



*Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.*

Communications Strategy 2015

UNDP Maldives



Preamble

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has been a longstanding developmental partner of the Maldives from the time it joined the United Nations in 1965. Over the years, the UNDP has partnered with the people of the Maldives, at all levels of the society, in helping the country achieve progressive development through its three key portfolios – Democratic Governance, Environment and Energy, Policy and Inclusive Growth (formerly known as Poverty Reduction).

As a formidable development partner, UNDP has been supporting the government of Maldives in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as well as other key national development priorities as agreed in the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) between the government of Maldives and the UN Country Team. In this regard, extensive support is continuously being provided to the country in areas that includes poverty alleviation, strengthening democratic governance, supporting disaster risk management, environment protection, climate change mitigation and adaptation and combating HIV/AIDs to name a few.

UNDP' s comparative advantage in Maldives lies in its on-the-ground presence, its longstanding relationship and partnerships with government and local stakeholders, its impartiality, and its ability to adapt to address emerging development priorities hence leading foster mutually beneficial relationships with multiple partners on the ground.

Overview

Strategic communications is about linking the right message with the right target audience in the right manner. Communicating is a two-way process and a successful communication requires an audience-centered approach towards that ensures responsive feedback as opposed to one-way information relaying. Strategic Communications is a management approach whereby communications becomes a tool for an organization to reach its current or future goals. This is central to what the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in the Maldives targets to achieve and accomplish.

The primary ground on which this communication strategy builds upon is that communications, specifically external communications, should be perceived as something that goes beyond a mere supplementary add-on, but rather as a critical tool that adds value to all the development work that is being carried out by UNDP. For an organization such as the UNDP, whose primary objectives remains largely interconnected with the progress of people it works for, visibility of its programmes and initiatives remain fundamental to meeting the organization's development objectives and for further resource mobilization.

That being said, the public perception and trust towards the UNDP and its programmes, rest upon how well a strategic communications plan is implemented. Favorable public opinion and a trusted and impartial public image of UNDP will further help in strengthening relationships with key partners and stakeholders. Therefore, understanding our target audiences, documenting our experiences and using those experiences to further expand and enhance our relationship with different levels of community will further improve the effectiveness and efficacy of the work we do in the Maldives.

Objectives – why are we communicating?

Communication remains central to achieving development goals and targets. Having positioned as a key development partner, advocacy and information dissemination is critical to ensure the continuity of existing partnerships with the people and partners. In this regard, this communications strategy, through close collaboration with three key portfolios of CO, aims to achieve the following objectives/outputs:

- I. Position UNDP as the preferred partner of the Government of Maldives, State Institutions, Civil Society Organizations and Private Sector in designing and implementing development solutions in the country
- II. Position UNDP as the preferred government partner in consulting on key development policies for progressive and sustainable development options
- III. Position UNDP as a key knowledge hub that will advocate for Human Development and Millennium Development Goals

To achieve these objectives, this strategy outlines the following core activities that will be implemented throughout the year. These core activities are:

- 1- Maintaining quality, consistency, and adherence to UNDP corporate standards in disseminating information shared to public domain and other stakeholders

To ensure successful communication and to maintain the trusted public image of UNDP, it is imperative to adhere to existing corporate communications standards set forth by the UNDP HQ that includes editorial manuals and other such documents. Adherence to such standards ensure consistency quality and accuracy of information disseminated to the public and other audiences.

2- Strengthening the existing ties with media organizations and news outlets and keeping the media informed of UNDP' s work in the country

Positive media coverage is what shapes the public perception towards an organization. To achieve positive, favorable and accurate media coverage of activities, events and programmes of UNDP, it is essential to build strong and close ties with the local media organizations, while also understanding the vibrant political culture within the Maldives and how the local media operates in the country. Previous lessons learnt suggests that any shortcoming in this end results to undesirable results such as inaccurate media reports, poor or no visibility of UNDP in joint initiatives and wrongful representation of UNDP.

3- Enhancing the visibility of CO by communicating results, ongoing projects and messages through media interviews, press releases, open-editorial articles, website stories, informative videos amongst others.

