



Land Network National Engagement Strategy

Communications Protocol

Communication is vitally important to the vision of LandNESS (Land Network National Engagement Strategy). This Communication Protocol sets out how we are committed to ensuring that communications from the LandNNES are consistent, coordinated, effectively managed and responsive to the diverse needs of our network. This protocol is applicable to ALL communications taking place within the LandNNES i.e. invitations to meetings and gatherings, circulation of discussion paper, etc

Development of outreach activities must be planned so that the Steering Committee, Communication officer, LandNNES facilitator and where applicable Working Group co-ordinators have a chance to give input at an early stage. The final form of all substantial communication products or outreach activities should be agreed upon by all the Steering Committee and the LandNNES Facilitator.

In order to achieve these products and actions, it is necessary to develop collective views, as well as collectively discuss, plan and evaluate joint communication activities, and create the key materials that can be used by every partner implementing the LandNNES strategy. The LandNNES Communications Officer needs to lead on this, involving the LandNNES Facilitator in the process.

The Communication Protocol covers the following :

- Section 1 : External Communication
- Section 2: Internal Communication to guide the LandNNES members
- A neutral house style that can be applied to all communications materials produced by the project, i.e. always aiming at presenting the LandNNES partnership correctly

1. External Communication Protocol

The following guidelines should be followed by all LandNNES Partner organizations when communicating LandNNES-related issues to any type of external audience at the international, regional, national or local levels.

All LandNNES Partners are encouraged to communicate LandNNES-related issues under their own name. However, it is important always to mention that LandNNES represents a collaborative effort with several partners. For all activities informed by the LandNNES project, using information gathered by the project and / or conducted in the name of the project, the following rules apply:

- a. The project short name is LandNNES. When used for the first time, the full title should be referred to or footnoted: “Land Network National Engagement Strategy (LandNNES)”. Thereafter the abbreviation “LandNNES” can be used. The abbreviation should always be in CAPITALS.
- b. The website for global audiences is [www...](http://www.landnnes.com), which also provides web space for pages from each working groups and/other project’s activities.
- c. All communication material should clearly indicate that the name of the project, Land Network National Engagement Strategy (LandNNES), refers to the collaborative effort of all LandNNES partner organizations. At the least, the short LandNNES title should always be linked to the website: <https://landnnes.wordpress.com/>
- d. LandNNES is the project title to be mentioned at all times when presenting working groups’ collaborations and project initiatives. When space allows, the following extended standard definition of the LandNNES partnership should be used: **“Land Network National Engagement Strategy (LandNNES) is a joint effort between is a joint effort between...**
- e. The partnership nature of LandNNES should also be clearly explained during oral presentations. All the main NES partners and International Land Coalition should be mentioned or shown in all visual presentations using standard material provided by the LandNNES and ILC.
- f. Name and/logo of all main LandNNES should be clearly visible on all printed, web and audio-visual materials. The standard LandNNES’ logos banner is available from the NES Communications Officer and within the NES intranet.
- g. When using the logos of partners, it is not technically feasible (for instance in the case of releases by email) for partners to be named individually. However, the main LandNNES logo and a link reflect with a link to the LandNNES website (<https://landnnes.wordpress.com/>). And if possible and appropriate - links to their respective websites attached to the site.
- h. All views presented by all partners with regards to NES-related issues and activities should be developed in line with this strategy document, and in particular with this external communications protocol and NES Communication officer, and by agreement with the LandNNES Facilitator, Secretariat, Steering Committee and Working Groups’ conveners.
- i. Where documents (of all forms) are to be shared publicly that carry the LandNNES message/logo or are a product of the LandNNES joint work and decisions and they will carry the LandNNES logo then all should be shared with the Steering Committee to ensure they are aware and have opportunity to review and object if required. This can be 2 days before.
- j. Joint LandNNES press releases are coordinated by the LandNNES Communication Officer. Views presented in the press release should be in line with the strategic document and any subsequent guidelines and information sheets to be circulated by the LandNNES Communications Officer.
- k. The Steering Committee of LandNNES should be informed in advance of the publication of all main project communication materials, so as to be able to provide inputs and feedback. A time frame for feedback by LandNNES Steering Committee will always be provided by the Communications Officer, and this will vary from a minimum of 7 hours to a maximum of a week, in relation to the urgency, size, complexity and importance of each specific item (see internal communications protocol below).
- l. Views presented with regard to LandNNES in press releases by LandNNES partners should always be in line with the principles and external communication protocol set out in this document. It is the responsibility of the partners issuing the press release to inform the other LandNNES partners of such a release.

