Engaged	Count the number of events per year JSC partook with public/communities/civil society
Actionable	Assess the current protocols for crisis management using event-based simulator

I.7.3 Examples of baseline assessments that could be conducted to suit particular interests, aligned with principles.

### **Step Two: Identify An Asset Or Activity To Improve**

At this stage, communicators must identify an asset (such as website, social media handles, brochures, press releases, internal circulars, so on) or an activity (press engagements, awareness campaigns, service delivery, skills development, etcetera) that is in need of updating or refinement.

These products or practices should be selected with realistic, achievable and measurable objectives in mind, and most importantly, in alignment with one or more of JSC's guiding communication principles.

Following is a list of possible activities related to each principle in the Framework:

Principle	Baseline	Identified Activity /Asset
Timely	Measure amount of time taken to deliver a response for public query	Improving the speed with which JSC administrators issue a written response to an individual or group
Relevant	Analyse follower demographics for each online channel	Addresses the growing mistrust shown towards JSC by targeting specific, highly affected groups
Trustworthy	Check public perception of partners using news and social media	Coordinate messaging with partners trusted by public and persuade audiences to share similar faith in JSC
Transparent	Count daily visitors to website's media page and/or press awareness of JSC activities	Introduce a visible event calendar that can be amended as needed and is easily viewable by press and public
Fair	Conduct accessibility audit of current office and communication assets	Ensure the agency, its services and communication products can be used by people with differing abilities.
Just	Track incorrect perceptions regarding JSC using surveys or keyword searches	Clarify misunderstandings or misconceptions about JSC and alter widespread or popular negative narratives
Engaged	Count the no. of events JSC partook with public/communities/civil society per year	Increase the amount of physical appearances by JSC and other public interactions compared to the past
Actionable	Assess the current protocols for crisis management using event-based simulator	Ensure that in the event of a crisis, JSC teams have/are aware of available resources and plan of action

1.7.4 Examples of possible activities that could be conducted in alignment with principles and assessments.

### Step Three: Select A Suitable Tactic

Referring to respective principles, communicators must identify a tactic that best serves the action (to improve one of JSC's assets or activities) that was chosen to be executed.

The following are some examples of tactics that could address a list of concocted activities:

Principle	Baseline	Identified Activity /Asset	Tactic
Timely	Measure amount of time taken to deliver a response for public query	Improving the speed with which JSC administrators issue a written response to an individual or group	Conduct sudden drills across different areas, prioritised by need
Relevant	Analyse follower demographics for each online channel	Addresses the growing mistrust shown towards JSC by targeting specific, highly affected groups	Using data from CSOs and press, uncover low trust audiences and design a targeted media campaign
Trustworthy	Check public perception of partners using news and social media	Coordinate messaging with partners trusted by public, persuade them to share similar faith in JSC	Identify and vet partners that enjoy high public trust, collaborate on a mutually beneficial campaign
Transparent	Count daily visitors to website's media page and/or press awareness of JSC activities	Introduce a visible event calendar that can be amended as needed, is easily viewable by press and public	Coordinate with the IT and other departments to create/launch event calendar, create a public relations campaign to engage press
Fair	Conduct accessibility audit of current office and communication assets	Ensure the agency, its services and communication products can be used by people with differing abilities.	Install features to make the building more accessible and alter the website to meet Level AA of WCAG 2.0. standards.

Just	Track incorrect perceptions regarding JSC using surveys or keyword searches	Clarify misunderstandings or misconceptions about JSC and alter popular negative narratives	Craft FAQs and social media content that can be regularly published to address confusion and provide clarity.
Engaged	Count the no. of annual events JSC partook with public or communities or civil society	Make JSC more approachable than in the past and create opportunities for positive public interactions	Increase participation in planned events and schedule appearances of representatives on conferences/panels.
Actionable	Assess the current protocols for crisis management using event-based simulator	Ensure that in the event of a crisis, JSC has staff who are aware of available resources and plan of action	Introduce a risk communications SOP, checklist, assemble and train a team for crisis operations

1.7.5 Examples of possible tactics associated with activities that could be conducted in alignment with principles and assessments.

Please note that the purpose of the above example is to assist communicators in generating ideas for the types of tactics that suit certain activities, and should not be considered an endorsed solution to a similar or comparable challenge.

Communicators should carefully weigh external and internal factors (for example: feasibility, legal constraints, public need) and recent findings from baseline assessments, before putting an activity, tactic or indicator into action.

#### Step Four: Create Precise Indicators

Formulate specific indicators that measure the activity's performance, both before and after new tactics have been introduced for a set period of time.

Indicators are used to measure communications outputs and show if an action has earned the desired results.

When creating indicators, ensure that they are clearly defined, reliable, valid, measurable and practical. The following examples demonstrate a selection of appropriate indicators.

Principle	Baseline	Identified Activity /Asset	Tactic	Indicators
Timely	Measure amount of time taken to deliver a response for public query	Improving the speed with which JSC administrators issue a written response to an individual or group	Conduct sudden drills across different areas, prioritised by need	Amount of time that each staff takes from receiving query to close and issue an acceptable response during a drill exercise
Relevant	Analyse follower demographics for each online channel	Addresses the growing mistrust shown towards JSC by targeting specific, highly affected groups	Using data from CSOs and press, uncover low trust audiences and design a targeted media campaign	The percentage of demographics that have responded to or are engaging with the media campaign
Trustworthy	Check public perception of partners using news and social media	Coordinate messaging with partners trusted by public, persuade them to share similar faith in JSC	Identify and vet partners that enjoy high public trust, collaborate on a mutually beneficial campaign	The number of JSC followers that have reshared, reposted or retweeted the collaboration post on their own social media feeds
Transparent	Count daily visitors to website's media page	Introduce a visible event calendar that can be	Coordinate with the IT and other departments to	The amount of articles, stories linked to the events calendar

	and/or press awareness of JSC activities	amended as needed, is easily viewable by press and public	create/launch event calendar, create a public relations campaign to engage press	within a month of the product's launch, increase in website traffic
Fair	Conduct accessibility audit of current office and communication assets	Ensure the agency, its services and communication products can be used by people with differing abilities	Install features to make the building and digital space (website) more accessible	Scoring based on WCAG 2.0 standards, number of new interactions with disabled people
Just	Track incorrect perceptions regarding JSC using surveys or keyword searches	Clarify misunderstandings or misconceptions about JSC and alter popular negative narratives	Craft FAQs and social media content that can be regularly published to address confusion and provide clarity	Number of advocates on social media, number of shares and new followers earned following campaign/posts published
Engaged	Count the no. of events JSC partook with public or communities or civil society per year	Make JSC more approachable than in the past and create opportunities for positive public interactions	Increase participation in planned events and schedule appearances of representatives on conferences/panels	Number of new events that JSC was involved with, alongside amount of coverage earned on news and social media following each such interaction
Actionable	Assess the current protocols for crisis management using event-based simulator	Ensure that in the event of a crisis, JSC has staff who are aware of available resources and plan of action	Introduce a risk communications SOP, checklist, assemble and train a team for crisis operations	The number of people signing up for risk communication training and changes in simulation results

I.7.6 Examples of possible indicators for tactics and activities, in alignment with principles and assessments.

### Step Five: Perform!

After establishing a baseline, and setting indicators suitable to measure the initiative's success or failure, it is time to put the plan in motion.

When executing the specific tactic, it is important to ensure that monitoring is active and that the communications team, along with other relevant authorities and departments, has been briefed on the status.

During the launch of an unprecedented initiative, the Bureau Head must be informed of any unsettling changes, and she/he should remain on standby to enact emergency/risk protocol if required.

### Step Six: Measure Progress

Once the new tactics have been implemented for a set period of time (it could be between three days up to one month, depending on the nature of the action) repeat measurements and weigh results against the baseline.

Depending upon the degree of success experienced, communicators may decide to explore further possibilities.

Prior to taking any action, communicators are advised to consider the following options.

- Continue the new practice based on good results, measuring periodically to sustain or improve performance.
- Keep on using the new tactic and measure after it has had more time to achieve impact. Certain practices may take longer to show results.
- Try a different approach. Communicators may need to try modified or different tactics before finding the one that works best for their context, objectives and primary audiences.
- Use the evaluation results to inform communications planning for next steps and future outreach.
- Share the results with relevant technical staff as a rationale for using effective communication tactics and discuss the next steps as a team, comparing different experiences and outcomes.

### Step Seven: Adjust Accordingly

After measuring the triumphs (or losses) that the chosen tactics have led to, for a period of time (as above) there comes an opportunity to tweak the approach and improve the intervention.

Communicators should reflect on probable outcomes, based on current performance, and identify what would be the most desirable result for the specific communications objective.

Refine objectives with reference to the baseline assessment as indicated below.

Principle	Baseline	Identified Activity /Asset	Tactic	Indicators → →	→ Refined Indicators
Timely	Measure amount of time taken to deliver a response for public query	Improving the speed with which JSC administrators issue a written response to an individual or group	Conduct sudden drills across different areas, prioritised by need	Amount of time that each staff takes from receiving query to clear and issue an acceptable response during a drill exercise	100% increase in the amount of time that staff take from receiving query to clear and issue and good response during a drill exercise, over 3 months
Relevant	Analyse follower demographics for each online channel	Address the growing mistrust shown towards JSC by targeting specific, highly affected groups	Using data from CSOs and press, uncover low trust audiences and design a targeted media campaign	The percentage of demographics that have responded to or are engaging with the media campaign	50% increase in the percentage of 3 targeted demographic groups via engagement and responsiveness across the media campaign
Trustworthy	Check public perception of partners using news and social media	Coordinate messaging with partners trusted by public, persuade them to share similar faith in JSC	Identify and vet partners that enjoy high public trust, collaborate on a mutually beneficial campaign	The number of JSC followers that have reshared, reposted or retweeted the collaboration post on their own social media feeds	Over 30% increase in number of JSC followers that have reshared, reposted or retweeted the collaboration post on their own social media feeds, based on average
Transparent	Count daily visitors to website's media page and/or press awareness of JSC activities	Introduce a visible event calendar that can be amended as needed, is easily viewable by press and public	Coordinate with the IT and other departments to create/launch event calendar, create a public relations campaign to engage	The amount of articles, stories linked to the events calendar within a month of the product's launch, increase in website traffic	Uptake of more than 10% in the amount of articles, stories linked to the events calendar within a month of the product's launch, increase in website traffic, compared to weekly average.

			press		
Fair	Conduct accessibility audit of the current office and existing communication assets	Ensure the agency, its services and communication products can be used by people with differing abilities	Install features to make the building more accessible and alter website to meet Level AA of WCAG 2.0. standards	Scoring based on WCAG 2.0. standards, number of new interactions with disabled people	Achieve Level AA conformance with the WCAG 2.0. Standards, increase interactions with disabled population by 50%
Just	Track incorrect perceptions regarding JSC using surveys or keyword searches	Clarify misunderstandings or misconceptions about JSC and alter popular negative narratives	Craft FAQs and social media content that can be regularly published to address confusion and provide clarity.	No. of advocates on social media, number of shares and new followers earned following campaign/posts published	Triple the number of advocates on social media, number of shares and new followers earned following campaign/posts published within a 3-month radius
Engaged	Count the no. of events JSC partook with public/communities/civil society per year	Make JSC more approachable than in the past and create opportunities for positive public interactions	Increase participation in planned events and schedule appearances of representatives on conferences/panels	No. of new events that JSC was involved with, alongside amount of coverage earned on news and social media following each such interaction	Twice the usual number of new events that JSC is involved with per year, alongside a 5% increase in coverage earned on news and social media, gaining by the same % following each such interaction
Actionable	Assess the current protocols for crisis management using event-based simulator	Ensure that in the event of a crisis, JSC has staff who are aware of available resources and plan of action	Introduce a risk communications SOP, checklist, assemble and train a team for crisis operations	The number of people signing up for risk communication training and changes in simulation results	A raise in the percentage of staff from 5% to 10% signing up for risk communication training and changes in simulation results

1.7.7 Examples of applied indicators that have been adjusted and amended based on the measurement of progress.

### **Evaluating Campaigns And Other Complex Activities**

The seven-step process described in the Evaluation Protocol can readily facilitate the assessment of individual communications assets and activities against JSC's purpose-aligned guiding principles.

Yet, elaborate communications campaigns that feature multiple components may require an equally complex approach.

Although individual assets and activities can still be measured via the 7-step protocol in a multi-step communications project, a broader method may prove more useful in analysing the bigger picture.

Irrespective, the most crucial part for communicators to remember is that JSC communications must still adhere to the principles of timely, relevant, trustworthy, transparent, fair, just, engaged and actionable to achieve maximum impact.

These remain the goals of campaigns and other multi-faceted activities that involve raising awareness, increasing knowledge, influencing attitudes, while also building public confidence in JSC and its functions.

## Opting For A Logic Frame

When planning complex, multi-component communications efforts, the logic frame helps communicators outline the steps and resources needed to achieve communication goals that support JSC's institutional goals in a comprehensive manner that is easy to understand.



I.7.7 A Logic Frame with examples from JSC. Empty shapes are included to denote a way for the information that comes under one section such as Activities (referring to different sets of resource) can be illustrated separately. For example under a component that deals with IT resources and another that deals with Multimedia work. Similarly, outcomes can also be depicted under multiple shapes if there is more than one projection under the same activity or output.

## Logic Frame and Evaluation

When using the logic frame, communications can be evaluated at any point of time. The following questions may help guide the process.



1.7.8 Asking the right questions to better utilise the Logic Frame.

As with the 7-step protocol, monitoring and evaluation should be embedded from the very start of planning as a core element.

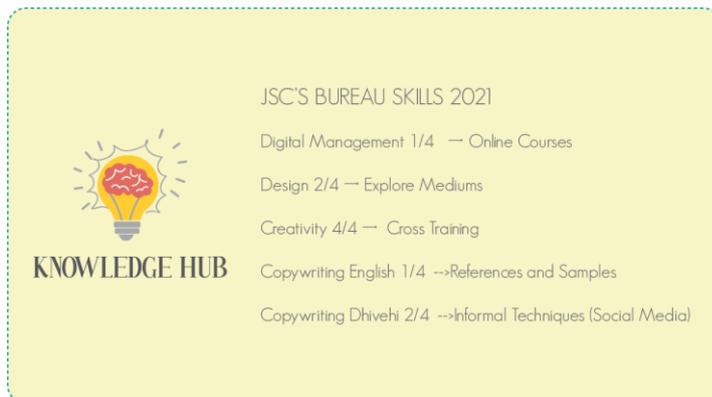
These three stages of evaluation are recommended for a campaign following the logic frame model:

- Baseline evaluation is carried out prior to implementation, producing a foundation to judge progress by gauging the size of the audience. It also helps determine or solidify purpose during the planning stages of a campaign.
- Mid-point evaluations are conducted after the project commences and help establish whether a project is on track to achieving its goals. The assurances of success these evaluations can provide are useful in appealing to leaders when lobbying for continuation or expansion. It also identifies obstacles, pointing to needed refinement.
- Summative evaluation is conducted at the end of a project to compare outputs and outcomes against baseline measures to establish project success. It also provides valuable insight for future efforts.

