THE SUPREME AUDIT OFFICE
OF THE SLOVAK REPBULIC

COMMUNICATION STRATEGY
OF THE SUPREME AUDIT OFFICE
OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC
2015 - 2020

Bratislava

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GENERAL PROVISIONS

The Communication Strategy of the Supreme Audit Office of the Slovak Republic for 2015-2020 (hereinafter "Strategy" or "Communication Strategy") is a key strategic document, based on the Development Strategy of the Supreme Audit Office of the Slovak Republic 2014-2020, defining the basic tasks of the Office and it translates them into five strategic goals. Strategic goal 4, Public Relations, is indicative for the Strategy.

The strategy identifies in the area of communication and public relations the basic goals that the Supreme Audit Office of the Slovak Republic (SAO SR or Office) intends to achieve through its communication activities. It specifies the initial state and condition to which the SAO SR needs to approach and also defines the priority areas and ways in which these objectives will be addressed.

The communication strategy is an instrument by which the SAO SR can achieve the fulfilment of communication goals. This desirable state is primarily influenced by public opinion, public opinion and media pertaining to individual topics and goals of the institution. The individual communication activities will be implemented directly by the SAO SR through the Communication and Public Relations Department.

Strategy vision and goal

The basic goal of the communication and communication policy of the SAO SR is to present the improvement impact of the audit findings on the public funds effective spending in the State during the entire audit process as well as on the credibility of the SAO SR. The main target group is the general public, the Slovak Republic citizens, towards whom it is necessary to systematically develop communication and SAO SR presentation on high level.

Target groups:
Based on the division and the emergence of the so-called CAF (Common Assessment Framework) stakeholders' maps it transpires that the key stakeholders in the communication, called target groups, are the professional, lay public and the media. The classical communication mainstay is the public who wants to be informed through the media, and they are therefore still dominant target group for communication with ever-growing share of the digital and new media.

We understand the communication goals as an adjustable and final outcome of the entire communication process and communication activities based on a suitably chosen communication strategy so external stakeholders, the public and the media, are duly and timely informed about the strategic goals of the SAO SR.

The main role of communication and communication with the public is that the stakeholders understand the audit activities of the Office, understand the scope, importance and quality the audit shift to the performance audit and that the interested parties (IPs) are familiar with the audit process and by able to use the results of the audit activity.

It is also important for the IPs recognise the status and competencies of the Office, its possibilities and limitations, have been informed about the development of the Office, the audit systems, the possibilities of audit developments and Office, at least as it was until 2014.

IPs should understand the SAO SR in the context of the Supreme Audit Institutions (SAIs) of Europe and the world, its position in the international organisations EUROSAI and INTOSAI, increasing prestige of the Office in relation to activities in international organisations and the possibilities and results in international audits.

A prerequisite for effective communication and communication with the public is:

a)   The IPs know about all the possibilities for obtaining information;
b)   IPs are familiar with forms of the Office presentation;
c)   The limitations of the information during the inspection are clear;
d)   The information provided is comprehended and clear, the flow of information is regular;
e)   The forms of communication are suitably set;
f)   The IPs are acquainted with the status of the SAO SR within the State administration;
g)   They understand the cooperation with the self-governing bodies.

The Communications and Public Relations Department (CPRD) also considers it important to devote sufficient space to internal communication. The Office employees should be regularly and well informed about the events in the SAO SR in the form of all available internal communication channels.

STRATEGIC GOAL 1 – PROVIDING INFORMATION

In order to promote its communication strategy, the SAO SR uses the communication tools of external and internal communication. On the basis of international experience and the current direction of communication in general, new online communication tools are also put to the forefront, which also direct information to individuals as final recipients, the citizens.