External communications and information dissemination, specifically those relating to ongoing projects and activities, should always be an ongoing process. Therefore, it is important to have updates and future initiatives planned on a specific project or programme on a regular and consistent basis presented in the form of news stories, press releases, op-ed articles, Facebook posts, tweets and if possible, videos and visual presentations.

4- Utilize social media channels to further expand the CO' s outreach and to disseminate messages, results and activities.

The Maldives, compared to its population and size, has a considerably large internet penetration, with a significantly large community regularly or on a frequent basis access popular social media channels such as Facebook and Twitter. Utilizing social media networks to relay our information allows us to tap into this audience and by using existing marketing tools offered by such social media services would further allow us to increase our outreach for a relatively minimal expense.

Expected Outcomes

- 1- Greater public awareness on UNDP' s work through increased positive media coverage.

- 2- Enhanced media outreach, including community and social media.
- 3- High quality communications products developed that reflect the work of UNDP Maldives.
- 4- Active social media pages and UNDP CO webpage regularly updated and maintained.

Key Messages – what are we communicating?

The following key messages will form the core essence of all messages that will be communicated to audiences under this strategy. These key messages are:

- 1- Enabling Maldivian people through skills development, knowledge sharing and capacity building by partnering with the Government of Maldives, Independent Institutions, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), Private Sector, Local Councils and Communities.
- 2- Supporting the Government of Maldives in advising on policy options towards achieving sustainable development and advocating for Human Development and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), as outlined in the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and UNDP' s Global Strategic Plan.
- 3- Supporting the Government of Maldives in setting up effective and accountable governance institutions for enhanced service delivery at national and local levels, improving social cohesion and strengthening capacity of civil society to meaningfully participate in the public life.
- 4- Supporting in sustainable management of the natural environment, climate change adaptation, and increased livelihood resilience. Continued and enhanced support is envisioned in disaster risk reduction capacity strengthening as well as adoption of low carbon lifestyles and achieving carbon neutrality.
- 5- Supporting the Government of Maldives in expanding access to productive assets and economic opportunities, and link programmes with the country' s economic and financial policies, to achieve equitable growth and sustainable development.

Audience – who are we targeting?

Line Ministries and Independent institutions

UNDP works closely with line ministries and independent institutions in programme and project implementation. To ensure successful and smooth implementation, strong communications is essential so as to ensure that UNDP staff and their counterparts in both line ministries and independent institutions are on the same page.

Donors and Development Partners

Key focus for communication with this audience segment is for resource mobilization, support on policy dialogue and for partnering in implementing programmes.

Civil Society (NGOs, CBOs)

NGOs and Community Based Organizations have a strong footing on the ground having closer ties to the communities and grassroots stakeholders. They influence community debates and helps in shaping opinions of the communities they are based in. By establishing proper communications, CBOs and NGOs can act as key partners in transmitting information and advocating messages of UNDP through their networks.

Internal Staff

Internal staff includes staff of UNDP as well as other UN Agencies based in the Maldives and non-resident agencies alike.

General Public

The general public includes beneficiaries of the work carried out by UNDP that includes both the public at large as well as specific groups such as women and youth.

Channels and tools – how do we communicate?

Social Media

Social Media channels such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, Flickr and Google Plus are extremely useful and cost effective platforms that could be utilized to communicate to masses. The Maldives has an extremely active social media community and hence social media remains one of the most formidable options to disseminate information, key messages and results both in the form of text and visuals including photo, video and infographics. As of yet, UNDP Maldives has its presence on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Flickr. LinkedIn and Google Plus are yet to be registered. To enhance the outreach, CO needs to invest on paid adverts which will further strengthen reach-out.

Print and Online Media

Maldives boasts of a variety of vibrant online news media outlets compared to its population. Along with established media outlets such as Haveeru Online, Sun Online, Channel News Maldives (CNM) and Minivan News, newly emerging news outlets and news outlets dedicated to specific atolls and islands could be tapped into further the outreach of UNDP CO' s information relayed to public domain.

Broadcast media

Apart from the state broadcasters Television Maldives (TVM) and Voice of Maldives (VOM), over the last five years, several private broadcasters with considerable viewers have begun broadcasting. Hence, it is imperative to approach these along with the state broadcasters. Key broadcasters to approach include TVM, VOM, Raajje Television, Villa TV, DhiTV, Channel 9 and Channel 13.