## Delivery

**It is not sufficient to only disseminate communications' products, nor interact and engage with the public through the press and social media. The way information is presented plays a major role in reinforcing a message of institutional integrity, as well as establishing the principles outlined in this Communications Strategy Framework.**

The appearance and aesthetics of presentation are controlled by a branding guideline, whereas the linguistics and how messages are conveyed is disciplined through an editorial guideline. Together, these regulatory documents provide an efficient means to ensure that JSC's 'brand' is represented in a professional, consistent and effective format.



I.8.1 Knowledge Hub: Delivery - Team Strengths and Weaknesses.

## Branding

Branding is the marketing practice of actively shaping your brand. It is a set of actions communicators consciously take, to develop a positive impact on the perceptions of the public.

### Planning Questions

The following questions will help the Bureau identify the key solutions for creating a brand presence by understanding the importance of a brand in any institution:

- What is a brand and how does it help an institution be recognizable?
- Why is a brand guideline important?
- What should be included in a brand guideline?
- What are the most important aspects to consider when creating a brand presence?
- What makes your collateral and social media uniform with your brand?

Branding is important for any kind of business or institution to be recognizable. The better developed the brand, the easier it is for an institution to stand out.

A consistent experience has to be created to build brand recognition - communicators have successfully created a brand when it sparks an instant connection with the targeted audience.

Therefore, the first and most important step the Bureau can take is to develop a brand guideline that consists of components that will act as a branding assistant whenever any type of collateral is being created. This means that it should carry an answer to any design questions that any communicator may have.

Any department should be able to create and publish content after referring to the JSC brand and style guide. This is a very important step as it creates brand strength, which in turn helps the public to unconsciously identify and relate to the institution whenever an interaction occurs.

Below are the most important subjects to be considered in a basic brand guideline:

- Brief on the Institution
- Brand Mission and Vision  
*(Specific to the communications principles covered in this document)*
- Logo Variations and Usage
- Colour Usage
- Typography
- Imagery
- Motifs
- Audio Visual Content
- Advertisements and/or Promotional content
- Social Media
- Business Systems
- Website

In an instance where there is no spokesperson to represent the institution, your branding will become your tone and voice. Of course, this is the case with most visual or textual published material. Therefore, it is vital to establish harmony across all of JSC's collateral.

In order to achieve said consistency, communicators can adhere to the following golden rules:

1. Proportion of image and text - It is important to give attention to the proportion of your images and text. Always avoid any kind of distortions for a more professional look overall.
2. Selection of Images - Give special importance to making sure the images and text used on JSC collateral have a certain amount of sharpness. In application, this means that it should not fall below 1200 per Inch (dpi). This can be accomplished by following the correct aspect ratios when selecting images and creating artworks.
3. Selection of colour - Always stick to the correct colour palette to display a cohesive look across all collateral. When using a colour that is not part of JSC's branding, for a special occasion, communicators should consider factors such as colour meanings and how it can be combined with the current brand feel to help collateral stand out.
4. Selection of print surface - When choosing a paper for the printed materials, consider the colour, coating, texture and weight of the paper. Standard white paper works great for everyday purposes of an institution but when it boils down to marketing and branding, the decision to print on a certain paper would play a role in communicating with the target

audience. Even if an artwork looks great, failure to choose a correct paper that aligns with JSC's branding would result in a negative impact.

5. Use of font - Using the same fonts on all materials also helps to create the look that JSC desires, as this would also play an important part in the information being recognized, along with all the other branding aspects. At the same time, it is important not to overdo it by always sticking to a maximum of 2 fonts.
6. Placing partner logos - The professional way of doing this is by requesting a brand guideline along with any other logo. It is important to strictly stick to the guide when using the logo of another individual or company. As a rule, never place any logos on text or a heavy image. This means the image on which a logo is required, placing should be 75 per cent plain or empty space.
7. Audio-Visual Content - These types of content speak more clearly to the public as it allows individuals to perceive the message in a more relatable manner. Communicators must follow the correct dimensions when creating any audio visuals. It is always better to be creative and original so that the image/clip stands out from all the other content. Choosing the correct type of audio that goes with your visuals is also very important. The three basic categories you can follow when doing this are vocals, sound effects and music. Audio must be synced to the video perfectly and if there is a voice-over, always add captions.

In the age of mass media, it is more important than ever that communicators know to follow a basic design guide. Otherwise, content runs the risk of getting lost in an ever-expanding crowd - never getting the recognition necessary to exert adequate influence.

A brand guideline makes it possible for any employee or collaborator to create content remotely, referring to it and publishing it from the convenience of any location.

In addition to these golden rules, for the process of producing social media content, it is just as important to analyse and factor in all the underlying elements such as feed management, specific size ratios of various platforms, length of videos and censorship policies.

For success in the hyper-modern field of branding, staying up to date with trends and all social platforms is paramount. A quick tip would be to keep a file dimension guide handy at all times as the sizes that can be uploaded to these pages can be subject to change whenever there is an update to the platform itself.

In today's world, having a uniform style and editorial process is key to becoming a household name or associating oneself with certain values. Having an omnichannel strategy - employing multiple complementary channels that account for all devices and platforms with consistent messaging, visuals, and positioning statements - would result in a highly identifiable brand tone and vision which would make the experience more impactful.

Of course, this requires a linguistic strategy in tandem with audio and visuals.

## Copywriting

Any literate person can form a sentence, but there is an art and science behind the skill of copywriting. It is the strategic placement of words to inspire people to take a form of action.

A communicator's approach to copywriting can differ depending on - obviously - the actual goal, followed closely by the target audience, whether it is meant for reading or speaking aloud, the interface it will be displayed on and more.

### Planning Questions

Although copywriting technique must lean heavily on the principles outlined in this strategy, the Bureau can identify more ways to support JSC's brand presence and assess the need for particular linguistic tools via the following questions:

- What are the messages that JSC is trying to convey?
- Why has the public struggled with, or why do they continue to oppose certain ideas about JSC and its activities?
- What type of language will build more trust in JSC?
- What words and phrases prompt engagement?
- What type of language will revoke the idea of justice and fairness?
- Is there a linguistic etiquette expected from a government agency such as JSC? Do these expectations differ across islands/atolls?
- Are there certain phrases or words that have negative or positive connotations, or can be viewed as synonymous with terms that are irrelevant or damaging?
- Can messages be phrased in a manner that is more transparent, welcoming and equitable?
- How do audiences consume information on different platforms? Are preferences concise or descriptive? Humorous or practical?
- Will adding emotive language make a message more relatable or distract from the actual goal?

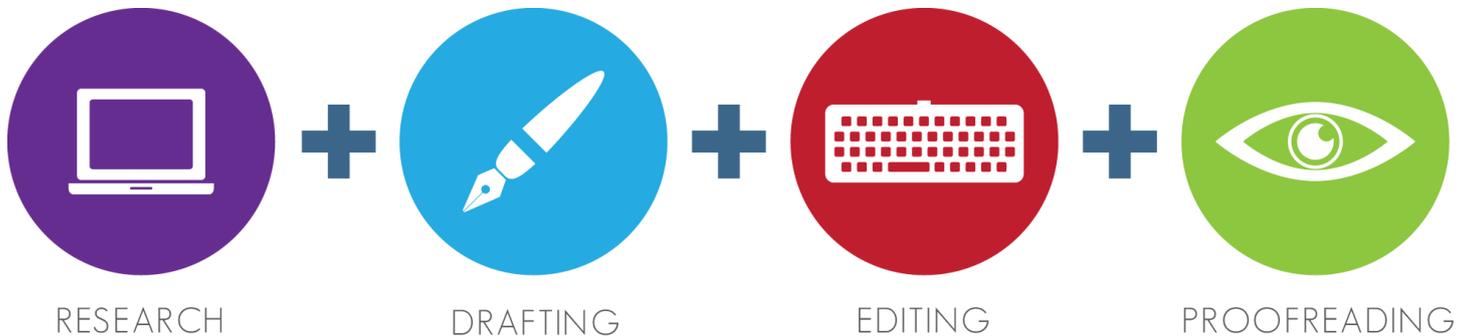
Again, developing an editorial guideline for JSC must first take into account its overall purpose of restoring public trust and affirming the institution's integrity alongside the four communication principles; timely and relevant, trustworthy and transparent, fair and just, as well as engaged and actionable.

If the brand and style guide gives the institution a voice and tone, then the writing that accompanies it is what provides pitch and volume.

Great communicators know that language and the way it is communicated dictates public perception.

Therefore, mastering copywriting is essential for any institution, and especially important for a government agency, which has a responsibility to inform vast audiences regardless of critique.

To achieve these goals, in addition to the agency's purpose and guiding communications principles, the agency can apply techniques known to ease understanding, elevate interactions and in particular, which are favoured by the press.



#### 1.8.2 The Copywriting Process.

No matter the quality of the writer, the editing and proofreading steps cannot be compromised, as it affects the credibility and accuracy of the content, and has the potential to negatively impact the institution's reputation.

As a rule of thumb when writing to an audience communicators should write:

- with the reader in mind;
- using the correct tone;
- in a concise; and
- clear manner.

The following tools are part of international best practises and are suitable to the local context:

#### 1. Brand Voice

Historically, the default voice of government (and consequently that of state-run agencies) was formal, factual and authoritative. The popularity of social media and the sheer amount of available content, however, has seen institutions adopting a less neutral language. These days, formality is waived on certain platforms, and emotive language is employed incorporating tones that are confident, celebratory, sombre or otherwise - as appropriate.

##### (a) Press Releases

These are official statements delivered to members of the press to provide information, deliver an official statement, or make an announcement directed for public release. The style is:

- between formal to journalistic, with the latter being more popular; and
- written in the third person using Active Voice.

##### (b) Collateral

In the communications' field, this refers to any media material used to promote an institution and/or its services. This includes everything from print materials like posters and flyers to digital content like catalogues and digital magazines. Anything

you can use to communicate your company's brand message is considered marketing collateral. The style is:

- between formal to semi-formal for internal communications,
- but educational, authoritative and formal for external communications.

Furthermore,

- in-office circulars/announcements, event posters/banners intended to encourage camaraderie or participation typically favour Active Voice, while
- Instructive material such as SOPs, guidelines, leaflets, flowcharts, brochures, Booklets all employ Passive Voice.

(c) Social

An institution's social voice refers to the way the brand's personality is presented on social media platforms. Ranging from semi-formal to colloquial tones, the style is:

- relatable, informative, factual, and
- constantly evolves based on occasion, reception and trends.

## 2. Length of Text

In today's world, less > more. However, for certain types of content communicators may include more information. The following details are meant to guide, not dictate and should be altered based on present-day expectations.



I.8.3 Pre-preparation: Briefs of differing lengths for communications products.

Instead of scrambling to craft a "short bio" for an interview or a television appearance at the last minute, as often is the case, it pays to have well written and pre-approved descriptors available on the Commission's functions, history, members, activities by year, prepared in a variety of expected lengths and styles.

## 3. Scripting

Producing effective copy for oral presentation is vital; it is necessary for video narration, captions, and even the delivery of a speech.

As fast, easily digestible and entertaining video content continues to grow in popularity, it presents a fantastic opportunity to foster awareness and disseminate information.

However, succinct video script copywriting that delivers your message concisely, creatively and naturally is required to properly engage a digital audience.

Some activities that may require scripting are:

- Introductory or explanatory video content
- Welcoming, descriptive event speeches or closing remarks
- Presentations and training
- TV and radio infomercials
- Podcasts

When writing copy for audio and visual content, communicators must:

- (a) Keep it short and to the point, and

*The purpose of this copy is to deliver key messages, as clearly as possible, within a specified time limit.*

- (b) make it understandable.

*Consider the pronunciation capability of the voice artist/spokesperson and audience familiarity with words or phrases used. Avoid jargon and overly formal language, use only widely accepted or known colloquialisms.*

According to the social media management company Hubspot, 92 per cent of consumers who watch mobile video ads share them with friends and family, making it the most powerful communication tool of this age. However, without proper scripts, a video makes less than 50 per cent of the impact that it is capable of making.

#### 4. Format

There is no strict structure for most communications products, although an introduction is usually expected. The exception would be for press releases, which should follow the upside-down pyramid format, akin to the news articles for which they are intended. This can affect an article that closely follows the desired copy.



#### I.8.4 Drafting an ideal press release using the Upside Down Pyramid.

Although print magazines and newspapers used to be the main targets for press releases, these days an effective press release can prompt bloggers, journalists and digital outlets to transform a filler piece into a newsworthy report.

### 5. Details

#### (a) Headlining

According to researchers, 8 out of 10 people read a headline, but only 2 out of 10 will read the remainder. In other words, 80 percent of headlines aren't strong enough to engage readers.

An effective headline is:

- Short and simple: No more than 6-7 words in most cases. Avoid jargon and use abbreviations unless quite obscure.
- Accurate and superclear: Fact check and proofread, without fail. Avoid clickbait-y and misleading titles.
- Powerful: Use words that trigger a psychological or emotional response. Exact percentages and figures can also have a strong impact.
- Urgent or unique: Bring an element of surprise or curiosity. Avoid clichés.

#### (b) Keywords

Using the right keywords is fundamental to online copy. These are the terms that people use to find the institution and its services, thus, creating text that enhances this function not only makes copy more relevant but also lays the foundation for any SEO (search engine optimization) strategy.