m. All partners should inform and alert the LandNNES Communication Officer on press and advocacy activities related to LandNNES activities in order to feed (update) the LandNNES website and the email alert tool and to help stimulate joint efforts.

n. Copy of all relevant press coverage should be sent to the LandNNES Communication Officer, who will collate this and share this with the team and with the Secretariat who can provide it to the donors.

o. The working language of the LandNNES project is English and communications resources should normally be developed in English. Target audiences in different parts of the region speak several other South African languages. Depending on the target audience and the product, translation into other relevant languages may be highly desirable if resources permit. LandNNES partners commissioning translations are responsible for their accuracy: translated products will not normally go through the same process of consultation and approval as the version in English on which they are based.

LandNNES contacts and subscriptions to project communication instruments

All communication activities offer the opportunity to expand our networks and invite people to make use of the project's communication mechanisms. Therefore, outreach materials should always invite target audience/readers to join in, and always include the project's contact information. With every set of outreach material, it is therefore crucial to:

- Include updated LandNNES contact information (including name and address of the LandNNES Facilitator and, if

applicable, Communications Officer) and the URL of the LandNNES website: www...

- Provide information on how to subscribe to the LandNNES email alert tool, LandNNES bi-monthly newsletter, contacts database, email working groups etc.

Web-based and e-mail communications should provide users with the option to subscribe to the LandNNES network online. Print materials should highlight the availability of this online registration service.

Promotional efforts at National Events

Several important workshops, seminars, meetings and other events will provide opportunities for LandNNES to reach out to the identified target audiences. The presentation of LandNNES may be important at these venues, and the presence of partners and outreach material should be coordinated by the LandNNES Communication Officer.

A list of the key events is not included here, but should be prepared and regularly updated by the LandNNES Facilitator and reviewed by the Steering Committee. Usually the agenda becomes available around half a month before an event, which is when the LandNNES Steering Committee should discuss the list of potential events and collectively identify priority events and target objectives related to the agenda items.

In addition to those events where LandNNES will be presented directly by the project core team, a wide range of other LandNNES-related events, seminars, workshops, meetings and conventions will be attended by the LandNNES partners. If applicable, they should also be encouraged to include LandNNES in their presentations at these events and to use the opportunity to also disseminate LandNNES materials at these events and by handing them out to their respective networks.

Relations with the Press

It is recommended that LandNNES builds upon the existing network of specialized press (magazines and newsletters) and general press that LandNNES partners currently have contacts with. LandNNES related case studies/opportunities should be identified and distributed to the press through these networks in co-ordination with the main LandNNES partners.

LandNNES Spokespersons: A central focal point for press relations will be the project Communications Officer. In coordination with NEES Facilitator and the Steering Committee will refer press enquiries to representatives of LandNNES working groups and partners. Vice versa, the Communications Officer will also act in close consultation with the communications officers of all LandNNES partners to foster the dissemination of news and achievements of the LandNNES project.

The project website should provide the necessary guidance and background documentation for press releases.

Using LandNNES partners' existing outreach instruments

All LandNNES implementing partners have their own very well established institutional outreach instruments and communication networks. These should be used for disseminating WOW news, case studies and opinion, and may include:

- Newsletters, bulletins, e-news;
- Websites
- Press contacts and communication teams
- Dissemination by regional and country teams, partners' representatives, through personal contacts at meetings, seminars, conventions or site visits.

