SHARE BALE ECO-REGION PROJECT

COMMUNICATION AND VISIBILITY STRATEGY

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1. Introduction

The European Union has embarked on a long term commitment to enhance resilience, food and nutrition security through multi sectoral integrated approach in the Horn of Africa, through its SHARE program[1]. SHARE BER is one of the EU projects strands for Support to the Horn of Africa Resilience. It is being carried out in the Bale Eco Region (BER) in South-Eastern Ethiopia, by five consortium members; Farm Africa, SOS Sahel Ethiopia, Frankfurt Zoological Society (FZS), International Water Management Institute (IWMI) and Population, Health and Environment Ethiopia Consortium (PHEEC). The project started in July 2014 and will run until November 2017.

The overall objective of the project is to enhance the drought resilience, food and nutritional security of vulnerable populations in Southern and Eastern Ethiopia with the specific objective of conserving biodiversity and ecosystems functions and services in the Bale Eco-Region and increase the resilience and well-being of highland/lowland communities inclusively.

Developing a communication strategy has become an increasingly critical function of the project. The strategy will plan the content and form of information needed by all those involved in policy formulation and the implementation of the project with other stakeholders. It will help convey the right messages to the right people, while making use of the appropriate communication channels to achieve the project objectives of safeguarding biodiversity, ecosystem services and livelihoods.

This document outlines the way we want to achieve Share BER's communication objectives. It will be used as a guide for choosing which activities and materials are anticipated to be most effective in fostering effective communications, to specific target audiences. It has the following eight components:

➤ Situation Analysis

➤ Communication Objectives

➤ Target audience and their interactions

➤ The messages

➤ Communication means/channels

➤ Communication Policy

➤ Evaluation and amendments

2. Situation Analysis

The Bale Eco-Region (BER) in South Eastern Ethiopia is a complex biophysical and socio-economic area linking the South Eastern highlands with the lowland systems within and outside Ethiopia through the flow of ecosystem services[2]. The eco-region covers an approximate area of 22,000 km2, with a human population of about 3.3 million (CSA, 2007). The BER is clearly defined, with its centre at the plateau around Tulu Dimtu before extending south to the boundary of Mena Angetu district including part of the Combretum-Terminalia woodland zone. To the north it is bounded by the Wabi Shebelle river, to the east by the River Web (Sofomor Valley), and to the west by the the Arsi-Bale plains in Dodolla and Adaba Districts. It comprises about 16 districts (woredas) in the West Arsi and Bale zones of Oromia National Regional State.

The situation in the BER is now at a critical stage. Land conversion and deforestation for agriculture is increasing and unsustainable livestock grazing and harvesting of fuelwood, timber and non-

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1. http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/aid/countries/factsheets/hoa_en.pdf
2. Ecosystem services are services that ecosystems provide to humans, e.g. water, fertile land, timber.

timber forest products continue to occur. Consequently, degradation of the BER and its function continues to go uncontrolled. As a consequence, communities who depend on these highlands either for their livelihoods, or who rely on the ecosystem services these areas provide, are becoming increasingly vulnerable. As a result of the above background the ECO Region needs integrated and harmonized developmental approach where the different stakeholders can play a constructive engagement and partnership.

The project is expected to reach 878,000 people living within the Bale eco-region and an estimated 12 million water users downstream in the lowland Oromia and Somali regions and Somalia.

A SWOT Analysis involves listing SHARES's project **strengths, weaknesses, opportunities** and **threats**. It would be important to think about what this means in terms of our communications priorities. How can threats be turned into opportunities, how can we play on our strengths through effective communications? It involves specifying the objective of the project and identifying the internal and external factors that are favorable and unfavorable to achieving that objective.

Strengths: characteristics of the project that give it an advantage over others.

Bale Eco Region is one of the world's richest areas in terms of biodiversity and ecosystem values[3]. Nevertheless, evidence confirms that this wealth is declining due to mismanagement (loss of habitat)[4]. There are a number of efforts and interventions that were developed prior to this program to safeguard biodiversity and ecosystem functions as well as livelihoods in the region, but the question of how to achieve greater impact remains unresolved. Through the support of the EU, the SHARE project is an important player in reaching 878,000 people living within the Bale eco-region and an estimated 12 million people downstream moreover, its direct alignment with the national strategy confirms that the project is demand driven[5].

In the presence of these conditions, the communication strategy is vital in contributing to establish a strong coordination and collaboration among the different stakeholders including government bureaus and build trust between partners, raise awareness to enhance attitudinal changes, motivate, offer opportunities for action, and to generate social pressure against non-compliance for action, so that the sustainability of the ecosystem of the eco region can be achieved.

