

## **Communication strategy**

### **Introduction**

The communication strategy of the Georgian National Energy and Water Supply Regulatory Commission (GNERC) is a strategic document of GNERC, which is based on the principles of accountability, transparency, and justice, as well as objective and unbiased approaches to various stakeholders of the society, close cooperation with non-governmental and international organizations, and the principles of timely and objective informing of companies operating in the electricity, natural gas, water supply and amelioration sectors and persons using communal services.

The communication goal of the GNERC is to raise the educational and informational level in society about the energy and water supply sectors and to provide information to the public about their rights in the energy and water supply sectors.

### **The goal and values of the Georgian National Energy and Water Supply Regulatory Commission (GNERC)**

GNERC carries out regulated activities within the framework of the powers granted by the legislation of Georgia in full compliance with the principles of transparency, for the purpose of continuous improvement of justice, competitive environment, and service quality in the electricity, natural gas, water supply, and amelioration sectors; it ensures the development of supporting mechanisms for companies operating in the sectors, sustainability of a fair tariff environment, formation of new energy markets, expansion of international relations, implementation of innovative projects, on the one hand, and unwavering protection of consumer rights and offering of flexible, simplified services, on the other hand.

An abbreviation of the Georgian National Energy and Water Supply Regulatory Commission - GNERC - is composed in the initial order, according to the original name of the Commission. Referring to the Commission by any other abbreviation or abbreviated form in both oral and written forms is contrary to the general rules of abbreviation.

### **Media environment**

GNERC's goal is to timely inform the public about news in the electricity, natural gas and water supply sectors. Therefore, the Commission, as part of its communication strategy, periodically conducts needs assessment and information campaigns to ensure that different target groups are informed. This is especially important in the conditions of the liberalization of energy

markets and related reforms, which in turn includes the formation of new skills by different target groups as one of the components.

In general, the population of Georgia receives information through various information channels - television, press, radio, and internet publications. Therefore, it is necessary to maintain balanced and close cooperation with all information channels.

In recent years, social media is the best way to get information for that part of society for whom the internet is the primary source of information.

Due to various factors, there is an increase in the provision of fake and biased information to the public by various channels and stakeholders. Therefore, the Commission should make maximum efforts to provide correct, verified, and accurate information to the public throughout the country and minimize/restrict the spread of false information as much as possible. For this, a timely information response is necessary, which is one of the main visions of the Commission's communication strategy that is reflected in the communication objectives.

It is advisable to form an advisory council of media representatives, experts, and opinion leaders willing to cooperate with GNERC, the main function of which will be to engage in GNERC's communication activities, as well as perform the function of feedback to the public, identify trending topics, participate in determining communication priorities, and meet at regular work meetings.

One of the necessary conditions for ensuring GNERC's communication goals and objectives is an increase in social media activity. It is important both to increase the coverage of social pages and to ensure the thematic diversity of the published material. In addition to the materials reflecting the organization's decisions, announcements and activities carried out by the Commission, materials reflecting the tariff-setting methodology, the perspectives of the development of the regulated areas, and the innovations taking place in them should be regularly published (shared from channels of the relevant format (YouTube, Scribd, etc.)). It is important that the social media platform goes beyond the direct information channel and also acquires the functions of promoting the regulated sectors and educating consumers (protecting their rights, comparing alternative suppliers and supply schemes if they exist, enabling the introduction of affordable innovations).

## **Communication Goals**

**Communication goals are:**

**Maximizing the level of awareness of GNERC's activities among target groups and stakeholders**

- Organization of targeted and specific information campaigns
- Systematization of relations with local and international media

- Strengthening internet communication
- Activating social media
- Informing non-Georgian residents about communal services
- Informing the wider community about simplified services in the energy and water supply sectors
- On the principles of regulation of the amelioration sector
- About the importance of liberalization of new energy markets and the progress of the reform for this purpose
- Promoting education and raising the level of knowledge of the interested groups of the society on energy, water supply, and amelioration issues together with the Elizbar Eristavi Energy Training Center at GNERC.

#### **Providing access to information on GNERC's activities**

- Preparation and distribution of information materials
- Intensification of direct communication
- Involvement of interested parties in the discussion of issues

#### **Ensuring the involvement of the target audience in the development of GNERC**

- Conducting dialogue with external stakeholders
- Cooperation with international organizations

#### **Communication topics**

- Constant informing of target groups about the development of new energy markets,
- Ensuring the involvement of interested parties in the process of tariff calculation
- Providing information to public stakeholders about the role of the regulatory commission and the legal framework
- Involvement of interested parties in the development of target indicators for the electricity, natural gas, water supply, and amelioration sectors,
- Organization of meetings with interested persons about the mechanisms for the protection of consumer rights,
- Active cooperation with the civil sector to improve service quality standards and their performance mechanisms,
- Providing information (booklets) in Azerbaijani and Armenian languages about communal services to the non-Georgian speaking population living in the regions,

- Proper communication with interested groups and immediate delivery of news
- Involvement of interested parties in the process of development of society-oriented regulations,
- Close cooperation with non-governmental sector
- Improving communication with the media and stakeholders,
- Proactive communication with different groups of society;
- Creation of a quick response mechanism in crisis situations;
- Receiving feedback;
- Establishment and enforcement of transparency principles;
- GNERC's positioning as a source of reliable, fair and objective information
- Creation and implementation of mechanisms for rapid response to misinformation.
- Strengthening the image and reputation of the Chairman of the Commission, members, and staff of the office by ensuring transparent decisions, active communication with the public, transparency of personal and professional information,
- Availability of information about GNERC's corporate culture as a regulatory body to interested groups of society

### **Target audience**

#### **External audience**

- Population of Georgia,
- Schoolchildren, students,
- Media representatives;
- Non-governmental sector;
- Opinion leaders - politicians, diplomats, industry experts;
- Ethnic minority.

#### **International audience**

- donor organization

#### **Interagency audience**

- the president of Georgia
- The parliament of Georgia
- Government of Georgia

## **Internal audience**

- GNERC employees

## **Communication channels**

- television
- social media
- internet publications
- print media
- radio
- GNERC's official pages
- Events, seminars, conferences
- Public meetings
- official meetings

## **Monitoring the effectiveness of communication**

It is important to periodically evaluate the effectiveness of GNERC's communication, based on public feedback, in order to improve communication. Also, it is necessary to constantly monitor the satisfaction of the consumers of electricity, natural gas, and water supply utility services.

## **Recommendation**

Based on the fact that communication with the public is a dynamic and life process, which in turn provides the basis for the emergence of new, unplanned circumstances, it is advisable to annually revise the communication strategy document.