



**Skills Mecca
e-Marketing Strategy
GRSM Task Team
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Acronyms

Acronym	Meaning
DCF	District Mayors Forum
DDM	District Development Model
ERP	Economic Recovery Plan
GDS	Growth and Development Strategy
GRDM	Garden Route District Municipality
GRRI	Garden Route Rebuild Initiative
GRSM	Garden Route Skills Mecca
IDP	Integrated Development Plan
ILO	International Labour Organisation
JDMA	Joint District & Metro Approach = Western Cape version of the DDM
LED	Local Economic Development
MMF	Municipal Managers Forum
OFO	Organising Framework for Occupations
SETA	Sector Education Training Authority
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time Bound
TAO	Track, Analyse, Optimise (part of data analytics process)

1. GRSM eMarketing Strategy Situated with a Holistic Garden Route Skills Mecca Concept

The Garden Route Skills Mecca is a concept that emerged from a regional pandemic in June 2017 known as the “Knysna fires”. That pandemic resulted in what became known as the Garden Route Rebuild Initiative that included the concept of a Skills Mecca as one of its strategic pillars.

To further the concept of the Garden Route Skills Mecca or the GRSM, stakeholder summits were held in 2018 and 2019 to mobilise the involvement of all stakeholders. Those Summits resulted in nine key resolutions shown in the box on the right that today is the framework of the work of the GRSM.

Implementation of the GRSM including this **eMarketing Strategy** is shown in Figure 1: The Holistic GRSM Concept.

The Resolutions

- Continue and accelerate collaboration and cooperation among all District skills development role players.
- Ensure that Skills Development leverages digital infrastructure as far as possible to ensure learning and processes methods are and remain cutting edge.
- As far as possible link Skills Development to Investment and Economic Development opportunities to the advancement for all.
- Ensure that all Skills Development processes in the Garden Route always proactively considers renewable energy.
- Engage with all willing partners, in particular the SETAs and the National Skills Fund, to explore the development and implementation of projects across the District.
- Consider and leverage local skilled people, including retired people, within the District, to accelerate the growth of the Skills Mecca.
- All public and / or private skills development projects and/or programmes in all municipalities are acknowledged, recorded on Skills Mecca on line solution and supported within resource limitations.
- Progressively support the development of the new apprenticeship of 21st Century (A21) in the District.
- Budget, plan and implement an annual Skills Summit that is held in a different local municipality rotationally and alphabetically.

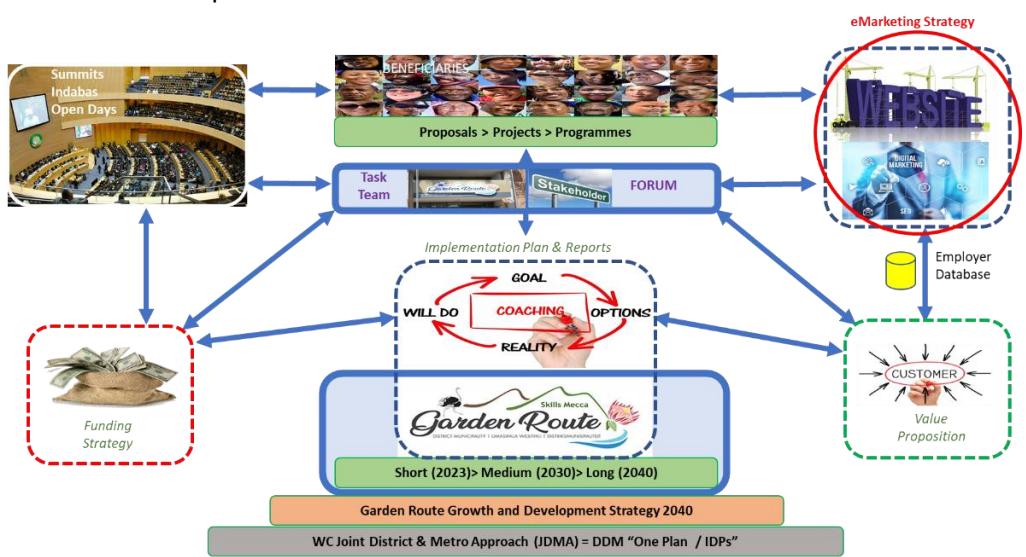


Figure 1: The Holistic Garden Route Skills Mecca Concept¹

This document expounds the eMarketing Strategy for the Garden Route Skills Mecca.

¹ A detailed description of The Holistic Garden Route Skills Mecca Concept is available on request from Garden Route District Municipality.