Opportunities: elements that the project could exploit to its advantage

➤ The harmonized coordination of the multi implementers brings more synergy to scale up conservation initiatives

➤ To create the link with national and international Natural Resource Management (NRM) , land scape, eco system networks and to play advocacy/lobbying role to promote participatory NRM/ land scape management by generating strong evidences.

➤ To derive relative measures that enhances the conservation of biodiversity or ecosystem services, to examine the distribution of ecosystem service benefits, and establish ecosystem service-based development initiatives that maximizes and re-distributes benefits in ways that are equitable for the local communities, reduces pressures on biodiversity and incentives conservation

➤ Engage in / stimulate dialogue on the formulation of national policies for the conservation of biodiversity and delivery of ecosystem services to vulnerable people

➤ Support local communities in the sustainable management of biodiversity/ecosystems services and provide technical support to build their skills.

➤ Explore the opportunities for sharing the benefits of providing / regulating / purifying water more fairly through mechanisms

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3. https://fzs.org/en/projects-2/current-projects/bale-mountains-conservation/
4. https://www.cbd.int/doc/world/et/et-nr-04-en.do
5. For further info: www.ibc.gov.et

In its current situation and SWOT analysis, the communication study is limited to analyze only the strengths and opportunities of the project while leaving PEST, Competitor Analysis, and Weakness & Threats because of its newness. PEST involves listing the Political, Economic, Social and Technological factors that could affect your project's work. Competitor Analysis is another useful tool when assessing what our competitors are doing. These will be integrated in the communication strategy in the future.

3. Communication Objectives

This section demonstrates how the project could effectively achieve its purpose through targeted communications.

3.1. General Objectives:

The SHARE project desires to be perceived as an effective, discrete, action-oriented, inclusive and integrated project that responds to the increasing biodiversity degradation and decline of ecosystems functions in the Bale Eco Region along with its adverse effects on the livelihoods and health of the community. The consortium also wishes to be seen as the reference for multi sectoral conservation of Natural Resources in the Bale Region to scale up to other places in the country, the Horn of Africa and across the continent. Therefore, by communicating with target groups, it will enhance the drought resilience, food and nutritional security of vulnerable populations in Southern and Eastern Ethiopia.

3.2. Specific Objectives:

These are the overarching communication objectives of the program that must be translated into messages that are disseminated to the target audiences as required through a multi-faceted selection of communication channels tools, techniques and approaches. With this back drop, we have to be sure that every object as a goal reaches at least one identified audience. The SHARE project endeavors to be accepted by stakeholders as:

a) A comprehensive and credible conservation-oriented project by the public and donors, national and local authorities, farmers and other stakeholders who are ready to act in favour of biodiversity and ecosystems functions and livelihoods

b) To engage effectively with relevant multi-stakeholders/target groups and to demonstrate the success of the project and change policy and practices.

4. Target audience

Stating clearly the target audience(s) is the first and key step in the process of developing communication strategy. It determines the various target groups we need to communicate with and what their information needs are. Target audience refers to those individuals, groups, or organizations with whom the project interacts directly to address an issue at the national, regional or global levels. To this end, the strategy divides these various target audiences for SHARE project communication activities in to 4 main groups; local, national, regional and global.

SN	Audience	Local	National	Regional	Global
1	Communities (smallholder farmers, CBOs, direct beneficiaries)	X	X		
2	Donor		X	X	X
3	Government officials from kebele to higher officials	X	X		
4	Private sector	X	X	X	
5	SHARE BER Multi sectoral taskforces from kebele level to national level	X	X	X	
6	NGOs and other development practitioners	X	X		
7	Research institutions/ Academic organizations	X	X	X	X
8	Regional organizations/Regional Economic Communities (RECs)			X	

5. Messages

Core messages should be clear, understandable and uniformly applied.

The bellows are some of the core messages which serve as a motto for the project till the project life/period:

➤ We focus on conservation of biodiversity, ecosystem functions and services in BER.

➤ We build resilience and ensuring sustainable livelihood of the highland and downstream communities.

➤ We want to show the interdependency of the highland and lowland systems through evidence based integrated interventions and research studies.

➤ We follow an eco-regional and multi-sectoral approach which looks at biodiversity, ecosystem functions and livelihoods in a holistic, inclusive and comprehensive basis.

➤ Our effectiveness comes not only from our skill, knowledge, focus on research for development and capacity to serve, but also most fundamentally from our heartfelt concern for the wellbeing of the individuals, families and communities we reach."

The messages are not limited only to the above mentioned, but also based on the situation possible to develop key messages by implementing partners.

6. Communication Means/Channels

The communication tools and techniques outlined here are employed to effectively disseminate information and obtain feedback with a view to enhance the effectiveness of SHARE's interaction with both its external and internal audiences. This section deals with how we want to communicate through each channel.