1. Social Media

➤ Twitter

- The avatars will be our logo.
- The profile name/s will be: LandNNES
- The profile text/bio is 'Here to promote people-centered land governance in South Africa!' NB: It is not an amended motto of LandNNES.
- The full Twitter Protocol is at ANNEX A, including Twitter Guidelines.

➤ Website

- The full Website Protocol is at ANNEX B

2. Internal Communication Protocol

This section defines the LandNNES internal procedure for developing and approving communications materials, providing feedback to the Communications Officer and participating in periodical LandNNES Communications planning.

For all major LandNNES outreach and communication instruments, endorsement is required from all LandNNES partners, mainly the Steering Committee acting on their behalf, before publication and/or distribution. The Communications Officer, under the guidance of the NEES Facilitator, has responsibility to (a) identify important communications materials that require broader LandNNES partners', and (b) solicit, compile and act on input and feedback from LandNNES Steering Committee:

Deadlines for feedback:

- a. Deadlines for feedback by the Steering Committee during the development of LandNNES communications material will be clearly specified by the Communication Officer or LandNNES Facilitator.
- b. All Steering Committee members are committed to meet such deadlines. Failure to do so will imply endorsement and automatically relieve the LandNNES Facilitator and Communications Officer from responsibility for any incorrect statements. This implies that Steering Committee members should always nominate an alternate (fall back) person when not available.
- c. In principle, draft joint press releases circulated by the Communications Officer should receive feedback from partners within two days' maximum. If there is more urgency, this should be explained and clearly communicated by the LandNNES facilitator, who should also follow-up with phone calls if possible, to solicit feedback in less than two days only in special cases.
- d. Other draft outreach materials such as newsletters, fact sheets, brochures, etc. should receive feedback within one weeks (depending on the size/complexity of the material)

Compiled by Sobantu Mzwakali, Communications Officer at LandNNES



ANNEX A

TWITTER PROTOCOL

Content

- The @LandNNES Twitter account is managed by the Communications Officer with the assistance and oversight by LandNNES' Facilitator and the Secretariat, on behalf of the network.
 - Our followers can expect between 2-10 tweets a week covering some or all of the following:
 - Alerts about new content on our other communication channels (our website, Newsletter, publications, meetings/gatherings, publicity campaigns, etc.)
 - Information from partners in the network about what they're doing
 - Occasional live coverage of events
- a) *Following*
- Individuals and organizations or institutions will follow @LandNNES, we will not automatically follow back. This is to discourage the use of direct messaging, avoid resource wasting spam handling and so that Communications Officer can easily identify other key Twitter users that are relevant to network in who we follow. However, being followed by the LandNNES does not imply endorsement of any kind.
 - LandNNES Twitter account will be updated at any time necessary. Twitter may occasionally be unavailable and there should be no responsibility accepted for lack of service due to Twitter downtime.
- b) *Tone of voice*
- Though the accounts will be anonymous (i.e. no named personnel will be running it) it is helpful to define a hypothetical 'voice' so that updates from multiple sources are presented in a consistent tone (including consistent use of pronouns).
 - The networks' 'voice' will be that of an extension of the main website/blog – effectively an 'outpost' where new digital content is signposted throughout.
- c) *Resources*
- The resource impact of running a social media account is low relative to other channels. A study of comparable organisations with existing accounts confirms this.
 - Communications Officer will be responsible for sourcing and publishing updates, co-ordinating replies to incoming messages and monitoring the accounts. This activity is expected to take less than an hour a day. Evaluation will take longer: approximately one day every 3 months.
 - The provision of content will require some low level input from other – namely: LandNNES facilitator, Secretariat and the Working Groups' Conveners. This will be an add-on to business as usual internal activity – for example a quick discussion of potential updates at meetings, or emails between core team and others to identify potential content for tweets.