Website

UNDP CO website acts as the central online location to obtain UNDP' s knowledge products along with other news stories, success stories, procurement notices, job advertisements and announcements. However, the CO website has relatively low number of visitors, and to increase

the number of visitors it is imperative to build a strong linkage between the website and other social media channels.

Annex 1: Communications Annual Work plan 2015

Annual Work Plan 2015									
Duration of the plan: January – December 2015									
Activities	Targets for planned activities	Time Frame				Responsible Party	Funding Source	Budget (US\$)	Unfunded
		Q 1	Q 2	Q 3	Q 4				
Activity 1: Maintaining and ensuring quality, consistency, and adherence to UNDP corporate standards in disseminating information shared to public domain and other stakeholders									
Activity 1.1: Update the CO Website to have the latest delivery, budget figures, project/programme details and other relevant information.	All project and programme details including budget updated	X				UNDP	UNDP	Nil	
Activity 1.2: Train 3 UNDP staff (1 from operations side and 2 from programme side) to handle UNDP CO Website.	3 UNDP Staff trained to use website as a backup		X			UNDP	UNDP	Nil	
Activity 1.3: Conduct a workshop on communications and success story writing to programme staff with support from APRC.	Workshop held.			X		UNDP	UNDP		
Activity 2: Strengthening the existing relationship with media organizations and news outlets and keeping the media informed of UNDP's work in the country									
Activity 2.1: Organize two 'coffee with media', one on first quarter and one on fourth quarter.	Two 'Coffee with Media' meetings	X			X	UNDP	UNDP	2,500	
Activity 2.2: Arrange media visits	Separate meetings held with all key media outlets	X	X	X	X	UNDP	UNDP	Nil	
Activity 2.3: Organize media briefing/information sessions on each unit's work done.	Three media briefing sessions held, one for each unit	X	X	X		UNDP	UNDP	3,000	
Activity 2.4: Organize media familiarization workshops on UN System and UNDP	3 Workshops held		X	X	X	UNDP	UNDP	7,000	

United Nations Development Programme in the Maldives

Activity 3: Enhancing the visibility of CO by communicating results, ongoing projects and messages through media interviews, press releases, open-editorial articles, website stories, informative videos amongst others									
Activity 3.1: News Stories, press releases made as per required.	-	X	X	X	X	UNDP	UNDP	Nil	
Activity 3.2: Success Stories on project based from M&E visits	4 New success stories	X	X	X	X	UNDP	UNDP	Nil	
Activity 3.3: launch UNDP News Letter	IGP Newsletter launched by end of Q1	X				UNDP	UNDP	2,000	
Activity 3.4: Re design project and programme factsheets and have print ready version for donors.	Factsheets for all projects/programmes completed and uploaded to website	X				UNDP	UNDP	1,500	
Activity 3.5: Develop portfolio videos for each of the three units	3 portfolio videos developed and published		X	X		UNDP	UNDP	5,000	
Activity 3.6: Hire a local photographer to capture photo stories and human interest photos	Photo database updated with new photos		X	X	X	UNDP	UNDP	3,000	
Activity 3.7: Designing and printing communications materials such as T-Shirts, Notebooks, Calendars, caps etc.	Materials to be printed and distributed		X	X	X	UNDP	UNDP	3,000	
Activity 4: Utilizing social media channels to further expand the CO's outreach and to disseminate messages, results and activities									
Activity 4.1: Paid Advertising for UNDP Facebook Page	10,000 likes by end of 2015	X	X	X	X	UNDP	UNDP	2,000	
Activity 4.3: Twitter campaign to increase number of followers	5000 twitter followers at the end of 2015		X	X	X	UNDP	UNDP	1,000	
Activity 4.2: Regularly updates on social media	-	X	X	X	X	UNDP	UNDP	Nil	
Activity 5: Collaborating and coordinating closely with other UN agencies in Maldives in celebrating International Days recognized by United Nations and other common media campaigns									
Activity 5.1: Celebrate International Days recognized by UN		X	X	X	X	UNDP	UNDP	2,000	
Activity 5.2: Participate in 2015 Social Good Summit				X		UNDP	UNDP	3,000	
TOTAL BUDGET								35,000	