Communications	Type of Communication	Target audience	Communication Channel/tools	Purpose
Public Communication • Meeting with local and national authorities, research & academic institutions, NGOs, private sectors and other partners • Meeting at field level with local authorities and relevant actors at the grassroots levels • Technical meetings to coordinate with others and mobilize actions where needed • The multi sectoral taskforces at kebele, woreda, zonal, interzonal, regional and national level	External	- National, regional, global biodiversity & Ecosystems conservation sector stakeholders (policy makers, donors, NGOs, CSOs) - Academic and research institutions - Local stakeholders (kebele, woreda, zone and district authorities and bureaus, farmers and associations) - Private sectors and General public	- Champions in GoE - Workshop, seminars - Case studies, progress reports Factsheet (summaries of activities and specialized), brochures (English and local languages), Newsletter articles/ special issue on SHARE project, Flyers - Academic paper (MSc Thesis) - Mass media, such as print, broadcast media - Online media project partners websites and social media (blogs, electronic forums, Twitter, YouTube, Flickr, Facebook, news releases, features, photo galleries, slide shares, etc)) - Photos, audio/videos - Market road shows and drama	- Showcase project approach outcomes and result, create a basis for upscaling - Networking resource mobilization - Awareness creation and sensitization on the project - Updating stakeholders on implementation of the SHARE approach and the results - Photos, are to support communications with clear images - Audio/video and websites are for sensitization - To engage with target audience (blog) or between members of the target audience (e-forum)
Operational communication • Technical meetings, action plan workshops where needed • Coordination meeting within the consortium members • Training workshops	Internal	Consortium members	- Workshop, seminars - Online (e-mails, common /their own website), tele/ video conferencing (using skype or other platform), data sharing mechanisms; such as Dropbox and Google Drive - Face-to-face/regular project meetings	- For endorsement of the processes of the project - Updating staff & project partners on the implementation of SHARE approach, results and building capacities in the implementation of the project - To strengthen partners synergy and deliver project objectives

7. Resources

The communications work will be principally funded from the project budgets. The communication experts of the consortium members will execute the communication and visibility strategy depending on the responsibility mentioned in the table below.

The communication team comprises representatives from each implementing partners namely: Farm Africa (FA), Frankfurt Zoological Society (FZS), SOS Sahel Ethiopia, Population, Health and Enviroment Ethiopia Consortium (PHE EC) and International Water Management Institute (IWMl). The communication team will meet at least once a quarter. The chair person for the team is PHE EC and the minute taker would rotate in every meeting.

8. Communication Policy

SHARE BER project acknowledges the importance of communications as an integral part of its daily functioning. The project is committed to transparent and effective relationships with its stakeholders and to form partnerships with the public and private sector through consultation and information dissemination. The purpose of this policy is to provide clear principles and guidelines for communication with project partners.

The PHEEC, who leads the communication part of the project, has the responsibility to ensure that all communications activities are done in accordance with these policies and procedures. This requires all communication and communication-related activities to be co-coordinated and to take place in a uniform way by the responsible body (what is communicated by whom). Hence, it is the policy of the SHARE project to provide information to its internal and external stakeholders about its activities in an accurate, timely, relevant and understandable manner.

9. Communication Roles and Responsibilities

Roles and responsibilities of the consortium

SN	Activity	Responsible partners				
		Farm Africa	PHE EC (the lead)	IWMI	FZS	SOS Sahel
1	Overall communication programs		X			
2	Budget management, financial planning and reporting	X	X			
3	Interacting with media	X	X	X		
4	Preparing meeting reports, workshop proceedings and other meeting requirements (out sourcing as optional)	X	X		X	X
5	Media/environment scanning and preparing media review		X			
6	Production of communication materials in English and local languages	X	X	X	X	X

7	Design of policy briefs	X	X	X	X	X
8	Speech writing, drafting press releases and contributing to situational analysis, assisting in the development of policy papers where relevant	X	X	X	X	X
9	Publication, distribution and stock management	X	X			

In addition to the above mentioned role and responsibility of consortium, in order to ensure effective communication and compliance to SHARE's communication policy, the following roles and responsibilities are adopted:

1. Who would be spokespersons of SHARE BER?

Depending on the situations and level of events, the higher officials/delegates of the Heads of the SHARE partners/Project Coordinator would be the Chief Communicator (spokesperson) of the project.

2. Communications team of consortium partners

The composition of communications team led by PHE EC is responsible for co-coordinating all communications activities in the project. In this regard the Communications team, shall support and co-ordinate all communication efforts, with the main aim of enabling the Directors/Heads/coordinators of the project to perform their function as Chief Communicators. They shall provide strategic advice and counsel with regard to communication policy development, program planning and program implementation and develop and implement communication plans and produce publications for information dissemination. These communication clusters of the project will include identifying communication issues, and implementing and managing communication actions such as campaigns, events, advertising, the design and printing of communication materials, audio-visual and still communication, marketing and communication research.