d) *Where content will come from*

- News releases, resources and statements published on the web - the headlines of news releases, consultations and statements. Depending on subject matter and social media tool these may be paraphrased to fit within 140 characters and lighten/humanise the tone.
- All press releases, consultations and statements will be mentioned on social media unless there is a reason not to. A procedure will be established to identify which of these are not for release.
- Marketing campaign messages - information about events we are running or attending, campaign materials we want to disseminate online.
- Videos on Youtube, once established – alerting our social media followers to new rich media content on our other digital outposts.
- Blog posts – any blogs run by LandNESS from <https://landnnes.wordpress.com/blog/> can be configured to automatically post an update and short URL on social media, announcing the new content.
- Announcement and coverage of events – pre-announcement and promotion of forthcoming LandNNES events and immediate feedback on discussions – if necessary.
- Insights from LandNNES partners – thoughts and reflections of partners, for example immediately after their events or interesting meetings with stakeholders.
- Thought leadership (or “link blogging”) - highlighting relevant research, events, awards etc. elsewhere on the web to position the LandNNES as a thought leader and reliable filter of high quality content.
- Asking and answering questions – occasionally, we may be able to ask questions of our followers for immediate customer insight or to conduct a ‘straw poll’ on behalf of a specific policy area. More often, we will answer questions put to us from our followers. These answers will be visible to all our followers, not just the person who asked them.

e) *Clearance*

- The “Core Team” will have access to the account and will be able to provide general updates. If we choose to provide live coverage of meetings the individual with responsibility for this will be identified on a case by case basis with the agreement of the Facilitator.

Twitter Specific Principles

f) *Hashtags*

- It is a convention among Twitter users to distinguish content using semantic tags those key terms, collaborate and share relevant information, and enables ‘trending’ (as displayed on the Twitter.com homepage) @LandNNES will use hashtags when:
 - Providing live coverage of events (live-tweeting)
 - Providing crisis communications. In this event it is likely that a common hashtag will already have been established and we would follow suit.

g) *Link shortening*

- Unless they are already very short (e.g. www.[dept].gov.sa/stuff) URLs in tweets will be shortened using link compressing sites (like tinyurl.com). To avoid any implied endorsement of one such service we will vary our choice as much as possible – but preferring those which provide click tracking statistics.

h) *Re-tweeting*

- We may occasionally be asked to re-tweet content from other Twitter users. We will consider these case by case but generally aim to honour such requests from Government Departments, partners *and other organisations/individuals working in the sector*.
- We should actively seek opportunities to re-tweet content that helps position LandNNES as a filter of intelligence, and inclusive/supportive of stakeholders. As such we may wish to consider re-tweeting interesting content that shows up in our own Twitter stream:
 - Research findings and statistics
 - Relevant sector/networking events
 - Relevant celebrations/commemorations e.g. awards, themed days (e.g. national heritage day)
- i) *Following and followers*
 - As part of the initial channel launch we will actively follow other relevant organisations, networks, Government's department, academics, public intellectuals, professionals in the sector and activists.
 - Our following back policy does not imply any endorsement by LandNNES.

Twitter Guidelines

LandNNES Twitter feed an important advocacy and information tool. We should use it aggressively to promote our ideas, causes and brands.

If you, a person logged in on @LandNNES account, also have a personal twitter account - remember to tweet any LandNNES-related content from the LandNNES twitter account first, and then retweet to your personal account – not the other way around. This builds LandNNES' presence on social media and saves time for your others who would otherwise have to retweet you.

As a network, LandNNES should maintain a confident tone that is respectful of all people and ideas, even when we disagree with them. Where possible, however, Tweet in plain English and avoid digital slang.

Use hashtags to drive traffic, but don't use a hashtag as a form of emphasis. Hashtags should be short and, if possible, memorable so that followers can come back to them without having to search for the hashtag. Check www.hashtags.org to see whether a hashtag has been used in the past 24 hours or whether there is a useful one to follow. Take a look at #NoToEvictions by our partners, Tshintha Amakhaya.

Build a story by tweeting an opening message and then using the reply button bottom left to reply to your own most recent tweet. Remove the @LandNNES and just write the next segment. That will come up as a new tweet but anyone opening it can see the stream. (If you reply to the first tweet, each will be a separate thread. If you want to start a new thread – for a new speaker, perhaps – then reply to the scene-setter, which will give your new thread a context).