Communicators need to make sure that specific words, and variations of those words, feature within the content on relevant pages of JSC's website and social

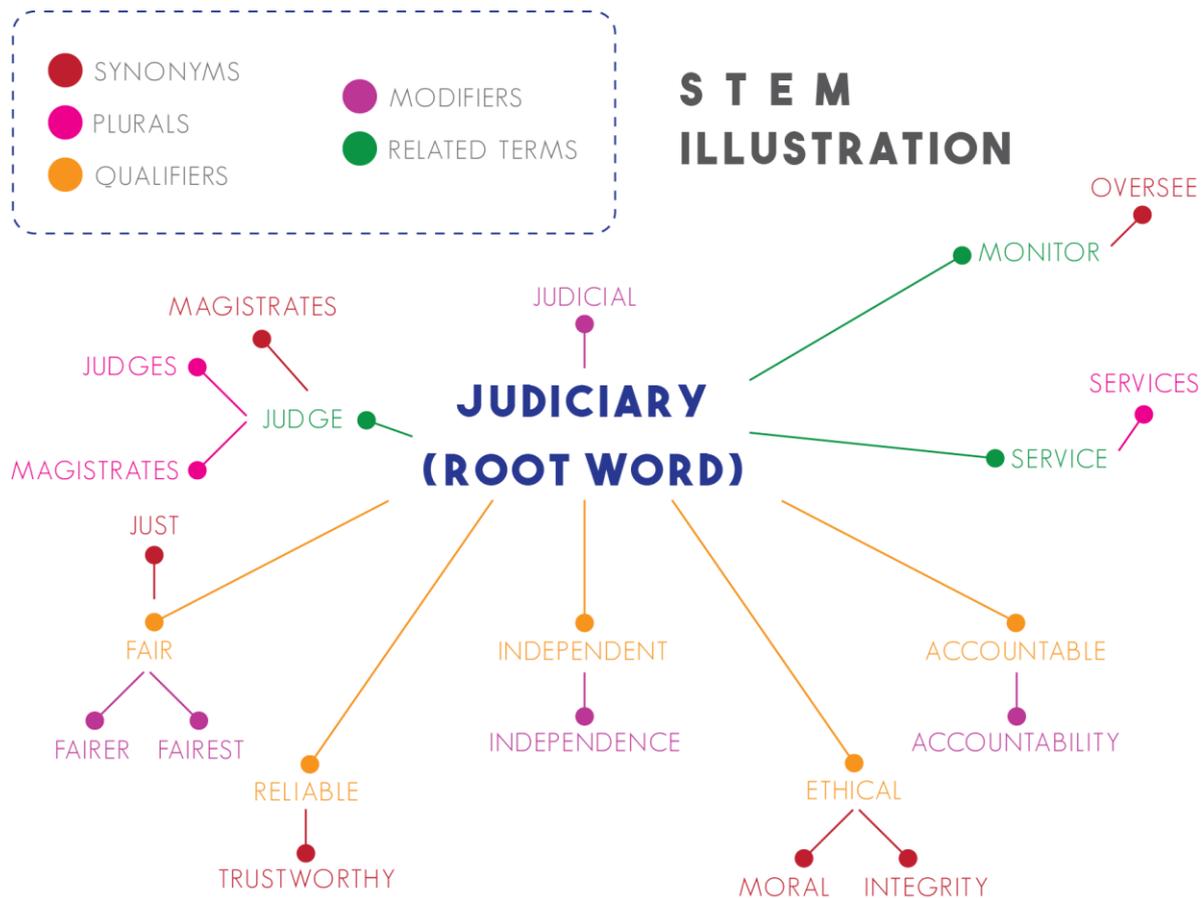
media channels. With an effective copy, the official website and social handles will rank higher across search engines, and visitors are more likely to engage or interact.

Failure to do so will lower the number of targeted visitors - those interested in the functions of JSC, who hold the power to change or improve perception.

The following actions can help expedite the process of selecting keywords.

- Research: Explore public knowledge and references to the institution on social channels and through media contacts. Alternatively, use a tool such as Google Keyword Planner (AdWords), Wordtracker, Google Trends and Answer the Public, keeping in mind that Maldivian users are bilingual and these products are not.
- User Perspective: Think about specific keywords and alternative/incorrect spelling that may be entered (Note that while the latter is not relevant for JSC's web or social copy, it will be important for setting up its SEO strategy). Look for high ranking keywords with low competition that are relevant to the content.
- Distinct Choices: There are a variety of keywords that communicators can use, however the more specific the better. Use the root word to determine plurals, qualifiers, modifiers and synonyms.

The process of finding variants around a 'main' keyword is called stemming; a very useful way to create lots of variations that can be incorporated into digital content.



I.8.5 Brief example of how to produce keywords with 'Judiciary' as the main root word.

Important things to remember when utilising keywords:

- Only the most important keyword should feature in a page title. E.g. "About JSC" will function better than "Welcome".
- Use the primary keyword(s) in the lead sentence of each page.
- Use common alternatives (modifiers and synonyms) in the body text.
- Try to add geography words, especially on social media. Eg. JSC Maldives.
- Do not prioritise the quality of information over keywords. The primary function is still to inform and educate audiences.

### (c) Hashtagging

Words that accompany the pound symbol (#) are called hashtags. When used correctly, hashtags can help the visibility of posts, ensuring it is seen by more people who are likely to be interested in the institution or its activities.

If used wrong, it can cause damages even on a channel where the agency enjoys healthy popularity, by annoying potential followers or even getting penalised via the particular platform's algorithm.



#### I.8.6 Basic rules for hashtag use.

By using hashtags, communicators can:

- Promote JSC and drive conversations on topics of concern. A successful example of such a tag used by governments around the world during the COVID19 pandemic is #FlattenTheCurve.
- Show support for social issues. This helps connect the agency to an issue that it has an impact on. For example, #EachforEqual and #IWD2020.
- Add context to a social media post. #EmojiDay is frequently used to make entertaining posts using relevant pictograms that draw attention to a project, activity or initiative currently prioritised by an institution.
- Help target audience find the agency using #MaldivesJudiciary or similar.
- Disclose partnerships by using the JSC hashtag along with a partner such as #UNDP.

#### (d) Mentions

Tags or mentions allow social media users to engage with any entity that has a social profile in a post or comment.

On Facebook and Instagram, tagging notifies the recipient and hyperlinks to the tagged profile.

Substituting names with tags or mentions helps:

- Keep the copy short and simple
- Link with affiliated, veto-ed partners
- Capitalise on trust and credibility acquired by partners
- Stay transparent by declaring partnerships

A government agency cannot and should not respond to all tags and mentions on social media as it creates a dangerous precedent and invites distracting users (trolls and bots). However, tags can be used effectively to track conversations about partners or the institution itself.

During sensitive situations, JSC communicators may wish to directly and privately respond to a tagged post, however, the process for deciding or acting on such an event should be laid out in the institution's social media SOP.

## Disseminating Key Messages

To better address specific concerns, it is important to tailor objectives and frequency in a manner that suits targeted audience needs and engage them on their preferred platforms.

When crafting messages for specific audiences, consider the following communication goals:

### AUDIENCE-SPECIFIC COMMUNICATION GOALS

LEGAL COMMUNITY	ASSERT AMENDMENTS, LEAN TOWARDS LEGALITY
JUDICIARY COMMUNITY	ESTABLISH INTEGRITY
GEN Z	PUSH STUDENTS TOWARDS LEGAL FIELD
MILLENNIALS	YOUNG PEOPLE NEED TO UTILIZE JSC
ACTIVISTS	NARRATIVE TOWARDS POSITIVE SYSTEMIC CHANGE
POLITICIANS	SHOWCASE GREATER ACCOUNTABILITY, CLARITY ON WORK MANDATE
CITY GOERS	CHALLENGE THEIR BROAD CYNICISM
URBAN ISLANDERS	BROADEN JSC REACH, ATTRACT CANDIDATES FOR JUDGESHIP
GENERAL PUBLIC	INFORM SERVICES, OFFER MORE CLARITY

#### 1.8.7 Audience-specific communication goals

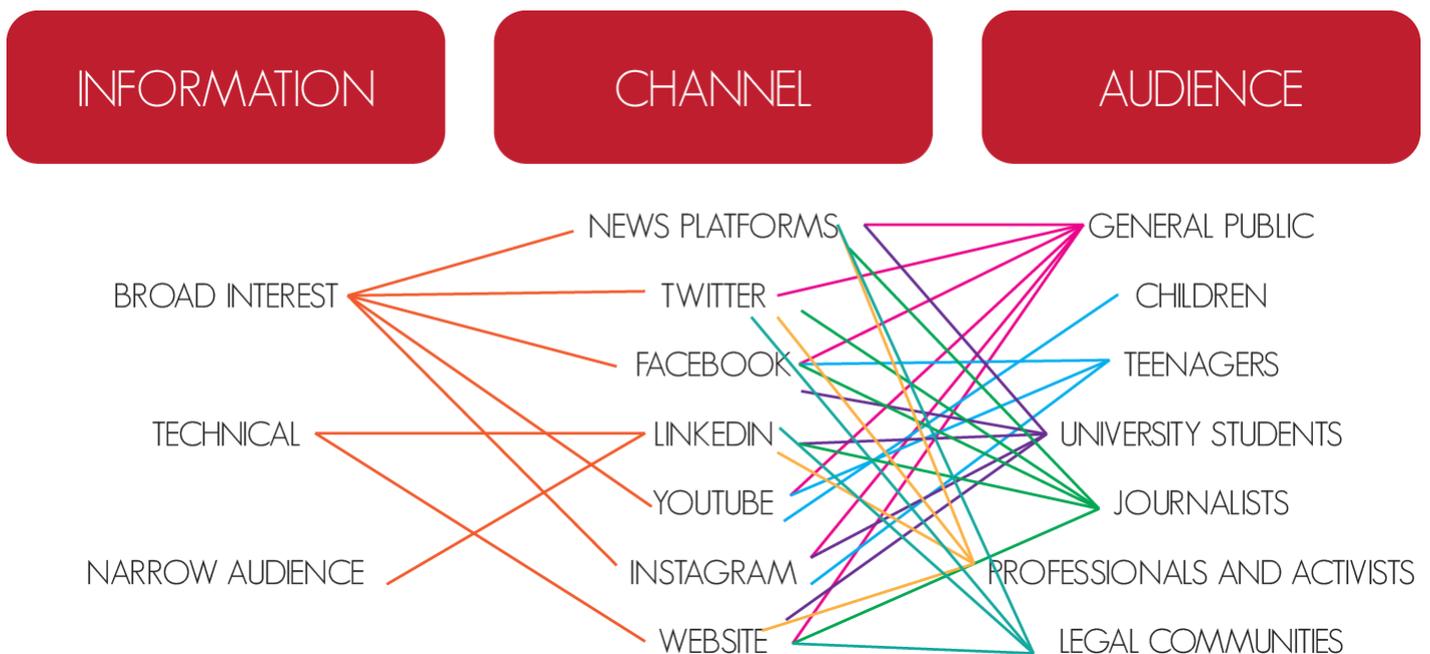
The following table can be utilised to plan content by compiling messaging ideas, ensuring that is in line with the guiding communication principles and exploring ways to best approach dissemination, in one go.

Audiences	Principle	Message Content	Objectives	Medium	Frequency
Lawyers Gen X Millennials Activists	Timely	Court cases can be expedited in partnership with JSC	Increase public involvement Build trust in legal community Promote faster response time	Digital News TV and Radio Instagram Twitter Facebook	Bi-monthly
Students Young Adults Teenagers Gen Z	Relevant	Judgeship as a career	Create awareness about growing need for judges Promote career benefits Connect to island living	Instagram Twitter Facebook Youtube (Ads) LinkedIn	Academic Year-End
Public At Large Activists Outlying Islanders	Fair	Anyone, anywhere can seek JSC services	Emphasise reliability Promote accessibility of service Increase digital engagement	Digital News Instagram Twitter Facebook	Bi-monthly

Students Young Adults Teenagers Gen Z Outlying Islanders	Trustworthy	Option to lodge complaints anonymously	Demonstrate trustworthiness Be transparent about process	Instagram Facebook Twitter Digital News TV and Radio	Quarterly
Public At Large Millennials Gen X Baby Boomers Professionals City Dwellers Activists	Actionable	Red tape free, exemplary public service	Show JSC as action-oriented Angle on response times	Instagram Facebook Twitter	Bi-monthly
Judges Lawyers Activists Baby Boomers City Dwellers	Engaged	Judge involvement and engagement throughout HR processes	Demonstrate efficiency Increase awareness of functions	Website Twitter LinkedIn	Close to Judicial Oath Taking
Judges Lawyers Activists Outlying Islanders Gen X Millennials	Just	Equal priority for judicial reform across all courts	Eliminate misunderstanding of reform initiatives Highlight equality between high courts and magistrates	Website Twitter LinkedIn Instagram Facebook	Quarterly

I.8.8 Table to organise and compile key messages.

Organised as above, it is possible to plan out year-long campaigns, disseminate on the heels of appropriate events and spread out content in a manner that optimally informs and engages audiences.



I.8.9 Juxtaposing channels, with types of information and target audiences.

## Crisis Communications

**Any detrimental event, significant enough to disrupt the normal functioning pattern of the Judicial Service Commission, that may destroy the people's trust in the institution or impact the health or safety of Commission members and employees must be treated as a crisis situation.**

Generally, crises fall into one of three categories; creeping crises that are foreshadowed by a series of events, slow-burn crises which show evidence of some advance warning, and sudden crises where rapid action is required due to significant harm has already occurred.

In an organisational context, crises are typically either natural, confrontational, financial, or may involve institutional misdeeds, workplace violence or criminal activity.

Communicators should be aware of the types or categories of crises so as to identify similar examples and/or produce reliable projections and incorporate estimates into their risk strategy.

### **Crises From A Communications Perspective**

- (a) Systemic - Impacts the overall institution's operations. Systemic crises often occur outside the control of governments and are difficult to predict.
- (b) Adversarial - Involves an external party, in opposition to the institution, seeking to contest/attack some aspect of the institution (e.g., message, decision, position, or vote).
- (c) Reputational - Raises doubts among the public about the ethics, judgement, or credibility of an institution, often including its leaders.

Not every negative comment leads to a PR crisis that can damage reputations or

mandates attention from the top leaders. The real, big problem appears when a mishap spreads to credible, local news. Therefore, it is vital that JSC has already invested in developing media relations prior to an unfolding crisis situation.

The growth of social media and information sharing has increased public sensitivity to the narratives that surround any emergency. Further, it is likely that the problem will begin online, spreading in an uncontrollable, unpredictable way on channels that the institution does not own. To counter this, communicators must put into effect uninterrupted monitoring practices, followed by mitigation tactics and a ready plan of action.

## Planning Questions

The following questions may help communicators get into the right frame of mind to map out the particulars of crisis management, and make accurate assumptions that help prepare the Bureau for such an eventuality.

- What are the weakest points within the institution, in terms of its functions/members/staff?
- Can these areas be further strengthened?
- Analyse previous crisis events - how can these issues be prevented or better dealt with in the future?
- How fast can JSC acknowledge a crisis? What are the barriers that may affect response time?
- During an emergency, who in the JSC holds the authority to issue information? (What is the chain of command?)
- Who is the best candidate to counsel the JSC (Bureau) regarding which information is legal/ethical to share (and to what extent)?
- What can be done to ensure that communications are timely and transparent during an emergency?
- Are there individuals or groups within the media who can be relied on to support JSC communications in a time of crisis?
- Who has the best relationship with these, and other, media players?
- Which staff member will be handling or overseeing public communications during a crisis?
- What kind of monitoring protocols can be put into effect once a crisis occurs, to ensure that sufficient useful data is generated to better shape future interventions?