2. GRSM eMarketing Strategy Overview

A strategy of any kind indicates the optimum direction an organisation can take. In marketing, strategy starts with understanding what the organisation wants to achieve – “the **Objective**” - while considering the context within which it operates². The context includes (Ibid Stokes):

- The Environment
- The Organisation
- The Customers
- The Competitors

Marketing itself is defined as a “set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large”³. Digital or eMarketing is no different to any other kind of marketing but is more powerful in two fundamental ways (Ibid, Stokes):

- Audiences can be segmented very precisely; and
- The digital sphere is almost completely measurable.

With above in mind, the GRSM marketing strategy document is therefore structured as follows:

Section 3 covers the Strategic Context that includes the background to the GRSM and links to the most critical prevailing strategic socio-economic development processes of:

- ✓ The National Skills Development Plan 2030 (NSDP) and the associated national Economic Reconstruction Recovery Plan Skills Strategy (ERRPSS);
- ✓ The District Development Model (known as the Joint District Metro Approach in the Province); and
- ✓ The Garden Route Growth and Development Strategy.

Section 4 covers the Customer Groups and the value exchange that between the GRSM and each of the customer groups based on the GRSM Value Proposition and ongoing processes for Market Research at National, Provincial, District and Local Community levels.

Section 5 covers the Objectives, Goals and Key Performance Indicators of GRSM eMarketing Strategy.

Section 6 covers the Tactics including Digital Channel Creation and Development to achieve the Objectives of the GRSM eMarketing Strategy.

Section 7 covers the ongoing Optimization and Institutionalization of the GRSM through Data Analytics and Data Driven Decision Making processes.

² Stokes, R. eMarketing: The essential guide to marketing in a digital world, The Red & Yellow Creative School of Business, Cape Town, 2018

³ <https://www.ama.org/the-definition-of-marketing-what-is-marketing/>, accessed August 2021.



3. GRSM eMarketing Strategic Context

The Garden Route region of South Africa is recognised and valued by many local and international people as a pristine part of the world with many naturally occurring wonders. It is considered by many to be a first choice place to live and thrive. It is a very popular destination for vacations and for those that are entering their retirement years. In addition more recently, partly caused by the COVID 19 Pandemic, there has seen a significant increase in semigration to the Garden Route.

At the same time this naturally beautiful part of the country is also prone to a range of natural disasters that has over the years ravaged the region, necessitating ongoing recovery strategies and building of long term resilience mechanisms. One such natural disaster gave birth to the Garden Route Skills Mecca concept. In June 2017, one of the worst wildfires on record in the Knysna region of the Western Cape burned 15000 hectares – from Knysna to Sedgefield in the west, and to Plettenberg Bay in the east – destroying more than 800 buildings, 5000 hectares of forest plantations, and claiming the lives of seven people⁴.

The Garden Route Rebuild Initiative (GRRI) that was initiated as direct result of the fires progressively led to the development of a detailed Garden Route Rebuild Strategy that included six strategic pillars, one of which was coined as the ‘Skills Mecca’ described in the rebuild strategy as follows:

- **Set up a “skills mecca” to attract** local and international skills providers and students for training in certifiable courses relevant to the local and global economy, starting with a skills training centre able to train 1 000 students per year.

The Garden Route District Municipality has consistently supported the Skills Mecca Project initiative and in April 2021 appointed a dedicated service provider to coordinate the across the Garden Route District for a period of two years. During the two year period capacity will need to be built to continue to institutionalise the Garden Route Skills Mecca concept.

The Garden Route Skills Mecca is not a stand-alone initiative but an integral part of The District Development Model⁵ (DDM) that is a national initiative that seeks to solve poor service delivery and development impact. Skills is clearly a part of the DDM process as is illustrated in Figure 2 that states that the DDM must link communities to the Skills Revolution - driven in the District by the GRSM.

⁴ <https://news.mandela.ac.za/News/What-caused-the-Knysna-wildfires>

⁵ Department: Cooperative Governance & Traditional Affairs, Implementation of the District Development Model, Presentation to Budget Forum 1 October 2020, Pretoria.