The role of the Communications and Public Relations Department is to select appropriate communication tools to represent a specific message. Communication with the public can be divided into two basic types - managed and unmanaged. In the SAO SR conditions, there is a great deal of communication in a very unadjusted way, when the CPRD has to prepare answers to questions whose thematic focus cannot be influenced by the Office and often have nothing to do with what the Office would like to present to the public through the media. In such cases, the CPRD adapts to the selection of the communication tool. However, if the SAO SR communicates its own content, it will choose the appropriate communication tool for external, internal or online communication, or their combination, for the specified target group:

External communication:

a)   SAO SR web site;
b)   Press information, press releases, statements and positions;
c)   Press conferences and briefings;
d)   contributions and interviews for printed and electronic media;
e)   public presentation by the SAO SR representatives;
f)   publications, documents, and SAO SR authorised journals;
g)   information and presentation materials;
h)   events for public, seminars, lectures, conferences and other activities;
i)   Law 211/2000 Coll. of Laws on Freedom to Information

Internal communication:

a)   Intranet;
b)   Print media monitor;
c)   LCD monitor in foyer;
d)   Lectures, seminars, conferences and other activities;
e)   Publications, SAO SR Journal ;
f)   Information and presentation materials ;

Online communication:
a)   On-line media;
b)   Social nets (Twitter and others);
c)   Video contributions and documentaries;

The main topic that the SAO SR communicates towards the target group is the information from the audit activity. The CAPRD must provide this information to the public and the media without delay, including in the form of external communication channels.

Activity 1.1
Publish the results of audit activity of the SAO SR on the web site without delay.

Date of fulfillment of the activity: continuously
Responsible: CAPRD
Measurable indicator: Number of published results about the audit activity results

Activity 1.2
Immediately provide the media with the required information in an exhaustive form

Date of completion of the activity: continuously
Responsible: CPRD
Measurable indicator: number of media outputs about SAO SR

Activity 1.3
Publish contributions in professional media

Activity Completion Date: Continuously
Responsible: CPRD
Measurable indicator: Number of media outputs in expert media

STRATEGIC GOAL 2 – COMMUNICATION DEVELOPMENT

Relationship with the public and the media, as well as feedback on communication activities, is an important part of improving the quality of SAO SR communication and, ultimately, the performance and quality of the Office work.

Therefore, it is necessary to prepare and regularly evaluate the communication strategy and the communication plan of the SAO SR on regular basis, as well as to continuously incorporate the suggestions for improving communication of the presentation from the members of the Communications Board of the SAO SR.

It is also important to re-evaluate how to provide up-to-date information on SAO SR audit activities through its website, to monitor regularly the feedback from the main target audience, i.e. the public, and to follow public opinion and its gradual development.

However, we must not forget the presentation of the social prestige and social responsibility of the Office.

Additionally, communication tools need to be adapted for more effective online communication.

The DPRC is required to improve communication skills, track theory and practice. The quality of media outputs, their content, but especially the form, is more than important for the initial impression, especially on journalists and the media. In contact with the media, it must be prompt, diplomatic and helpful. At the same time, however, it must be taken into account that other representatives of the Office may come in contact with the media and therefore they need to be helped, advised and, if necessary, a media training for them to be organised / recommended.

Activity 2.1
Every year evaluate the communication strategy

Date of completion: 31 March of the year concerned
Responsible: CPRD
Measurable indicator: Document *Assessment of the Communication Plan*

Activity 2.2
Updating the communication strategy as needed

Date of completion of the activity: continuously
Responsible: Communications and Public Relations
Measurable indicator: updated SAO SR Communication Strategy SR 2015-2020

Activity 2.3
Regularly monitor public feedback and track public opinion and its development

Date of fulfillment: 2 times per year
Responsible: CPRD
Measurable indicator: evaluation of questionnaire surveys

STRATEGIC GOAL 3 – CARE FOR WEB SITE

The most important and undoubtedly the most commonly used communication tool for external communication is the web site of the Office. It is through the Internet that the interested parties get the most information about the activities of the SAO SR. These are mainly the results of the audit activity that serve both the media and the citizens, and it is therefore desirable not only to regularly fill this content but also to the seemingly self-evident and legitimate requirement for the smooth functioning of the web site. Problems with errors and outages persist even after the continuous interventions of the IT department and the information system provider.

The Office is also using the News and Events categories to communicate and inform about the Office. The task of the department is to care for them in accordance with the requirements of the relevant departments. The web site also serves for surveys, see Activity 2.3.