## Background

Although the Framework principles should be taken into consideration, during a high-stress rapid-movement emergency situation, communicators may condense the guiding tenets into these four priority areas:



I.9.1 Priority areas within the principles, specifically for crisis situations.

The above (right) principles are widely accepted to represent the cornerstone of successful crisis management.

In the Maldives, historically, the judiciary branch of governance has suffered a tumultuous - and at times chaotic - relationship with the fourth pillar, the press.

This, among many other operational and graft-related issues, has impacted the institution's ability to serve, and perhaps more to the point, work alongside the public or receive the confidence that is so critical to its function, especially during a crisis scenario.

Therefore, it is crucial that JSC's crisis communications are conducted in a manner that bolsters public participation and paves the road towards trust - without creating further obstacles.

In addition to the special task force assembled to lead communications during a crisis, risk communicators at JSC include a wide spectrum of employees, including staff working on judicial reform, in public affairs, and as researchers, as well as those working directly on community outreach and engagement.

## Crisis Team

Establishing a trained and specialised public relations team will ensure that communications adhere to the prioritised principles; timely, transparent, fair and actionable.

An emergency team should have no less (and no more) than two authoritative figures ( to make decisions, to issue orders, as a proxy) supported by creatives and media professionals to deliver instructions.



I.9.2 The proposed layout for JSC's crisis management team.

It should be noted that at the time of compiling this document, the Commission has not yet approved the aforementioned crisis unit and the protocols that follow in this Chapter. (See *Chapter 9; Recommendations*)

### General Staff

It is important to keep in mind that disaster situations are incredibly stressful for the team at large.

For instance, depending on the problem or how it is unfolding, it may be wise to inform all employees of general strategy and emphasise following the institution's lead.

Failure to adequately prepare the organisation may also give rise to panic and confusion, which is usually the underlying cause of publicity blunders that occur amid emergency communications.

To determine the best course of action, it may be helpful for communicators to consider the following:

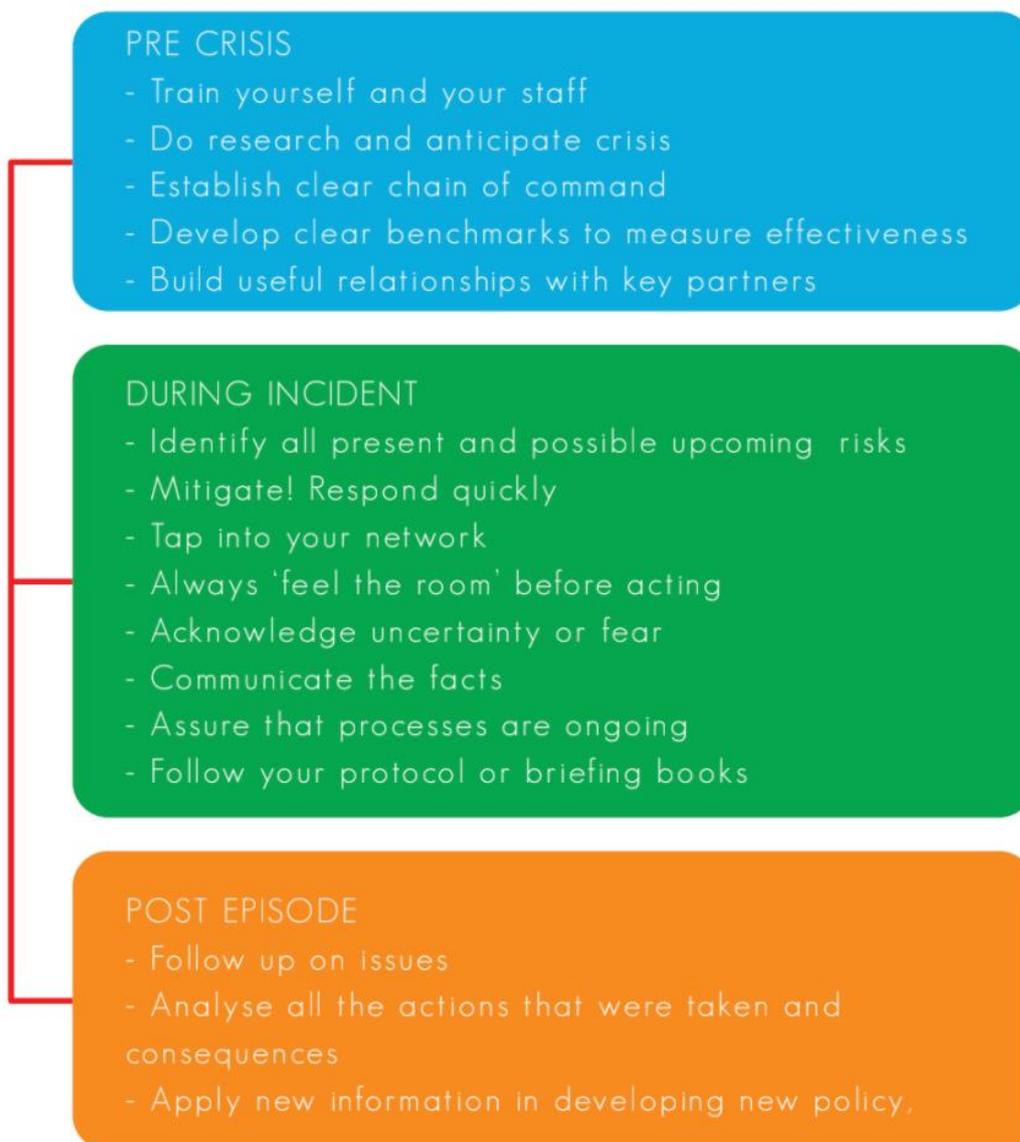
- Would reasonable people expect a responsible organisation to respond?
- Would silence be seen as not caring or a sign of guilt?
- Are others already framing the story?

### Crisis Protocol

Communicators should view pre-crisis and post-crisis activities as prevention measures. Both seek to reduce known risks that could lead to a crisis, with the latter focusing on learning from experience.

Past findings and monitoring initiatives should be incorporated into an organisation's

Crisis Communications SOP;  
 Crisis Communications Checklist;  
 Communications Monitoring SOP and  
 Internal Communications SOP.



I.9.3 A Crisis Communication process that is suitable to JSC's needs.

As illustrated above, there are three main stages to consider when preparing for, evaluating or tackling a crisis.

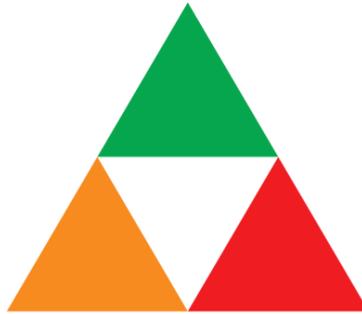
1. The pre-crisis stage is an opportunity for detecting and correcting early warning signals to improve foresight.
2. Across the 'during' or mid-crisis stage, the team will identify and implement a set of activities to reduce the damaging effects of the crisis.
3. Finally, the post-crisis stage involves analysing the series of events beginning from when the first hints of a crisis emerged and onwards, with the express goal of

improving on errors made.

### The Triage Method

After a communications team is established, disaster projections conducted, and a regular monitoring system is in effect, a number of potential crises may begin to emerge.

A convenient way to assess crisis levels and determine whether action is necessary is to implement a triage technique to assess the severity of the potential PR disaster.



This is done by dividing threatening situations into one of three colours as illustrated below.



Situations that don't require any immediate action.

E.g. when an associate organization or collaborator faces a crisis, as it doesn't directly affect JSC functions.

Yet still, there may be a chance that the outcome impacts JSC's work in some way. Monitor the situation closely. Observe social media and search results. If JSC is trending, then the tag changes from green to orange.



The orange tag is for situations that could possibly harm JSC and/or harm public trust in the institution.

E.g. One seriously negative report, which has received hundreds of positive comments or one negative reaction compared to a large amount of contrasting views.

You should keep an eye on it, but don't summon your PR crisis team just yet.



These scenarios require quick and decisive action. JSC's reputation are in imminent danger and a response team is required.

This applies to anything that affects the function of the Commission. Harshlest scandals involve members (or executive staff), and sexual harassment. Preferably, some form of action happens before press get a whiff of controversy.

Remember: situations typically escalate suddenly and rapidly, within hours, from code green to orange or even red. Thus, it's vital that the situation is constantly under monitoring.

## Summary of Recommendations

To sum up the previous chapters, it is clear that for JSC to achieve effective and efficient communications, it must establish a standardised set of policies and guidelines that adheres to the guiding principles laid out in this framework.

These regulations must govern overall activities within the institution as well as interactions between employees and the general public.

From a holistic point of view, this strategy seeks to:

- embed and nurture a culture of communications that are
- timely, relevant, transparent, trustworthy, fair, just, engaged and actionable,
- across all of JSC's functions and interactions.

Although the recommendations that follow are grouped under one dominant principle, most of the proposed changes support multiple aspects of the Framework's guiding values. Of course, as previously stated in this document, the following recommendations have not, at the time of writing, been officially presented to the Commission. It is important to note that these proposals shall hence be subject to their approval prior to action.

Nevertheless, the ideas driving these recommendations have been broached to said leaders and were developed in line with the regulations and laws relevant to JSC and its functions.

### Timely and Relevant

#### 1. Speeding Up WorkFlow - Using A Work OS

A Work OS is a cloud-based software solution that provides a centralised and easy-to-use platform for communications teams to organise and manage their work. Despite being widely associated with marketing or sales, a Work OS is designed for organisations of all sizes and across all manner of possible functions; leaders can alter workflow as needed and teams can pick which apps to integrate for better productivity. It proves particularly useful in a post-COVID climate.

For instance, using CRM software would allow the Bureau Head to designate tasks to other team members, schedule meetings, update databases, monitor project progress, acquire approval for new initiatives from authority figures such as the Secretary-General, collect information from external sources (including social media) and so much more - simultaneously.

One suitable option is 'monday.com', a visual platform that in its own words "manages everything". It requires minimal training, offers over 200 templates to start with for any industry, and responds to queries within the hour. Communicators need only feed the software with its workflow needs, sync necessary data/handles and the software will reflect work done, updates required, notify team

members and so on. It can be accessed on desktop, laptop and mobile gadgets, thus reducing work time, which is especially useful for communication goals.

## 2. Increase Media Interactions

At present, JSC does not have sufficient media interactions. Understanding the world of news media begins with a thorough delve into the inner workings of this industry and how it operates.

The relationship between institutions and media personalities is usually give-and-take; where communicators provide journalists with stories and journalists become allies to institutions during their toughest moments.

JSC communicators should cast aside misgivings and approach every reporter with a fresh outlook. Through regular interactions, the Bureau can obtain knowledge on which news desks (specialised journalists) are most relevant to the institution's cause, who are the editors that stir up the most trouble, what time to deliver press releases, how to inspire timely coverage, what sort of archive-based or multimedia support is needed and more.

At a minimum, JSC should hold press gatherings four times during the calendar year, provide opportunities to clarify understanding once each month and identify 1-2 journalists to interact with or pitch ideas to on a biweekly basis.

## 3. Crisis Communications Plans

Avoiding a repeat of the previous Chapter (8), suffice to say, a crisis communication plan is a set of guidelines used to prepare an institution for an unexpected, disruptive event.

A standard operating procedure (SOP) for Crisis Communications should include steps to take when a crisis first emerges, how to communicate with the media/public/stakeholders, and how to prevent the issue from occurring again.

Checklists for Crisis Communications are another tool that could be employed to help assess risk, assemble necessary resources, issue preliminary communications, commence data gathering and so on.

JSC is in urgent need of a Crisis Communications SOP and Checklist, adjunct to its Communication Strategy Framework, that the Bureau and the Commission can rely on to standardise and optimise communications activities in the event of an emergency.

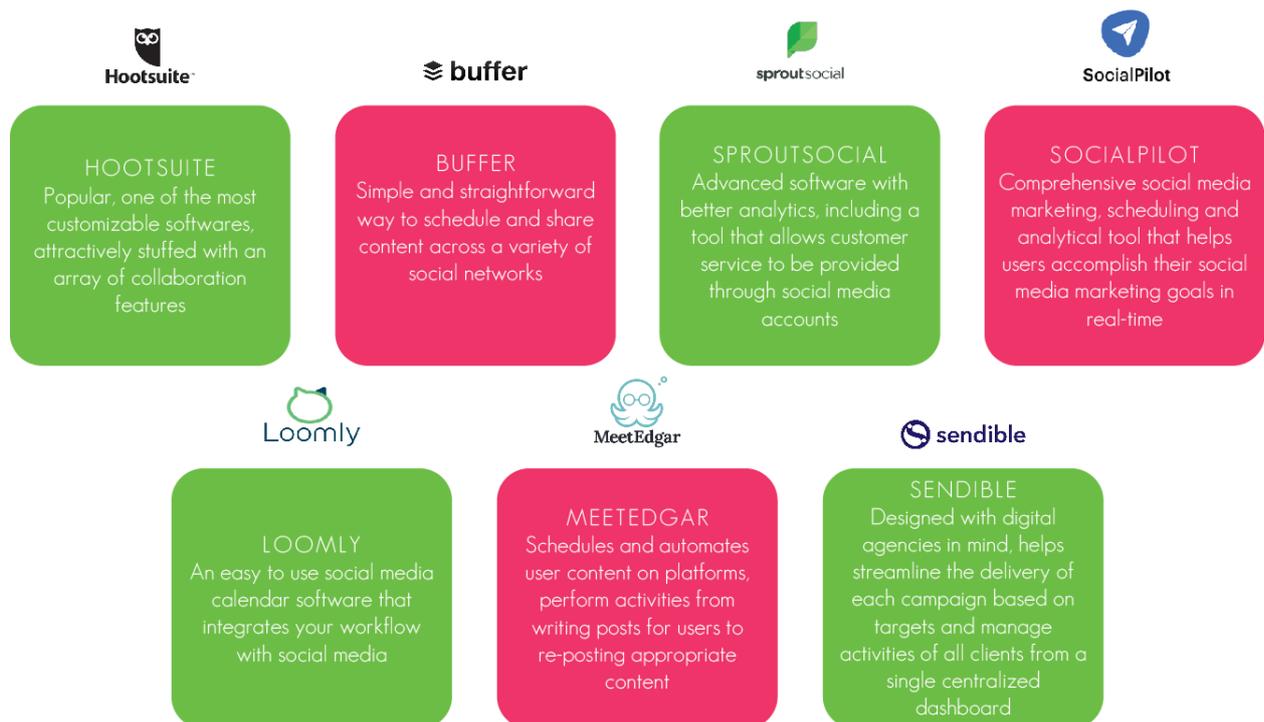
## 4. Active Monitoring Protocols

The process of reading, watching, and listening to published information, then identifying and analysing content that contains specific keywords or topics (relevant to the institution) is a key component of any comprehensive communications strategy.