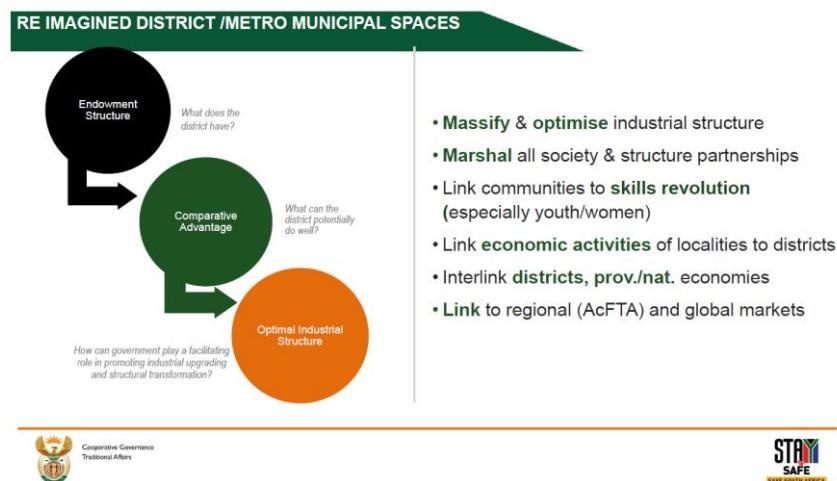


Figure 2 : Source: Department of Cooperative Governance & Traditional Affairs

In the Western Cape the DDM is called the Joint District and Metro Approach⁶ (JDMA). In terms of DDM Committees and drivers, the presentation to the MMF on 10 June 2021 indicated that District Mayors are JDMA political “Champions” at district level and District Municipal Managers are administrative “Champions”. **These individuals that “system customers of the GRSM ”will therefore be critical to include in communication channels that are developed as part of the GRSM eMarketing Strategy.**

The GRSM also needs to align to the Garden Route Growth and Development Strategy (GRDM GDS) that is also very clearly linked to the DDM or JDMA. The GDS includes Skills Development as one of four cross-cutting enablers for supporting the implementation of the Garden Route Growth and Development Strategy. The GDS asks “**What are the skills requirements/ challenges that constrain this priority area?**”

1. A water secure future
2. A circular economy
3. Resilient agriculture
4. Sustainable tourism
5. Supporting wellbeing and resilience
6. A connected economy: transport and rural-urban integration and ICT
7. Sustainable local energy transition

The individuals and businesses and that work in the above focus in areas are the “employer system” customers of the GRSM will therefore be critical to include in communication channels that are developed as part of the GRSM eMarketing Strategy.

⁶ Western Cape Government, Local Government Depart, Presentation to the Garden Route Municipal Mangers Forum, 10 June 2021



However this alignment must focus at a local municipal level as GSD states that “**each local municipality within the Southern Cape region should be enhanced as a unique and sustainable settlement based on its competitive advantage.**”

Where possible skills development processes must emulate economic processes as expressed in the GDS to “**develop complementarity and not competition within the region, to build on unique strengths, and to manage shared vulnerability.**” This implies that unnecessary duplication of skills development processes should be also be avoided where possible.

To realise both of the above requirements, a reporting mechanism template and process has been designed for each local municipality to table at the quarterly GRSM Forum its current activities and future opportunities for skills development within each of the priority focus areas of the GDS. This predesigned reporting template as is shown in Figure 3.

GRSM Forum Skills Development Report for : XX Local Municipality for XX 2021						
Water	Circular Economy	Agriculture	Tourism	Wellbeing	Connected Economy	Energy
<p>Current Activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Access to Funding > Written Plan > Location > Employment Impact > Partners > Similar Activity <p>Future Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > 5 Year horizon > Research > Duplications > Demand Led (business conglomerates) <p>GRSM Resolution Links:</p>	<p>Current Activities</p> <p>GRSM Resolution Links:</p>	<p>Current Activities</p> <p>Future Opportunities</p> <p>GRSM Resolution Links:</p>				

Figure 3 : Local Municipality GDS Aligned Skills Development Reporting Template for GRSM Forum

This quarterly reporting mechanism is a critical component of the GRSM eMarketing Strategy as it will support all local municipal based stakeholders to market their projects and programmes through a “GIS - Google Map” based resource that will be hosted under the Partners on the GRSM Web Site⁷ that will be managed through by a project / programme based web page owned by the entity that drive the project or programme. This must enable a database of possible projects and programmes that can be shared with possible investors where relevant or align to a funding opportunity such as SETA based discretionary grant process.

⁷ Refer Section 4 Partners of Annexure A

4. GRSM eMarketing Strategy Customer Groups and Market Research

This section of the eMarketing Strategy is based on the GRSM Value Proposition⁸ that aims to define the value proposition of the Garden Route Skills Mecca to the various customer groups. The GRSM Value Proposition informs all communication, marketing and design elements when interacting with customers to position the Garden Route through a consistent storyline that enables the development of this [eMarketing Strategy](#). A holistic view of the GRSM customer ecosystem is depicted in **Figure 4**.