The related communication tool is Twitter. In accordance with the requirement to use innovative communication tools, online media and social networks in the communication of the Supreme Audit Office of the Slovak Republic, the SAO SR started to present information about its activities and related content in the form of Twitter, at twitter.com/NKUSR. Within this communication, it is important to take care of this account, that is, to fill the profile with new and up-to-date content, and not least, the number of subscribers, followers who present the real reach of communicated messages and reflects the effectiveness of on-line communication itself.

Activity 3.1
Customize the website with a more effective online communication

Date of completion of the activity: continuously
Responsible: CPRD
Measurable indicator: changes and modernization of SAO web site

Activity 3.2
Evaluate traffic and related indicators or the website

Date of completion of the activity: annually, as part of the communication plan evaluation
Responsible: CPRD
Measurable Indicator: document *Assessment of the Communication Plan*

Activity 3.3
Taking care of the website flawless operation

Date of completion of the activity: continuously
Responsible: IT Division
Measurable marker: number of helpdesk tasks related to site malfunction

Activity 3.4
Priority to provide up-to-date information about the audit activity

Date of completion of the activity: continuously
Responsible: CPRD
Measurable indicator: number of published documents about audit results

Activity 3.5
Present strategic documents of the SAO SR to the public

Date of completion of the activity: continuously
Responsible: CPRD
Measurable indicator: number of published strategic materials

Activity 3.6
Increase the number of Twitter social network subscribers

Date of completion of the activity: continuously
Responsible: CPRD
Measurable marker: Number of followers

STRATEGIC GOAL 4 – PRESENTATION

To make the work of the SAO SR more visible, in addition to the above, it is necessary to present correctly the results of its activities. During 2013 and 2014, electronic (both in 2013 and print) annual reports were prepared in both Slovak and English languages, bringing a desirable response from partners, the public and journalists. It would be good to continue publishing, not just annual reports, but also other professional materials, whether they are information about self-government or something else. It would be appropriate to continue in the set visual line for a complete visual image.

At the same time, it would be useful to develop new promotional materials, because those available are obsolete and outdated.

Activity 4.1

Every year, prepare an annual report in Slovak and English languages in both digital and physical form
Date of completion of the activity: end of year
Responsible: DPRD in co-operation with the Department of Strategy and Methodology and Department of Law
Measurable indicator: Document *Annual Report for the Year*

Activity 4.2

Prepare new promotional materials
Date of completion of the activity: continuously
Responsible: DPRD
Measurable indicator: existence of new leaflets, brochures or similar mater

STRATEGIC GOAL 5 – PROVISIONING THE DEPARTMENT

The communication and presentation of every State institution, especially such a unique and independent institution with a specific activity as the SAO SR, changes significantly and the demands are increasing. It concerns, first and foremost, technical expertise, mainly related to the use of new technical solutions and on-line communication. The trend in this area is obvious and is confirmed by the experience of the SAIs from some other countries.

The prerequisites for incorporation of new communication tools online in the SAO SR communication and presentation are improvements in the personnel and technical area. It concerns an increase in the number of staffers - specialists for on-line communication, web site, and in-house communications, and also providing possible technical support for making videos. The scope of tasks could be deliberately divided, and the other staffer could be more specialised in working with the fundamentals of audit activity, creating printed information for print and electronic media, handling the pleas under the Law 211/2000 Coll. of Laws on Freedom of Information and a manager for organizing and coordinating these activities, strategic tasks, managing the Office presentation and corporate social responsibility, media analysis, and crisis communication.

From a technical point of view, it would be necessary in the future to equip the Office with particular solutions for on-line communication that requires instant and transportable access to the Internet for the operational form of communication.

Activity 5.1

Increase the number of Department employees to three
Date of completion: 31 December 2015
Responsible: DPRD in co-operation with the Human Resources Office
Measurable indicator: number of employees

Activity 5.2

Provide Departmental staff with instant and mobile Internet access
Date of completion: Continuously
Responsible: DPRD in cooperation with the Property and Operations Division
Measurable indicator: Availability of at least two smartphone / tablet devices in the DPR

CONCLUDING PROVISIONS

The SAO Communication Strategy for 2015-2020 is elaborated in the strategy of individual annual communication plans. The basis for their creation is the evaluation of the communication plan from the previous year.