In a modern context, published sources refer to both news media and social media. Monitoring can be done manually or using software tools (*See Chapter 6; Monitoring and Evaluation*), however, it is necessary to begin these efforts at the earliest possible date.

As above, many types of social media monitoring software are compatible with Work OS systems, however, if JSC chooses to forgo a specialised digital operating system, it would still require monitoring software.

Below are some options for social media monitoring platforms:



I.10.1 Examples of social media management software suitable for JSC's goals, which offer paid as well as free versions.

News media can be monitored manually, or as do many local media outlets, via an RSS feed. Although foreign-owned/operated news scanning services do exist, it would not be feasible to use such a tool as navigating keywords in Dhivehi Language, with the proper context is likely to be impossible, and if not then certainly an unfeasible affair.

## Trustworthy and Transparent

### 5. Systems For Accuracy

This document demonstrates that a standardised communications strategy is integral to JSC's institutional credibility. To achieve cohesiveness, guidelines or SOP's must be developed to regulate the interactions and interventions that take place internally as well as externally (with the public).

Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) help to ensure consistency and establish certain standards across all aspects of the institution's work.

Three guidelines necessary to uphold JSC's communication strategy are;

- (a) an SOP for communications within the institution (creates a communication culture that complies with Framework principles and a mechanism that allows the Bureau to oversee all communications related work, thereby reducing risk),
- (b) a publishing SOP (systemizes publishing and disseminating activities of all JSC communications products),
- (c) and finally, Branding and Editorial Guidelines (*See Chapter 5; Delivery*).

Having specific SOPs and other guiding documents to support the introduction of a new communications framework can help save time, reduce errors, produce reliable results and are useful when training new staff or transfers.

#### 6. Establish Media Database

A structured directory that contains contact information for journalists, influencers and content creators is a public relations super-tool that helps institutions find the right people when seeking earned media coverage.

The database should allow communicators to search by a variety of filters such as outlet name, owner, region, media type, language and so on.

Perhaps more importantly, by having a regularly updated list of media contacts, JSC will be able to disseminate information to a much larger number of active media outlets, including regional news. In the past, the Bureau has struggled to keep track of the individuals present in its media group, or their reporting status and therefore cannot guarantee the current 'mailing list' is as comprehensive as it should be.

By providing equal access for media across the archipelago, JSC is not only adhering to Framework principles and bolstering public trust but also fulfilling a nationwide commitment.

#### 7. Develop Necessary Collateral

JSC does not presently have adequate collateral to boost press coverage or even public interest. Here, collateral refers to all distributable material, from printed posters to digital content like infographics on social media, that are used to create awareness about the institution, its functions and its services.

The following two items should be simple to create/compile, helps transparency and will bolster trust:

- Press Kits: A collection of introductory writings (briefs on commission members, historical background), fact sheets and recent news (press releases) that make it easy for journalists to learn more about the institution and its functions and also provides photos and videos to use in producing a variety of content. It can help journalists create compelling stories. Press

Kits are typically found on the 'media' page of an official website, although smaller versions are known to be provided on portable devices or in print, during events and conferences.

- Event Calendar: A list of activities that are organised by date and featured on an official website, to inform visitors of upcoming or planned events. Communicators can direct journalists towards this webpage when pitching stories, or can leverage significant events to make JSC's releases appear more newsworthy.

## 8. Declare a Spokesperson

According to Chapter 6 of JSC Regulations (2010), on Provision of Information to the media:

(a) Information pertaining to work conducted by the Commission should be provided to the media, to the extent determined by the Commission, by the Secretary-General or (a) senior staff member(s) tasked with that work as chosen by the Secretary-General.

(b) Information regularly disseminated by the Commission such as statistics should be provided to the media by the relevant Section in accordance with the instructions of the Secretary-General.

(c) If a specific member is elected by the Commission to provide information pertaining to a specific work of the Commission, such information should be disseminated by that member to the extent determined by the Commission. However, should circumstances necessitate more parties to provide information (to the media) simultaneously, such arrangements may be facilitated per discussions with the President or Vice President.

*(See Appendix; Unofficial Translation of JSC Regulations, for more details)*

With reference to the above, JSC can declare a public spokesperson, and/or a media point of contact, to speak on behalf of the JSC as directed by the Commission, its President or Vice President.

Feedback received from media regarding confusion on whom to contact for a quote on JSC or to call for easy access to collateral, fact-checking and so forth, suggests that declaring a spokesperson and a point of contact would not only erase doubt but hopefully, prompt further media engagement. Initiating this activity (before a crisis makes it necessary), gives the impression that JSC is proactively trying to improve information access and will not hesitate to share pertinent details with the media.

The most natural candidate for a Spokesperson would be the Secretary-General (SG), whereas the Media Focal Point should be the Bureau Head. It may be too time-consuming for the SG to attend to other media queries (outside of offering quotes or procuring one from a Commission Member), and further, the Bureau Head would be more familiar with available media resources.

It should also be noted that declaring two individuals, to serve as spokesperson and focal point respectively, is common practice in the Maldives, especially in the case of government bodies.

## Fair and Just

### 9. Integrate Accessibility Features

A government institute or service should be user-friendly for everyone, including people who use wheelchairs, canes and mobility scooters, and those with vision and hearing impairments.

**Building and Staff:** Conduct an assessment to check whether public spaces within the building are safe and independently accessible to all, and make the necessary changes. This could mean anything from ensuring the entrance is wheelchair-friendly, to adding braille signage or installing lighting features that help accommodate people with low vision.

**Communications Products:** Design or redesign communications, in consultation with experts, to ensure all people can perceive, understand, navigate, and interact with printed and electronic information issued by JSC. The institution could make a version of its brochures in braille or change JSC's official website to meet international standards like the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0.

#### 10. Design Awareness Campaigns

Initial research efforts have attributed a large portion of negative discourse regarding JSC to general misconceptions about the institution and a misunderstanding of the judiciary and JSC's functions.

By curating and then executing omniplatform awareness campaigns, the institution will widen its reach, offering clarity that allows more people to interact with JSC in a positive manner. The dispersed nature of the Maldives means that knowledge regarding the agency may differ among communities, thereby affecting their access to judiciary mechanisms.

It would be beneficial for JSC to make the most of this highly digitised population and launch online campaigns that educate individuals and boost public awareness, shifting conversations towards positive action and reform activity and away from distracting, damaging or irrelevant discourse.

### Engaged and Actionable

#### 11. Using Data, Refining Protocols

Governments change, the field of law evolves and communications platforms are constantly being modified - it makes sense that the Judicial Service Commission will also similarly grow, and have different goals and objectives.

To remain relevant, trustworthy, transparent, fair, just and engaged, in the most timely context, JSC must regularly review its data. A thorough update should be performed at least annually, but brief perception studies or social media analytics must be done monthly (or in some cases, quarterly). Once monitoring mechanisms have successfully generated useful insights, JSC must make certain that such knowledge is immediately put to action.

In the beginning, this involves making growth projections or identifying areas of weakness. To test the new assumptions, communicators must then amend current products or activities and set new indicators or shorter periods between acquiring new measurements. *(See Chapter 6; Monitor and Evaluation; Evaluation Protocol for more information on refining tactics)*

The process may be repeated several times, and the requirements to start or continue these amendments should be detailed in governing documents such as the Internal Communications SOP and Communications Monitoring SOP (*as discussed in Recommendation 5*).

#### 12. Run Communication Simulations

Simulations are widely used to evaluate and/or practice responses to hypothetical scenarios. This is especially useful in the field of communications, where professionals design simulations based on likely obstacles, and have people face their fears or learn to rapidly adapt.

It is not possible to mimic the mental stress and chaos that heralds an actual crisis, however, communications simulations help formulate effective talking points, identify operational weaknesses, deduce the most appropriate hosts for a press conference etcetera.

As they say, practice makes perfect.

While claims made based on simulations are considered to be reliable, how reliable they really are is best determined with real-world implementation trials. Focus group audiences may prove a good test crowd, as would fellow colleagues, or even civil society groups.

To recap, once a crisis team has been finalised and a spokesperson is declared, then it would be wise to have monthly ‘simulation sessions’ where the concerned parties engage in role-play, use simulation software (if available), and theorise about potential outcomes.

#### 13. Increase Public Appearances

Intentions to “restore citizens’ trust in government” stand at the core of any effort to modernise the public sector. The performance of the public administration impacts trust in government, but existing levels of trust in government may also have an impact on perceptions of government performance.

Therefore, by making more public appearances, JSC will be able to demonstrate a new, more approachable demeanour, assuring stakeholders, particularly those located in non-urban areas, that the agency is working towards removing (perceived) barriers that prevent participation.

Participation can take the form of

- (a) Conferences and Panel Discussions
- (b) Information Stands at Student Recruitment Events or Trade Fairs
- (c) Training delivered virtually or in-person (for example, court reporting for journalists)
- (d) Awareness Events (held by CSOs)
- (e) CSR Events (team building or social responsibility activities)

As the institution is aiming to attract young people towards a career in the judiciary, especially as magistrates in their islands, it would be worthwhile for JSC to take part in education and job fairs, either solo or with academic partners, and provide information about pathways to judgeship, including necessary criteria and employment benefits.

Overall, JSC should aim to either host or participate in a minimum of 4 events per year. This may include 2 events specific to the agency (such as judicial oath-taking) but can only be justified as such if it includes a press conference or public query session. On that note, as JSC's CSR events are considered to be government-initiated, an annual strategy should not lean heavily on these events as a means of elevating publicity.

Having JSC experts or specialised staff disseminate information on panels gives the agency a more engaged appearance overall, while also serving the principles of trustworthiness, transparency, and relevance. Placing more than one face to the institution allows JSC to appear less political as well.

## Conclusion

This Communications Strategy Framework (CSF) is not intended to be an end-all guide to all aspects of collateral management, internal processes, public relations initiatives, nor does it aim to strictly regiment the way information is disseminated.

In the first chapter, the CSF explores the role of communications throughout Maldives' Judicial Service Commission, delving further into how these activities and products correlate with the agency's mandate and the goal of elevating institutional integrity. The Rapid Capacity Assessment conducted in the first segment of the UNDP-funded CSF project serves as a primary source for many of the insights referred to and conclusions drawn in this document.

Furthermore, a total of three additional consultations were held to bolster the recommendations detailed in this document including; one meeting held with Commission members, a lengthy discussion with the Head of Bureau and finally, an informal (anonymous) sitdown with six influencers active in varying roles across the local media spectrum.

Based on these insights, four basic principles (organised into complementary couplets) were determined that shall guide all manner of operations, as well as influence communication activities taking place within JSC and from JSC to a number of target audiences.

Each principle was accompanied by a list of communications devices that are intended to guide the integration of said values into communications protocol, materials and activities. Together, the devices map out a framework for testing current measures or curating and executing new, more sustainable initiatives - then are explored in-depth in Chapters 6 - 7.

As reiterated in the last 4 Chapters (6,7,8,9 - this being the 10th) detailed techniques and tools were not recommended due to the likelihood that such data may be nullified within a short period of time. Instead, the focus was placed on more enduring methods and an overarching strategy that can be used to establish a way forward; taking advantage of emerging technology and determining which facets of the latest software or platforms best fit JSC's objectives.

The Delivery Chapter, following stipulations that JSC must produce a Branding and Editorial Guideline, examines a brief overview of the content that must be incorporated into such a document. This is

followed by Crisis Communications which looks at what SOPs and checklists should entail when enacting risk or emergent transmissions.

Finally, as its title suggests, the Recommendations Chapter lists thirteen immediately required amendments to be present for approval to the Commission and put to action along with this CSF, with the purpose of making an early, substantial and direct impact on JSC communications.

More information on the process of producing this document to follow in the next Chapter.

## Acknowledgements

*"I would like to thank JSC members for their cooperation in determining an overarching mission and various specific communications objectives. In particular, I'd like to express my appreciation to the Secretary-General and Head of Bureau for compiling a vast amount of information within a very short time frame.*

*On that note, the timing for this component of the UNDP funded JSC Communications Framework project coincided with 2021's year-end activity, impacting the availability of various stakeholders and presenting difficulties in coordinating meetings and consultations. In the end, I was able to conduct the necessary research thanks to a brief extension granted by the UNDP, and because JSC's SG and HOB generously chose to stay in contact across their respective leave periods.*

*Producing a document that is comprehensive, but also less technical, avoiding jargon - taking into account the fact that there are no managers with a background in mass communication (journalism, advertising or public relations) - proved far more challenging than anticipated. However, after wading through a sea of documents, I settled on a style widely used to regulate communications across UN bodies; relying on layperson terms while also packing in a great deal of knowledge and expertise. Having said this, I'd like to direct attention to my designer on contract - Jauna Nafiz, whose expert research and illustration skills truly elevated this document, transforming complex concepts into an easy to follow, logical format.*

*Access to justice is a fundamental human right, granted to all citizens under the Constitution of the Maldives. Given that the mission of JSC is to reform judiciary functions across the archipelago, I believe it is crucial that this agency empower the public to participate, report injustices and flaws in the system and thereby strengthen the provision of justice.*

*With a nod to the fact that communications' is one of the fastest evolving, most rapidly-paced global industries, I remain hopeful that the vision and principles laid out in this document will benefit JSC and the Bureau for years to come."*