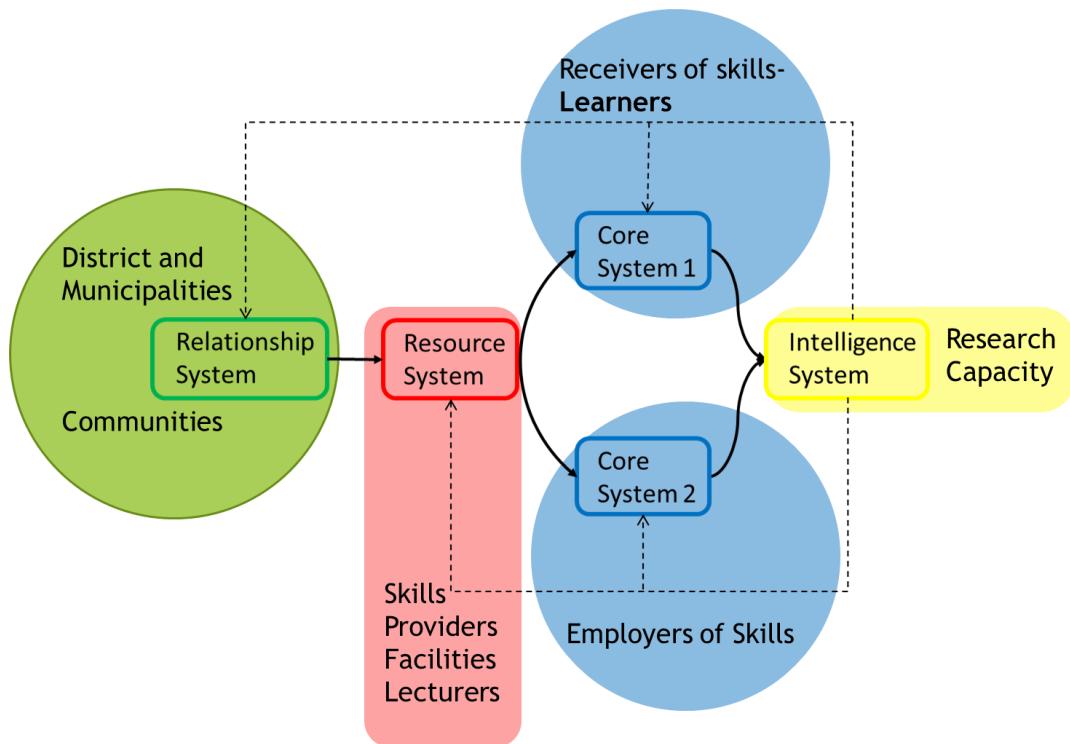


Figure 4 : GRSM Customer Ecosystem: Source GRSM Value Proposition.

The relationship system shown as the green circle on the left includes the sponsors of the system are **mayors, councillors and management** of the District and Local Municipalities. These sponsors have a direct, often daily relationship with the **constituent members of the community**. The greater the buy in from these customer groups the better chance of success and local resourcing of the overall system as depicted in the red block.

The key customer group that ensures that the delivery happens when the system is resourced **Skills Providers**, including facilities and lecturers that includes trainers, mentors and assessors. Often these providers are also often very key to finding resources and need to be continuously involved with the eMarketing Strategy.

⁸ A detailed description of The Garden Route Skills Mecca Value Proposition is available on request from Garden Route District Municipality.

The other two customer groups that benefit from the support from sponsors, communities and the providers are the two core groups shown in the blue circles, namely the receivers of the skills = **Learners** and the employers of the skills = **Organisations**

All of these customer groups will need to be targeted by the eMarketing Strategy including the existing structures already in place as shown in Figure 5 : GRSM Governance, Leadership, Management, Operations, Coordination, Support, Administration.