Here are a series of ideas culled from a variety of NGO sites on how to use Twitter:

1. Write tweets in clear, concise language – no abbreviations and always use proper punctuation. Tweets that are written in complete sentences without abbreviations and therefore easy to read

are retweeted much more often. Second, tweets that end in either a period or a colon before the link are also retweeted more often and thus tend to have higher click-through rates. A messy, overloaded tweet just isn't worth tweeting. Take the time to format tweets properly;

2. Avoid going into rants or being rude. A rough rule of thumb is: If you wouldn't say it to your other-half's mum, don't say it on Twitter;
3. Don't just repeat the same information. As a charity / NGO, the chances are that your followers are actually interested in what you have to say. They really want to hear from you, especially if they're a donor. It's quite common for people to post the latest blog article or retweet an interesting titbit and there's nothing wrong with that but if that's ALL you're doing, then you're not adding any value to your followers and they'll stop paying attention;
4. Be Gracious. Respond to people when they mention you. Reply when people ask questions. Follow back people who follow you (but don't feel obliged to);
5. Not everything said at a conference is worth repeating. Don't bother with platitudes, just highlight those thoughts that come out of the live conversation that strike you as worth thinking more about or worth relaying to your audience;
6. If you are Tweeting from an event, start with a location and topic so people know what's coming up and end with a clear: That's it folks message;
7. Analysts differ on how often to tweet, but don't flood your timeline. Only tweet that which is relevant. Sending more than one tweet every hour significantly decreases your click-through rate, according to social media scientist @DanZarrella. At minimum, a nonprofit must tweet or retweet at least twice daily to gain traction on Twitter. This can be different if you are live tweeting an event, but still be frugal. The guideline for users tweeting on the LARC account is a minimum of 2 – 110 tweets a week, except when tweeting from an event.
8. Use pictures. The ideal image size for uploaded images on Twitter is 525 x 262 pixels. This size ensures that there is no cropping of your uploaded images on both the desktop and mobile versions of Twitter. Cropped images receive significantly fewer retweets. That said, if your nonprofit primarily posts text-based tweets, then your engagement is much lower than it could and should be;
9. Think about posting video material if it is really appealing or relevant. The Twitter App will invite you to extract an edit from your raw footage;
10. You don't have to use all 140 characters. According to research by Dan Zarrella, tweets that are between 120 and 130 characters receive the highest click through rates (CTRs). Think of this as your sweet spot for writing engaging tweets – giving more room for other users to organically retweet your content also helps.

ANNEX B

WEBSITE PROTOCOL

The Land Network national Engagement Strategy website is our main tool for communicating with our the public. The quality and content of the website and extranet pages must be robustly managed to ensure that members of the public are provided with valid and relevant information.

a) Responsibilities

- LandNNES has a Communications Officer who have responsibility for website content management.
- Content for the website and extranet should be submitted to the Communications Officer.
- Communications Officer has a responsibility for website content management including:
 - Using the content management system to create and update content
 - Assigning appropriate metadata to content items
 - Ensuring material has been cleared for copyright where necessary
 - Ensure that content created or edited by authors is accurate and up to date
 - Notify content owners when content is due for review
 - Ensure content is appropriate to be made available
 - Advise authors/contributors of any changes required to content before it is suitable for publication

b) Content

- The website will be clear about how we are “Here to promote people-centered land governance in South Africa!”
- The website will include:
 - Home Page: Da description of LandNNES
 - “Who we are”, once membership is conformed
 - News and Stories
 - Resources and library
 - Contact details
- News articles will only be published on the website or extranet if they:
 - Are timely and relevant
 - Will assist visitors, or keep them informed of recent events
- All website content must comply with standards for
 - Online writing
 - Accessibility, including documents and images
 - Structure
 - Metadata
 - Online presentation
- Images will only be published on the website or extranet if they:
 - Do not infringe copyright
 - Comply with accessibility standards
 - Are relevant, compelling and add value