Rae Munavvar



Communications Consultant

### Notable References:

UK Government Communications Plan - Best Practises

Strategic Communication Framework UNECE

WHO Strategic Communications Plan

US EPA Risk Communications

Institute for Government UK

The Practice of Government Public Relations (2021) By Lee, Neeley and Stewart

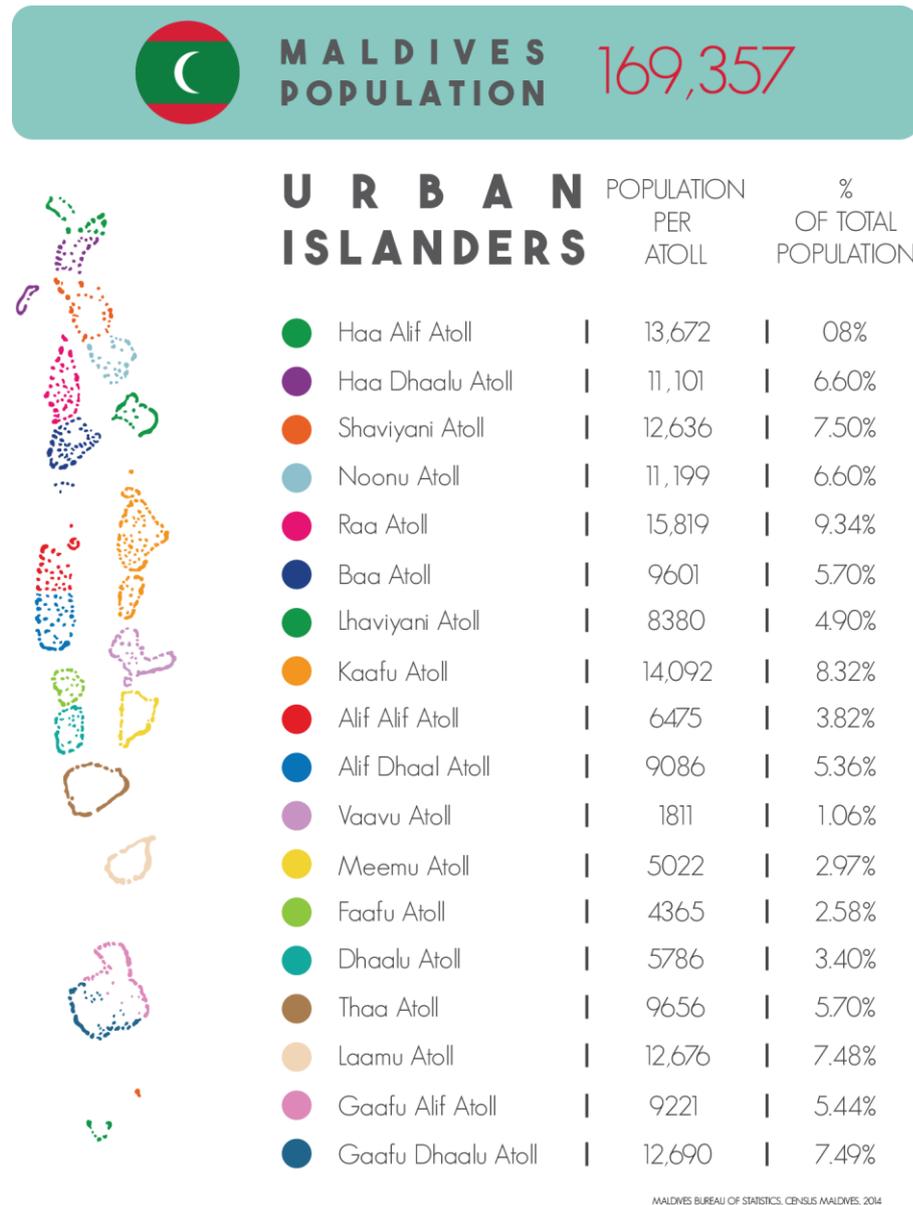
The Politics of Crisis Management: Public Leadership under Pressure (2017) by Boin, Hart, Stern and Sundelius

Forbes Communications Council

99 Designs (Blog)

## Appendix

### 1. Population Demographics





**MALDIVES  
POPULATION**

169,357

## CITY DWELLERS

	POPULATION PER CITY	% OF TOTAL POPULATION
● Male'	153,904	90.90%
● Kulhudhuffushi	8440	4.98%
● Fuvahmulah	8510	5.02%
● Addu	21,275	12.56%

## MONIKER STATISTICS

	POPULATION PER MONIKER	% OF TOTAL POPULATION
Generation X (40 - 59)	31,936	18.86%
Generation Y (25 - 44)	57,188	33.77%
Generation Z (10 - 24)	46,785	27.63%

MALDIVES BUREAU OF STATISTICS, CENSUS MALDIVES, 2014

## 2. Consultation Meeting

Session 1: Commission Members, Consultant  
1:15 pm on 22 December 2021

Attended by JSC's Head of Bureau Nihaya Ahmed, JSC's Secretary-General Izmeera Shiham, JSC's President MP Hissan Hussain, JSC's Vice President Masthoo Hussain (appointed by President's Office), JSC Member/ Supreme Court Justice Aisha Shujune Muhammed, JSC Member Aminath Ummu-Kulsum (appointed by People's Majlis)

And Rae Munavvar (Consultant for JSC's CSF Project, funded by UNDP)

Total meeting duration → One hour and 45 minutes

The key discussion points that were raised are as follows:

*One: Introduction - Developing Strategy's Mission Statement*

1. What are the core values the strategy needs to embody?
2. Which portions of the current JSC regulations, and related Acts:
  - (a) necessitate the development of a communications strategy?
  - (b) would affect or need to be considered when developing such policies?

*Two: PEST Analysis*

3. What would you say are the key drivers, trends and forces in the external environment that affect JSC? (Political, Social, Economical, Technological)

*Three: SWOT Analysis*

4. What are the implications for the organisation and key stakeholders and what are the opportunities, threats and risks?
5. To what extent does the organisation meet its stakeholders' expectations?
6. Does the organisation have an inspiring purpose?
7. What is the quality of the relationships between the organisation and its stakeholders?
8. To what extent is communication executed efficiently, effectively, and in line with the professional standards?
9. What would happen if a natural disaster strikes?  
Eg. Is your website secure, or do you run the risk of being hacked?

*Four: Internal Capacity Audit*

(Regarding Staffing, Collateral, PR Tools, PR Events)

10. How many staff does JSC have per department?
11. What is the academic/experience background of each Bureau staff?
12. What are the public relations tools now in place, outside of what is mentioned below?  
Website, Social Media [IG/FB/Twitter], Viber Group, Press Releases  
For eg. Spokesperson Declaration, Emergency Team, Brochures, Communication Flowcharts, SOPs.
13. Looking at the annual plan for 2021, how many events were achieved? How many other goals were met?
14. Please provide comparative statistics from 2018 to 2021 in google sheets.

*Five: Communication Goals and Objectives*

15. What are JSC's goals with regards to internal communications?  
Eg. To be professional, accurate, competent, kind...  
Institution prioritises transparency, free of political bias...  
Employees are approachable, maintain confidentiality etc...

16. What are the goals for external communications (between JSC and public stakeholders - what sort of objectives would be involved?)

Eg:

1. Informing—increasing awareness about the importance of statistics in everyday life; promoting official statistics and the work of JSC.
2. Understanding—exchanging meanings, learning, reducing misunderstandings and misinterpretation of statistical data.
3. Changing attitudes—shifting perceptions.
4. Altering behaviour—persuading the audience to act differently and heeding a call to action.

*Six: Branding*

17. What sort of limitations does JSC have with branding?
18. Do you have a branding guideline and a logo-use guideline?
19. If set, could JSC adhere to such guidelines, internally as well as with external communications?
20. Currently, what is the process for changing logo/logo colour/fonts/motifs?

21. Are there legal constraints for this sort of government agency when using multimedia? If so, please provide appropriate documentation.

*Seven: Audience Segmentation*

22. What audiences are the most important to JSC? Why?

*Eg. From General Public, the most important could be either city dwellers, islanders located elsewhere, young people, older generations, the working class etc.*

23. Which policymakers are most important? Who makes decisions that affect JSC the most?

24. Which influencers are most important? Who is popular in the JSC/Judiciary/Legal field? Perhaps civil society?

25. Who are your strongest scrutinises? *Eg. Opposition, certain Twitter users, NGOs etc.*

26. List out who are your usual partners? *Eg. DJA/UNDP/Name Training affiliates...*

*Eight: Configuring Channels*

27. What channels do you feel are most important for your communications and why? *Eg. Broadcast, social media, print news, web portals...*

*Nine: Key Messages*

*(Organisational, Public, Community)*

28. What sort of messages does JSC want the public, communities to pick up on when they view

(a) visit JSC's offices

(b) access JSC's primary OWNED media (website, brochures etc)

(c) view JSC's (for SHARING) content on social media platforms

29. What sort of messages does JSC want to convey to the news media at large?

30. What would the Commission specifically like to convey to each of the audience groups discussed earlier? (*Eg. Urban islanders, City dwellers, politically active Gen Z-ers, middle-class millennials, lawyer community, etc*)

*Ten: Application of Best Practises*

31. Of the following best practices, which rank highest for JSC?

a. One Government, One Voice

b. Citizen-Centric Communications

c. Agile Communications Teams

d. Digital and Transparent by Default

e. Focus on Dialogue and Engagement.

f. Content Driven by Storylines.

g. Cycle of Delivery

h. Results-Based Management

*Eleven: Crisis Management*

*(Team, Pre Crisis Preparation, Crisis Action, Post Crisis Actions)*

32. Who can be in the Crisis Management Team?

33. Are there any sort of laws that apply to PR crisis management, in terms of authority to release information, process to determine such etc?

### 3. Unofficial Translation of JSC Regulations

Included below are solely the sections that were identified as relating to Communications.

#### Part A: Under Internal Communications

##### **Dissemination of Information to the Media**

6. (a) Information pertaining to work conducted by the Commission should be provided to the media, to the extent determined by the Commission, by the Secretary General or (a) senior staff member(s) tasked with that work as chosen by the Secretary General.

(b) Information regularly disseminated by the Commission such as statistics should be provided to the media by the relevant Section in accordance with the instructions of the Secretary General.

(c) Information pertaining to the Commission's policies and decisions should be provided to the media by the President of the Commission, or in their absence, the Vice President or Acting President.

(d) If a specific member is elected by the Commission to provide information pertaining to a specific work of the Commission, such information should be disseminated by that member to the extent determined by the Commission. However, should circumstances necessitate more parties to provide information (to the media) simultaneously, such arrangements may be facilitated per discussions with the President or Vice President.

### **Objectives of Meetings**

7. The objective of this chapter pertains to holding and conducting meetings of the Commission to achieve the following:

(a) Elect the President and Vice President of the Commission.

(b) Finalise all work and decisions as necessary under the Constitution and law in order to provide counsel to the President of the Maldives regarding the appointment of the Chief Justice and Justices of the Supreme Court.

(c) Appoint Judges of the Maldivian judiciary sans the Chief Justice and Justices of the Supreme Court, provide promotions, conduct the necessary studies for reform, and finalise pending decisions.

(d) Compile and approve all regulations, policies, standards and other relevant determinations necessary to conduct the work of the Judicial Service Commission, as well as finalise pending decisions of the Commission pertaining to the Judicial branch.

(e) Form committees to carry out various works of the Commission, hold meetings of the committees, finalise decisions pertaining to the works of the committees, and decisions pertaining to the implementation and execution of committee decisions and proposals.

(f) Approve studies to look into issues pertaining to the work of the Commission, as well as finalise decisions pertaining to various studies and reports.

(g) Determine the standards and policies required to efficiently carry out all administrative works related to the Commission's governing.

### **Meetings of the Commission**

8. The meetings of Commission are divided into the following four categories:

(a) Official meeting

(d) Emergency meeting

### **Agenda and Other Documents**

(f) The Secretary General of the Commission must forward to the members the agenda of meetings, in the format of the sample agenda attached in Annex 1 of this Regulation, electronically or via other means, at least 12 hours before the meeting takes place.

### **Issuing of Notice**

18. Members should be notified of meetings a sufficient period of time in advance except in emergency circumstances. Following the issue of notice, members are assumed to be in attendance unless they inform the Commission otherwise.

### **Conduct of Members at Meetings**

(b) All decisions made during the meetings of the Commission must be announced by the Chair upon their finalisation, and subsequently recorded accordingly in the minutes of the meetings.

### **Minutes of the Meetings and Recordkeeping**

(b) The Secretary General is responsible for safe-keeping the records of the Commission's meeting minutes.

### **Executing the decisions of the Commission**

22. (a) Members and staff of the Commission are obligated to respect and adhere to the decisions of the Commission. It is the full mandate of the Secretary General to implement the decisions of the Commission, as well as inform the relevant Sections and staff. Furthermore, the Secretary General should identify the decisions that involve a workflow, appoint (a) staff member(s) to conduct that work, and inform the members of the Commission accordingly.

(b) The decisions finalised during official meetings of the Commission should be informed to the relevant Sections and their senior staff within a maximum period of 3 days. Any decision of the Commission that should be effective immediately should be informed to the relevant division of the Commission at once.

(c) Upon receiving notification of (a) decision(s) finalised by the Commission, it is the mandate of the relevant Section's head to execute all necessary work to implement the decision(s) pertaining to their Section.

(d) In the event a decision of the Commission cannot be implemented or face obstructions to its implementation, the staff in-charge of the work should inform the Secretary General without delay, who in turn should inform the President of the Commission immediately. The President should bring the issue to the attention of the other members.

#### **Maintaining Confidentiality**

24. (a) Participants should not disclose any details of (a) meeting(s) of the Commission except under policies as determined by the Commission.

(b) Any information members are privy to via their positions should not be misused to obtain illicit personal benefits or secure benefits for a third party.

(c) Any information members are privy to via their positions should not be disclosed to a third party, except to fulfil their responsibilities and mandate.

#### **Mandate of the Vice President of the Commission**

26. (a) In the event where the President of the Commission is incapable of or excused from fulfilling their mandate, or the position becomes vacant, the role will be temporarily filled by the Vice President.

#### **Secretary General of the Commission**

27. The Commission should appoint a Secretary General to run the administrative works of the Commission. The position will be appointed for 5 years, although the term may be extended by 5-year periods should the work of the incumbent Secretary General be deemed acceptable by the Commission.

#### **Mandate of the Secretary General**

2. Compile the strategic plan of the Commission with their input, and thereupon compile, execute and oversee the long-, medium-, and short-term projects for the development and progress of the Commission.

7. Prepare all the documents and make arrangements required for the meetings of the Commission.

8. Prepare agendas for the meetings based on the counsel of the President of the Commission.

9. Write and maintain the minutes of the Commission's meetings.

10. Prepare the studies and reports needed for the meetings of the Commission.

12. Implement the decisions finalised during meetings of the Commission as needed, and provide counsel and direction to the administrative staff accordingly regarding such decisions.

16. Compile the administrative framework of the Commission (with details included regarding the number and qualifications of staff needed for recruitment), recruit employees, compile the employment contracts and statements, assign work to employees with clear details of their responsibilities, maintain records and documents of employees, assess and evaluate the work done by employees, and propose to the Commission to terminate unsuitable employees.