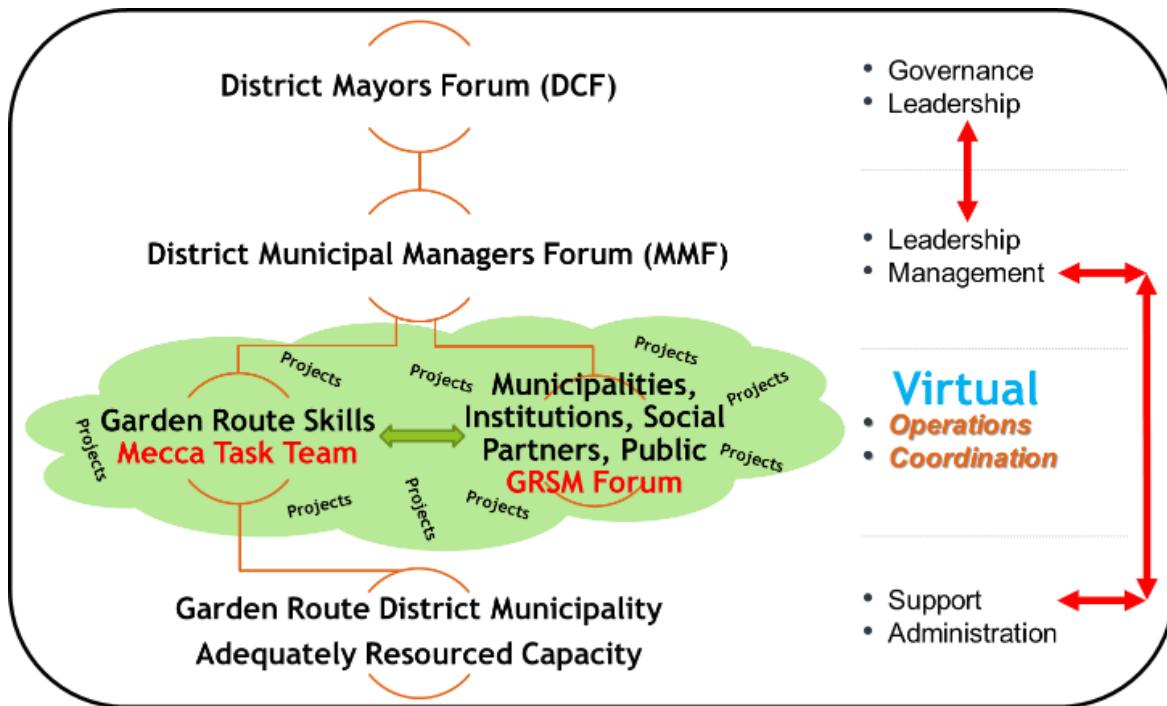


Figure 5 : GRSM Governance, Leadership, Management, Operations, Coordination, Support, Administration.

The institutional structures shown in Figure 5 have progressively become entrenched as supportive of the GRSM across the District since the first Skills Summit in February 2018. In Summary these structures include:

- The District Mayors Forum or **DCF** that is led by the District Mayor and includes all Local Municipal Mayors. This structure ensures good governance and in particular political leadership for the GRSM.
- The District Municipal Managers Forum or **MMF** that is led by the District Municipal Manager and includes all local Municipal Managers. This structure reports to the DCF and ensures operational leadership and administrative management of GRSM processes. This structure is critical as it is instrumental in providing necessary resources to staff and contractors that work with the day to day processes that support and administer the GRSM.
- The Garden Route Skills Mecca **Task Team** that is led by the Executive Manager Corporate Services at the District Municipality. It is an “internally” focused structure that provides



leadership to coordinate all the activities to implement, monitor and report on the resolutions for Garden Route Skills Mecca.

- The Garden Route Skills Mecca **Forum** that is led by the Chairperson of the Education Training Development Portfolio Committee at the District Municipality. It is an “externally” focused structure that provides a platform for all relevant stakeholders in the Garden Route to give inputs that support activities that implement the resolutions for Garden Route Skills Mecca.
- The GRSM **Task Team** and The GRSM **Forum** work very closely together to create the “engine room” for all the operations and coordination for the GRSM. In particular the two structures lead project & programme initiation, development and implementation with all discussion processes based a hybrid **virtual** model that is now standard operating procedure.
- Within the Garden Route District Municipality itself Garden Route Skills Mecca Team is now fully operational made up key personnel from across the Corporates Services Division that will be progressively adequately resourced over time.

The final part of the holistic Value Proposition system shown in Figure 4 that will continue to inform the **CONTENT** of the Marketing Strategy in particular is the Intelligence System in the Yellow Block that is dependent on Research Capacity.