17. Compile and propose to the Commission regulations and policies pertaining to employees, propose amendments to such regulations to the Commission, as well as implement and inform employees of decisions of the Commission pertaining to them.
18. Make the best possible arrangements when and where possible to provide the necessary working environments, space, and resources needed for members and staff.
19. Establish and maintain a cooperative environment for everyone working in various technical levels at the Commission, as well as promote harmony, ties and diplomacy among the employees.
20. Oversee the work of employees, support and incentivise diligent staff, and take disciplinary action towards irresponsible employees.
21. Plan and conduct programmes to increase the knowledge, skills and capabilities, and thereby standards, of the employees. Plan and conduct programmes to help employees who need additional assistance in their work.
22. Establish and promote respect, time management, and diligent completion of work assigned on a daily basis among employees, and ensure integrity in the work done.
23. Carry out studies to discover and introduce innovative new methods, as well as new technology to enable faster, easier and more cost effective work.
24. Develop ties with foreign parties as per Commission policy, in order to obtain further knowledge, information and experience for members and staff.
25. Cooperate with the planning and conducting of various activities represented by the Commission, as well as actively participate and urge other staff to take part.

#### **Mandate of the Members**

29. (c) Maintain confidentiality of information deemed confidential by the Commission.

#### **Attendance Record**

31. Members of the Commission should sign the daily attendance record upon attending the meetings.

#### **Leave of Absence**

32. (a) In the event a member is unable to attend a meeting of the Commission or a committee meeting due to (an) extenuating circumstance(s), they must inform the Secretary General at the earliest.

#### **Leave**

33. (a) Members should submit requests for leave to the Secretary General of the Commission. The Secretary General should grant leave to members upon request.

#### **Code of Conduct for the Members**

- (b) In the event any member is in contradiction with (a) of this subject, the President of the Commission should submit a request for the relevant committee of the People's Majlis as well as relevant authorities to look into the issue.

#### **Resignation**

- (b) A member who has announced that he may resign wishes to resign, they should propose their resignation in writing to the President of the Maldives. The member will be relieved of their position once the letter reaches the President.

#### **Lodging of Complaints**

38. Complaints against Judges should be filed through the form included in Annex 3 of this Regulation, with details of the accusations levied as well as supporting evidence.

39. (a) If a member brings an issue or issues regarding the discipline of Judges to the attention of the Secretary General, the Secretary General should forward the issue or issues to the relevant Section for investigation.

(c) The complaints received by the Secretary General in (a) and (b) of this subject should be lodged with the relevant Section through the form included in Annex 3 of this Regulation.

#### **Keeping record of complaints**

43. There should be a registry for the complaints lodged with the Commission, which may be maintained via a computer database or in books. Accordingly, backups and hardcopies of the information saved on computer databases should be under the care of the Commission's Secretariat.

1. Registry of complaints

2. Registry of cases under investigation

#### **Registry of cases undertaken by Committees**

45. (b) A statistical report of the various complaints lodged with the Commission must be prepared and saved before the 5th of every month.

#### **General policies for the Staff**

46. (a) In their line of work, all employees of the Commission should adhere to the Islamic Shari'ah, the Constitution, and laws and regulations of the Maldives, as well as policies stated in this Regulation.

(c) Employees should accomplish their assigned work to the best of their ability with care and diligence.

(d) Employees should comply with orders passed down by Sections and the heads of Sections that do not contradict any laws and regulations.

(e) The head of a Section may assign work to a staff of another Section only with the permission of the head of said staff's Section.

(h) Employees should not issue or disclose any documents or recordings belonging to the Commission to a third party without authorisation from the Secretary General, with the exception of the circumstances detailed in Subject 6 (a), (b) and (d) of this Regulation.

(j) Employees should obtain permission from a senior staff of the Commission in order to borrow or take any item belonging to the Commission outside of the premises. A senior staff member may grant permission after the employee provides in writing details of the item, purpose of borrowing the item, period of borrowing the item, and the borrower's signature. Any item belonging to the Commission may be allowed off the premises only upon obtaining the borrower's signature. It is the responsibility of the staff in whose care the item is kept, to ensure that the item is returned within the stated period of borrowing. Individuals who borrow items from the Commission should return them undamaged. They will be held responsible for any damages to the item caused due to neglect.

(k) Employees should not utilise other members of staff or resources of the Commission as a means of earning personal income or income for another employee. Employees should not make use of office resources in order to save up on personal expenses as well. Nor should any employee comply with any such order given by another employee.

(l) Employees should not pay out of their own pockets to save up on any official expenses pertaining to the Commission or the state. Nor should any employee comply with any such order given by another employee.

(n) In the event an employee will be out of the island or country on a public holiday for which Commission work has been scheduled, should inform the head of their Section of a senior staff of the Commission.

(o) Employees should adhere to safety measures set by the Commission as precautions against any possible harm or danger in the line of their work. In the event an employee sustains an injury that requires medical attention, medical care should be provided as a priority. The employee's supervisor should also inform the Secretary General of the incident without delay.

(p) Employees of the Commission should adhere to the following dress codes during official working hours:

1. The dress code for male employees is trousers, and long- or short-sleeved shirts with ties. Or trousers and long-sleeved bush shirts. Or a safari and two-piece suit. Employees should also wear office boots or footwear appropriate for an official work environment.

2. The dress code for female employees is faaskuri hedhun or Pakistani hedhun (salwar and shirt, or kurta and dupatta), or trousers with a top or any decent dress, as well as footwear appropriate for an official work environment.

3. The dress code for male Support staff are trousers with a shirt or bush shirt, and appropriate footwear. The dress code for female Support staff are socially acceptable clothes that do not hinder work, and appropriate footwear.

(q) Members of the Commission attending important ceremonies should be dressed in attire suitable for the given function.

(u) Attention to good hygiene is mandatory under all circumstances.

### **Abuse of Employees**

47. (a) No employee should engage in or condone any act that constitutes workplace abuse towards another employee. Abuse of employees in the workplace constitutes an act perpetrated by an employee or employees against another employee or employees, that negatively impacts the latter in any manner.

(b) Listed below are some of the acts that may be deemed as abuse if perpetrated and/or repeated by an employee or employees against another employee or employees:

1. Teasing, taunting, heckling and/or harassing an employee or employees with the objective of angering, distressing, demeaning and/or degrading them. In the event such an act negatively impacts an employee, the recipient should inform the perpetrating employee as such.

2. Perpetrating an act that is stated as abuse by law.

3. Perpetrating harm against the life or body of an employee, or verbally threatening to do so, or threatening via gesture to do so.

4. Sexual abuse/violence against employees.

5. Raising one's voice at an employee, in the presence of others, in order to disrepute or disgrace them.

6. Using obscene language while conversing with or raising one's voice at an employee.

7. Threatening employees with termination or harsh punishment without acceptable reasons.

8. Any act of obstruction against an employee's work. (This includes wilfully withholding information an employee requires for their assigned work or providing misinformation.)

9. Making sexual allusions verbally or via gestures to an employee in the workplace, as well as physically (and non-consensually) touching, pinching, caressing etc. them.

10. Coercing or attempting to coerce another employee or employees into any acts that entail sexual favours in the workplace.

11. Speaking of sexual topics using indecent language, attempts to entice an employee into sexual acts using such language, propositioning an employee to sexual acts either verbally or in writing, proposing to meet outside of the workplace for sexual purposes, using indecent language in conversation, making indecent jokes, and perpetrating indecent acts.

12. Indecent exposure via any medium, sharing pornography, and any action to suggest sexual attraction towards an employee or employees.

13. Any belittling, taunting, heckling, harassing, teasing, degrading, demeaning, ostracising, and name-calling etc. against an employee based on their gender.

14. Providing an administrative service that is either owed or not owed to an employee, withholding an employee's owed right or providing a right not owed to them, or threatening and intimidating an employee, in exchange for sexual favours.

(c) Women and men should be allowed to work with dignity and self-respect.

(d) In the event an employee perpetrates an act of abuse against another employee, disciplinary action should be taken against the perpetrator and any accomplices, as per this Regulation. If such a case is lodged with the Commission, the Commission should look into the case without delay and take necessary action.

(e) If an employee perpetrates any of the acts listed in this Subject against another employee, any and all employees have the right to file the case with the Secretary General or the Commission.

(f) If a case regarding any incidence of the abuse as stated in this Section, is filed more than 3 months after the date of the offence, it will not be accepted as a case filed over the abuse in question.

#### **Establishing and dissolving posts**

49. (a) The Commission will create and dissolve administrative positions as needed, in order to carry out the Commission's mandates.

(b) In the event that there is a need to create a new post, the Secretary General should propose the reason, and details of the responsibilities of the new post to the Commission.

(c) In the event a post needs to be dissolved following a shuffle to the Commission's framework of posts, the employee filling in that post should be reassigned to another of a rank not below their current post. In the absence of such a post, the Commission should issue them a notice and redundancy package as per the Employment Act.

#### **Recruitment of Employees**

50. (a) Recruitment for members of the Commission should first be announced internally among the staff of the Commission. In the event an employee is found to meet the criteria, the Commission should grant the appointment to that employee. However, in the event that no such employee is to be found within the Commission, the recruitment announcement is to be made public, including the following details:

1. Title of the post
2. Location of employment
3. Rank and criteria of the post
4. Main mandate/responsibilities of the post
5. Salary and additional allowances
6. Documents to be submitted
7. Deadline for employment applications

(b) The Commission should consider the following upon receiving application(s) for employment.

2. Interviewing the applicants that meet the criteria. In the event that more than 10 applicants meet the criteria, the human resource panel may shortlist a certain number of participants to be interviewed.

#### **Appointment of Employees and Statement of Employment**

52. (d) Following employment at the Commission, the employee should be assigned work after both parties have signed the employment contract.

(g) The following should be completed after the appointment of an employee:

1. Obtaining the employee's signature on the Statement of Employment within 1 month of their appointment.
2. Provide training for employees during probation if previously agreed upon.
3. If the employee's level of work and service require improvement during the period of their probation, it should be recorded and the employee informed of such.

(h) Each employee should receive a Statement of Employment detailing the mandate and obligations of their work.

#### **Disciplinary Action**

54. (a) Swift disciplinary action should be taken if the following tendencies or similar are noted of an employee or employees:

1. Irresponsible towards work.
2. Irresponsible towards attendance.
3. Incapability regarding assigned work.
4. Violating the standards and policies pertaining to work, as well as lack of adherence to staff policies.
5. Inciting dissonance amongst employees.
6. Lack of respect towards decisions of the Commission.
7. Lack of adherence to the regulations of the Commission.

(b) In the event disciplinary action is required over an act of an employee, the disciplinary action should be proportionate to the extent of the offence, as follows:

1. Oral notice.
2. Written notice.
3. Written warning.
4. Demotion.
5. Suspension from work for a period not more than 14 days.

(c) In the event an employee is involved in the embezzlement of state funds or bribery, the issue should be filed at the relevant authorities.

(d) In the event an employee is convicted of a crime by a judicial court, or found to be involved in embezzlement, or there is risk of harm to the Commission if their employment continues, the Commission may skip the steps listed above and terminate the employee. Such termination should come into effect following approval by the Commission.

(e) In the event a notice needs to be given or disciplinary action taken against an employee over irresponsibility, the issue should be filed with the Human Resource Committee and the action taken by the Secretary General via the Human Resource Department. In such cases, the employee's supervisor or head of their Section should forward the required information to the Human Resource Department. Disciplinary action taken towards an employee should be recorded in their personal file.

(f) In the event a notice needs to be given to a head of a Section or Division over irresponsibility, it should be done by the Secretary General.

(h) In the event an employee refuses to sign a written warning, the issuing of the warning should be announced to the employee in the presence of two witnesses, with the latter signing the document as witnesses to the warning.

(i) If an employee does not improve following disciplinary actions taken in accordance with this Regulation, the Secretary General should file a request for their termination with the Commission, including details of the disciplinary actions already taken.

(j) Employees have the right to lodge complaints with the Commission if they believe any disciplinary actions taken against them over irresponsibility were unjust. If such a complaint is lodged in writing, it will be investigated by a temporary 3-member committee formed by the Commission.

#### **Termination**

55. (a) An employee of the Commission may be terminated via a notice/chit, under one of the following circumstances as per regulations:

1. If an employee is unable to accomplish their assigned work due to a physical or mental disability.
2. If an employee deliberately goes against procedure in the line of work, or if the employee is found to be in contradiction with the laws and regulations of the Commission.
3. If an employee runs for an election stated in the Constitution or law.

4. If an employee requests to resign.

(b) If the actions of an employee reach the extent of termination, their supervisor should bring the issue in full detail to the attention of the Secretary General, who in turn should file the case with the Commission based on the counsel of the Human Resource Committee.

(c) Following the issuance of the termination notice, the employee should be granted their owed salary and other allowances within the period stated in the notice. However, per Subject 23 of the Employment Act, employees can be terminated without notice as well.

(e) If there is risk of harm to the Commission from an employee to be terminated, their termination may be effective immediately upon notice, after they are granted the full salary and allowances owed for the duration of the notice period.

(f) In the event an employee is given notice or terminated, they must be informed in writing including the reason for the notice or termination. The Commission has the authority to instruct the employee to attend work or stay home for the duration of the notice.

### **Resignation**

56. (a) Employees that wish to resign should do so in writing.

(b) In the event an employee who received education and training under a bond of the Commission requests to resign before the period of the bond expires, the employee may repay the balance amount of their education and training expenditures, as well as any allowances they received, in instalments across the remainder of their bond period. If the employee fails to repay the balance amount, the issue should be filed at court.

(d) If an employee wishes to resign from the Commission for another opportunity, the employee should inform the head of their Section upon applying for the new post. In the event that the employee has a pending bondage to the Commission, the employee should obtain in writing how the Commission intends to release them. If the employee does not have a pending bondage to the Commission and receives the new post, the Commission should release them.

(e) Following the submission of resignation, the employee should attend work regularly until they receive notice of termination in writing.

### **Temporary Employment**

57. (a) If there is a need for temporary employees for important work, the Secretary General should counsel the Commission regarding recruitment.

(b) Temporary staff may be employed for a period no longer than 3 months. All temporary employees should sign their contract of employment.

(c) Temporary employees should be appointed for the kind of work stated in (a) under a contract of employment as stated in (b). Such contracts should detail the scope of the work, the duration of work, the minimum number of daily hours, wages, and allowances if any.

### **Salary and Overtime**

58. (a) Salaries and allowances of employees of the Commission should be determined by the Commission in discussion with the Ministry of Finance and Treasury, in accordance with the Judicial Service Commission Act. Salaries and allowances of employees should also be detailed in their employment chit (job confirmation letter).

(b) Salaries and allowances of employees should be according to the amounts detailed in their employment chit, or job transfer chit in the case of a staff transferred from another post. In the event an employee's salary is determined in a letter, chit, or other form of writing after their employment or transfer, or an employee is informed of a change in their salary, their salaries and allowances should be according to the amounts stated in these documents.

(d) Salaries should be deposited within the last two days of each Gregorian month. In the event the day coincides with a public holiday, salaries should be deposited within the last two working days of the month. Salaries will be counted from the dates stated in the employment chit or transfer chit issued by the Commission.

(e) Salaries for employees who resign or are terminated should count up to the dates on which they receive their termination notice. In the event an employee is arrested, remuneration for the duration between their arrest, release and termination should be as follows:

1. If an employee is convicted, remuneration should not be paid for the duration of their remand.
2. If an employee is acquitted, remuneration should be paid for the duration of their remand.
3. If an appellate court such as the High Court or Supreme Court of the Maldives overturns an employee's previous conviction in a lower court, remuneration should be paid for the duration of their remand.

(g) An employee should be ordered to work overtime only in extenuating circumstances where the employee's service is absolutely necessary. Such work should be approved as overtime work under a policy set by the Secretary General. Overtime work of employees should be recorded.

#### **Absence without notice**

63. (a) Employees may take a leave of absence if the employee, or someone under the employee's care and responsibility, becomes ill and thus the employee is unable to attend work.

(b) Leave of absence should be granted in accordance with Subject 42 of the Employment Act and this Regulation. Requesting and granting of leave of absence should be as follows:

1. If an employee unable to attend work during official hours informs their supervisor and the Human Resource Section latest by 1 (one) hour after their working hours commence, the employee should be granted a leave of absence. If the employee fails to inform within 1 (one) hour as stated previously, it will be recorded as unauthorised absence.

2. If an employee is tasked with completing an important assignment on the day of their leave of absence, they should inform the head of their Section.

3. If the employee on leave is tasked with an important assignment, they should inform their supervisor with enough time to delegate the work to someone else, providing full cooperation and the necessary information so that the office may make arrangements to carry out the assignment in their absence.

4. In the event of sudden and unexpected situations that cannot be informed in time, such as a circumstance that results in a medical and physical disability, the employee should inform the office and make arrangements for leave as soon as they are able. (Contracting the common cold, for example, does not fall under such situations.) If the employee fails to do so, the Commission has the prerogative to deem it as negligence towards work responsibilities.

(d) As per (a) of this subject, the employee should inform accordingly within the two days of their leave.

(k) If an employee is absent without notice for 7 days, their Section or head of Section should propose their stance regarding the employee's post to the Secretary General, who in turn should lodge the issue with the Commission without delay.

(l) If an employee is absent for 1 month due to incarceration, their Section or Division should propose their stance regarding the employee's post to the Secretary General, who in turn should lodge the issue with the Commission without delay.

(m) If an employee is on leave of absence for a period of 3 days or longer, they should submit a medical certificate on the day of returning to work within official hours. If they fail to do so, they will be fined for the days of absence even if their reason for leave is provided.

#### **Annual Leave**

(d) Annual leave for employees will be provided after discussion with their supervisors regarding their assigned work, with the leave subsequently decided by the Secretary General. Annual leave for the Secretary General will be decided by the Commission.

### Part B: Under External Communications

#### **Dissemination of Information to the Media**

6. (e) All press releases under the Commission's name must be approved by the Commission prior.

#### **Objectives of Meetings**

7. The objective of this chapter pertains to holding and conducting meetings of the Commission to achieve the following:

(a) Elect the President and Vice President of the Commission.

(b) Finalise all work and decisions as necessary under the Constitution and law in order to provide counsel to the President of the Maldives regarding the appointment of the Chief Justice and Justices of the Supreme Court.

(c) Appoint Judges of the Maldivian judiciary sans the Chief Justice and Justices of the Supreme Court, provide promotions, conduct the necessary studies for reform, and finalise pending decisions.

(d) Compile and approve all regulations, policies, standards and other relevant determinations necessary to conduct the work of the Judicial Service Commission, as well as finalise pending decisions of the Commission pertaining to the Judicial branch.

(e) Form committees to carry out various works of the Commission, hold meetings of the committees, finalise decisions pertaining to the works of the committees, and decisions pertaining to the implementation and execution of committee decisions and proposals.

(f) Approve studies to look into issues pertaining to the work of the Commission, as well as finalise decisions pertaining to various studies and reports.

(g) Determine the standards and policies required to efficiently carry out all administrative works related to the Commission's governing.

#### **Executing the decisions of the Commission**

22. (f) All decisions of the Commission that need to be made public should be published on the Commission's website, while members of the Commission should be informed of decisions that need to be acted upon. The file with the list of these decisions should be made available to all staff of the Commission.

#### **Maintaining Confidentiality**

24. (d) All documents and information pertaining to the Commission should be publicised or issued to another entity only under a policy set by the Commission.

(e) Any document(s) provided with permission from the Commission for members to fulfil their mandates should not be publicised for personal gain or to secure benefits or harm to a third party.

#### **Mandate of the Secretary General**

2. Compile the strategic plan of the Commission with their input, and thereupon compile, execute and oversee the long-, medium-, and short-term projects for the development and progress of the Commission.

5. Provide full cooperation when the Commission is answerable to the People's Majlis (parliament) regarding the Commission's administrative works.

16. Compile the administrative framework of the Commission (with details included regarding the number and qualifications of staff needed for recruitment), recruit employees, compile the employment contracts and statements, assign work to employees with clear details of their responsibilities, maintain records and documents of employees, assess and evaluate the work done by employees, and propose to the Commission to terminate unsuitable employees.

21. Plan and conduct programmes to increase the knowledge, skills and capabilities, and thereby standards, of the employees. Plan and conduct programmes to help employees who need additional assistance in their work.

23. Carry out studies to discover and introduce innovative new methods, as well as new technology to enable faster, easier and more cost effective work.

24. Develop ties with foreign parties as per Commission policy, in order to obtain further knowledge, information and experience for members and staff.

25. Cooperate with the planning and conducting of various activities represented by the Commission, as well as actively participate and urge other staff to take part.

### **Lodging of Complaints**

39. (b) The media relations unit of the Commission should bring any rumour or news regarding the discipline of Judges circulating within the media to the attention of the Secretary General. The Secretary General should forward such information pertaining to the discipline of Judges as a complaint to the relevant department of the Commission.

### **General policies for the Staff**

46. (b) Employees should be respectful in their interactions with all individuals that visit the Commission for various needs.

(g) No employee of the Commission may participate in a political activity organised by a political party or other entity.

(h) Employees should not issue or disclose any documents or recordings belonging to the Commission to a third party without authorisation from the Secretary General, with the exception of the circumstances detailed in Subject 6 (a), (b) and (d) of this Regulation.

(i) The stipulation in (h) does not apply to any information the Commission decides to make public.

(j) Employees should obtain permission from a senior staff of the Commission in order to borrow or take any item belonging to the Commission outside of the premises. A senior staff member may grant permission after the employee provides in writing details of the item, purpose of borrowing the item, period of borrowing the item, and the borrower's signature. Any item belonging to the Commission may be allowed off the premises only upon obtaining the borrower's signature. It is the responsibility of the staff in whose care the item is kept, to ensure that the item is returned within the stated period of borrowing. Individuals who borrow items from the Commission should return them undamaged. They will be held responsible for any damages to the item caused due to neglect.

### **Disclosure of employees' personal information**

48. (a) Personal information of employees should be disclosed to entities in and outside of the Commission in accordance with the Constitution and laws. Personal information constitutes the following:

1. Information and/or documents pertaining to the age and marital status of an employee.
2. Information pertaining to an employee's educational, health and criminal history, as well as the standard of their work and employment history.
3. Classification of their position, range of remuneration, and the mandate or responsibilities of their work.
4. Address, fingerprint and/or signature.

(b) With the exception of the circumstances stated in this Regulation, an employee's personal information should be disclosed only with their permission.

(d) In the event it is proven to the Commission that an employee has disclosed the personal information of another employee in contradiction to this Regulation, the Commission holds the authority to take action in accordance with this Regulation.

### **Recruitment of Employees**

50. 2. Interviewing the applicants that meet the criteria. In the event that more than 10 applicants meet the criteria, the human resource panel may shortlist a certain number of participants to be interviewed.

### **Appointment of Employees**

51. (a) Employees appointed to permanent posts of the Commission should be Maldivians over the age of 18 and below the age of 65.

(c) Interviews with potential employees should be held by a panel compiled by the Commission.

### **Appointment of Employees and Statement of Employment**

52. (d) Following employment at the Commission, the employee should be assigned work after both parties have signed the employment contract.

### **Disciplinary Action**

54. (d) In the event an employee is convicted of a crime by a judicial court, or found to be involved in embezzlement, or there is risk of harm to the Commission if their employment continues, the Commission may skip the steps listed above and terminate the employee. Such termination should come into effect following approval by the Commission

### **Resignation**

56. (a) Employees that wish to resign should do so in writing.

(b) In the event an employee who received education and training under a bond of the Commission requests to resign before the period of the bond expires, the employee may repay the balance amount of their education and training expenditures, as well as any allowances they received, in instalments across the remainder of their bond period. If the employee fails to repay the balance amount, the issue should be filed at court.

(d) If an employee wishes to resign from the Commission for another opportunity, the employee should inform the head of their Section upon applying for the new post. In the event that the employee has a pending bondage to the Commission, the employee should obtain in writing how the Commission intends to release them. If the employee does not have a pending bondage to the Commission and receives the new post, the Commission should release them.

(e) Following the submission of resignation, the employee should attend work regularly until they receive notice of termination in writing.

### **Temporary Employment**

57. (a) If there is a need for contracting temporary employees to conduct important work, the Secretary General should counsel the Commission regarding recruitment.

(b) Temporary staff may be employed for a period no longer than 3 months. All temporary employees should sign their contract of employment.

(c) Temporary employees should be appointed for the kind of work stated in (a) under a contract of employment as stated in (b). Such contracts should detail the scope of the work, the duration of work, the minimum number of daily hours, wages, and allowances if any.

### **Salary and Overtime**

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#### 4. PESTLE Analysis

P	E	S	T	L	E
Political	Economical	Social	Technological	Legal	Ethical
Unmet electoral pledges to change JSC's composition	Budgetary constraints due to COVID-19	Failure to use advertising that speaks to the main demographic	Failure to use digital media to its maximum capacity	Judges Act No 13/2010, Chapter 3 Section A, Part 11 "Judges' Code of Conduct, Responsibilities and Powers; 11... [On the subject of Media]"	Lack of Policies and SOPs to ensure rapid, transparent communications
Media bias due to misinformation	Recession gives rise to anti-government sentiments	Attitudes towards leisure times	IP protection	JSC Regulations 2011, Chapter 1, Section 6 "Engaging with Media"	Unequal access to all medias
Government instability	No specific budget set aside for communications, difficult to plan	No policy to streamline transparent and timely communications	Database organisation tools	Constitution of Maldives (2008), Chapter 8, Part 1, Section 158 "Composition of the Judicial Service Commission"	Disseminates information to press and social media in the same way
Political unrest	Payroll has no one with PR background, financial burden to recruit or train	Lack of community, civil society and press engagement	Lack of overall digital presence	No mechanism for crisis communications	Overall poor accessibility measures

## 5. SWOT Analysis

S	W	O	T
Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Bureau Staff cross-trained to use Design applications	Judges barred from ex parte communications (Judges Act, 13/2010)	Increase Bureau skills	Judicial misconduct
Willing to learn new skills	Vague regulatory policies (JSC Regulations, 2011)	Expand media network	Data leaks
Fluency in Dhivehi writing	Calls to depoliticize JSC Composition (Constitution 2008)	Announce specific spokesperson (Chapter 1, JSC Regulations, 2011)	Public mistrust
The only avenue for judicial accountability	No policies to streamline communications	Interact more on public platforms	History of corruption
Positive amendments made to reduce waiting/processing time	Mismanagement of data	Provide media and advocacy training	Political opposition
Received RTI training	Poor media relations	Increase public awareness on JSC role	
	Lack of overarching communications strategy or culture	Increase public awareness on JSC activities	
	Little copywriting expertise		
	Unclear media focal point(s)		

## 5. Perception Study

# STATISTICS

M E D I A   M E T R I C S

COVERAGE   17% NEGATIVE

FEEDBACK   50% NEGATIVE

S O C I A L   M E D I A   R E S U L T S

CURRENT  
AUDIENCE**VS**POTENTIAL  
AUDIENCE

1.08K

389K-409K

KEYWORD RESULT - NEGATIVE

...foreign experts have made it clear that one of the biggest impediments to ensuring justice [in the Maldives] is political influence ...from our vantage, instead of working to solve these issues, efforts are being made to avoid addressing this

\*At present, when various issues emerge, JSC has nothing to offer media but publicly available press releases - there is no relationship with the media in any other form

- Media Focus Group -

## ON DAY TO DAY COMMUNICATIONS' CHALLENGES

Feedback was varied, ranging from mismanagement of data (not utilized for media sharing), dealing with ad hoc newspaper comments, a weak media network, lack of SOP's to direct workflow, technical hiccups among staff, difficulty with copywriting and similar concerns. The majority of comments pointed towards the absence of an overarching PR strategy.

Are internal communications reflective of JSC's public stance on social platforms?

YES : 0 3  
NO : 0 1  
SOMETIMES : 0 1

## ON EXISTING MEDIA RELATIONSHIPS



Largely, the answers indicated that there was no solid relationship with media outlets, and it was clear that a media database either did not exist or was not being properly managed, with a heavy reliance on the viber group, where the onus to seek information lies on participating journalists. Even with the outlets mentioned, feedback showed that no specific point of contact had been established and that public hotlines were being used to reach newsrooms. Further, there have been incidences of confusion where the wrong newspaper was contacted.

Rate JSC's present digital presence (social media, website).

THREE PEOPLE RATED 3  
TWO PEOPLE RATED 4

## ON PUBLIC PERCEPTION

Bureau staff demonstrated awareness of negative public perception, inferring that the public associates JSC (aside from the typical keywords like Judiciary, Courts, Appointments), with terms such as 'Political', 'Not Transparent' and 'Ineffective'.

Does the JSC receive adequate feedback on its various activities from press and public? Circle the correct reference if 1 is very ineffective and 5 is absolutely perfect.

NO : 0 3  
YES : 0 2

Two participants mentioned that JSC previously received more media/public attention. Another participant presumed that the lack of attention (overall) may perhaps be attributed to the nature of JSC's functions.

Rate the overall feedback that JSC receives

3 PEOPLE RATED 3  
1 PERSON SELECTED 4  
1 PERSON SELECTED 2

## ON JSC'S PHYSICAL ENGAGEMENT

Participants unanimously declared that JSC is not active on physical platforms, although there was some level of participation at civil society functions in the past. Two participants estimate that, over the past 5 years, only 4-6 such events have taken place.