Research will be ongoing and continuous across three very independent organisations level as depicted in **Figure 6 : GRSM Intelligence System Research Levels.**

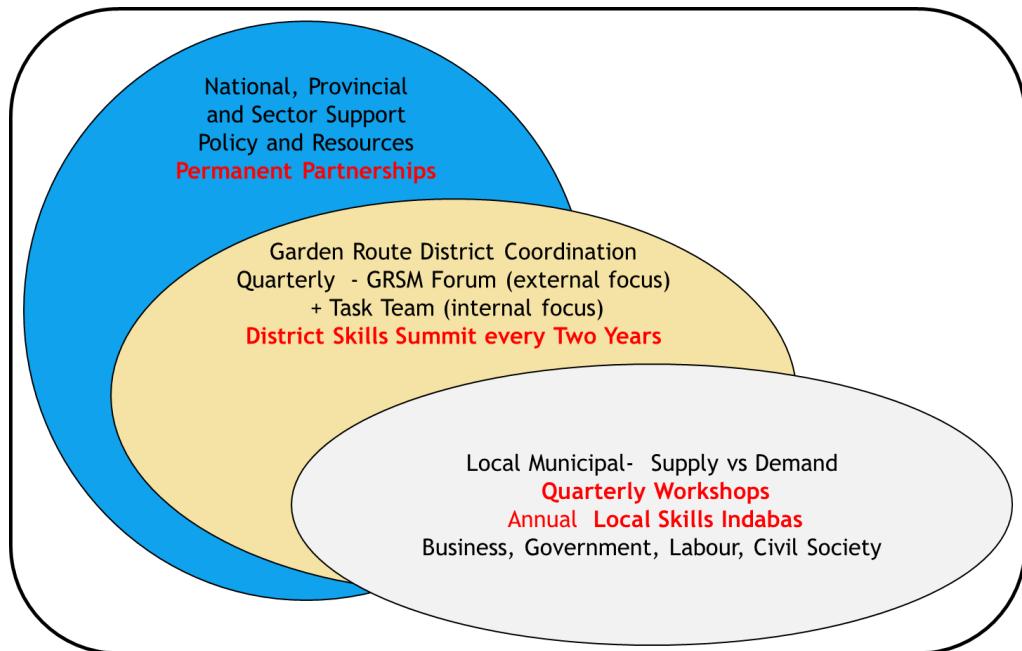


Figure 6 : GRSM Intelligence System Research Levels.



Research at each of the three levels shown Figure 6 is critical due to :

- **National – Provincial- Sector** based research will the GRSM to track and benefit from policies and resources that guide skills development in the country.
- Garden Route **District Coordination** based research through the Forum and Task Team that coordinates skills development across the District. A key feature of this relationship level is a District Skills Summit held at least every two years within the District that will form mechanism for validating ongoing research at a local level.
- **Local Municipality Supply – Demand** skills development based research that strives to determine what are the specific skills needs that are informed by the socio economic needs of local municipal area. This relationship level is the critical “grass roots” level where all social partner interactions occur that continually inform future skills development needs.

It is at local level, the Supply – Demand Level that the employer database will need to be built through ongoing interaction between LED and Skills Unit Colleges with the constituencies per community. This will be the work of one full time person, initially an intern funded through a LGSETA Partnership Project⁹ that has been applied. The role of the person is described as follows in the partnership application:

- *Work with the Economic Development Unit in each B Municipality to continuously identify employers and their skills development needs in the municipality and update and maintain an employer database of all employers within the Municipality. The database will be hosted at the District Municipality.*

The research and data capturing process is illustrated in Figure 7 below that includes the critical element of building an employer database across the District.

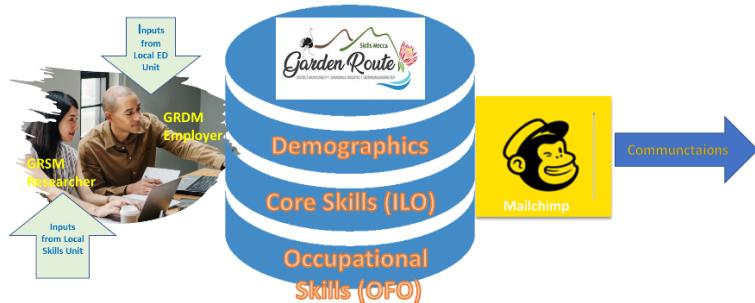


Figure 7 :Building an Employer Database of Skills Needs at Local Municipal Level

NOTE: The Core Skills and Occupational Skills Fields in the database will be predetermined drop down menu fields developed by the GRSM Coordinator and Database Developer.

⁹ A copy of the LGSETA Partnership proposal is available on request from Garden Route District Municipality.

5. GRSM eMarketing Strategy Market Objective, Goals and KPIs.

Based on the customer groups clearly identified in preceding sections, the GSM eMarketing Strategy Objective, Goals and KPIs are reflected in Figure 8.

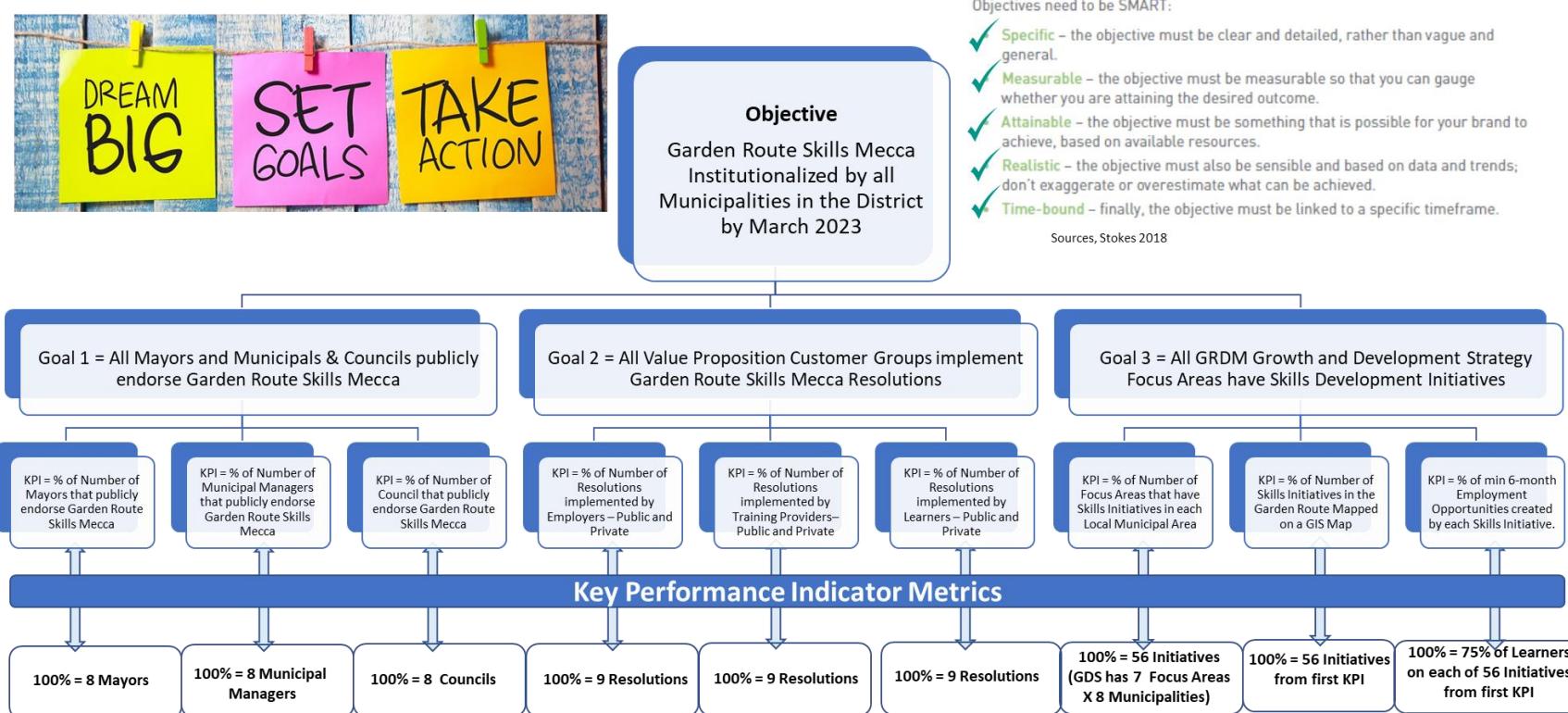


Figure 8 : The Garden Route Skills Mecca eMarketing Strategy Measurement Framework

6. GRSM eMarketing Strategy Engagement and Retention Tactics Market

To ensure achievement of the objectives, goals and targets of the eMarketing Strategy a range of tactics will be developed and deployed leveraging the full range of digital tools available to the GRSM. An integrated view of the architecture of these tools is shown in **Figure 8** below, with each channel being developed, and deployed in a phased in approach. However two key platforms need to be developed to achieve this:

- The Employer Database developed and maintained through local level as per Figure 7; and
- The GRSM Web Site that is intended destination of social media traffic to engage with and retain all customer groups. The Proposed Web Site Map and Content is attached as **Annexure A** to this Marketing Strategy.

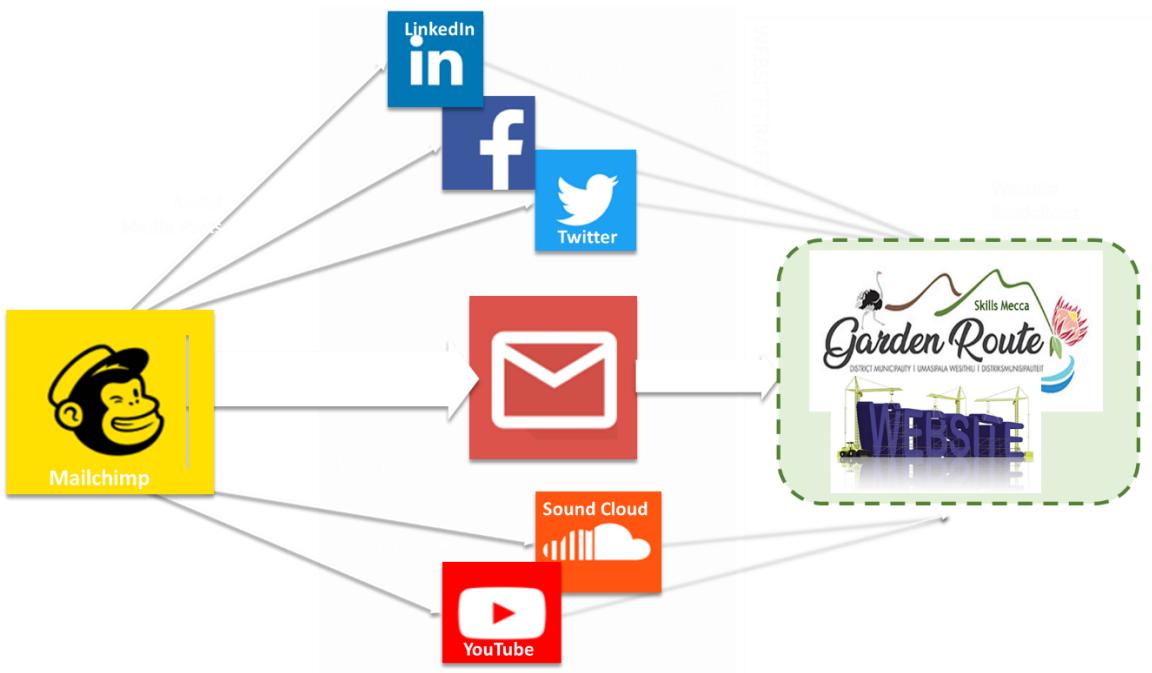


Figure 8 :The GRSM eMarketing Strategy Channel Architecture

Content generation for weekly / monthly social media campaigns using all or selected social media platforms will be generated by either internal GRSM Team Members or GRSM Partners that “own” Pages on the GRSM Web site¹⁰. These partners will also be shown on a GIS Map embedded into the web site. This GIS creation and maintenance is also included in the work of the full time persons funded through a LGSETA Partnership Project¹¹ that has been applied. This role is described as follows in the partnership application:

- Update and maintain a GIS map located on GRDM hosted on web site that reflects the existing skills capacity of each municipal area and possible opportunities for skills development.

¹⁰ Refer Section 4 Partners on Annexure A

¹¹ A copy of the LGSETA Partnership proposal is available on request from Garden Route District Municipality.

7. GRSM eMarketing Strategy Optimisation

As the eMarketing Strategy is implemented through the various channels and process two key questions will need to be asked continuously

- Is it actually working ?
- How might it work better?

These questions be answered on a monthly basis by tracking, analysing and optimising (TAO¹²) the digital assets and campaigns created and implemented by the GRSM Team and Partners.

This will need to one of the key functions of a GRSM Team Member that is located at the District Municipality that is part of the full time persons funded through a LGSETA Partnership Project¹³ that has been applied for. In essence this person needs to become the Webmaster for the GRSM Web Site. The monthly process that needs to be followed by the Webmaster is shown in Figure 10 below.



Source: Stokes, R. eMarketing: The essential guide to marketing in a digital world, The Red & Yellow Creative School of Business, Cape Town, 2018

It will important therefore to recruit and appoint a person that has an aptitude towards doing this work and then capacitate the person with opportunities to develop these optimization skills.

¹² Stokes, R. eMarketing: The essential guide to marketing in a digital world, The Red & Yellow Creative School of Business, Cape Town, 2018

¹³ A copy of the LGSETA Partnership proposal is available on request from Garden Route District Municipality.