10. Procedures and Regulations

The following procedures and regulations are the rules that govern the implementation of the Communication Policy.

a) Media Relations

The responsible communication team from consortium would be the first line of contact with the media and are responsible for co-coordinating all media relations in consultation and approval with the relevant bodies of partners and copied to consortium partner communication experts. All media queries must be referred to the Communications team who will then engage with the relevant line functionaries for an adequate response. The Communication team must coordinate interactions with the media at all times, such as media conferences, briefings, letters to the media and advertising. Inquiries and responses from the media should be in writing. The Communications Unit is responsible for media evaluation and monitoring.

b) Internal Communication

The main purpose of internal communications is to facilitate and manage the flow of information between partners in order to create an informed workforce. Internal communications involve useful information about SHARE BER that staff/partners may have an interest in using in the following communication tools and mediums:

E-mails, Newsletters, Posters, Notice Boards, Intranet, Workshops, Staff meetings, SMS, electronic data sharing platforms (Dropbox , Google Drive), face-t-face contact, project monitoring visits.

c) External Communication

The main purpose of external communications is to inform stakeholders of the services and programs of the project. Billboards, radio, television, exhibitions, conferences, workshops, the internet and newspapers are major communication tools and mediums used for external communication.

d) Production of Communication Materials

The Communication team must be consulted on communications material that is produced on behalf of the SHARE BER project. Production items could be: policy briefs, newsletters, case studies, scientific reports, working papers, brochures/leaflets, posters, letters, etc. After the team reviewed the proposed communication material, before publishing and dissemination through web site and other means of communication there is a need to be approved by the SHARE BER project coordinator.

e) Visibility

The Communication Team is responsible for the image of the project. This responsibility includes designing the type of communication material to be used by the project and partners (i.e. folders, letterheads, etc); the way communication material is used and produced (i.e. the font, use of partners and donors logos, etc). All consortium partners and donor (s) logos shall be used as prescribed in the projects communication materials. To ensure consistency throughout all communication material by all partners the proper logo of partners should be placed in the order of FA---FZS---SOS Sahel Ethiopia---IWMI----PHE EC.

f) Branding and Promotional Materials

Branding - is the process involved in creating a unique name and image for a product in the stakeholders' (consumers') mind. A logo is one and the main branding elements in communication that brings uniqueness to the project's visual. As stipulated in Article 7.8 of the MoU each co-implementing partner will agree on the production of any publication or media production on which the logo of each partner will be displayed. In addition, donor (s), (i.e. the EU) logos shall also be displayed in all publications or media productions and all communications must comply with the EU visibility guidelines. With this respect, in every publication and communication material of the project, the appropriate logo (high resolution) of the donor and partners (five implementers in the order as mentioned above) should appear.

Presentation of partnership and support logos

Joint partnership

In every communication material of the SHARE project the donor (EU) logo must appear in the upper right hand corner , while consortium partners' logos should appear in the same size and proportion at the lower edge of the paper, banner, etc.

Promotional materials are messages issued on behalf of the SHARE project to demonstrate "the packaging of new ideas" .

A brand identity usually consists of the following integrated components:

Logo: For all communication and promotional materials of SHRAE project, all consortium members logo needs to be included in the mentioned order.

Web site: Since Farm Africa is a lead organization, by adding one wing for SHARE BER project on

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6. http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/communication_and_visibility_manual_en.pdf
7. http://www.vocabulary.com/dictionary/promotional%20material

the existing website, its website could be used for external and online visitors about SHARE project. Every partners organization has also a right to post information's related to the project on their web site after reviewed and approved by the team. Also possible to post any information about the project which was already approved and posted on the web site of the lead organization.

Letterhead: Regarding about the letterhead, no need to have a separate letterhead for SHARE BER project. Every partners should used their own letterhead but the content of the letter on the background part should be consistent by all implementing partners by mentioning the project objective as mentioned in the project document and also by mentioning all project implementers.

g) Language Policy and Translations

The SHARE project language policy is based on the working languages of the donor and consortium partners, (i.e. English). Nevertheless, it takes into account local language usage and the preferences of residents when communicating. English, Amharic and Afan Oromo will be business languages for the SHARE project. Therefore, official notes, printing materials, advertisements, etc. issued for general public information will be published in English, Amharic and Afan Oromo.

h) Exhibitions

The communications Team of SHARE BER is responsible for the Branding and Corporate Identity of the project, thus, the unit must be consulted when partners/coordinators are taking part in fairs and exhibitions on behalf of the SHARE project.

i) Events

Events shall be organized wherever need arises from coordinators or heads, and the Communication team of SHARE shall take full responsibility for media, publicity and branding. They are essential for disseminating key messages to stakeholders. Workshops, seminars, experience sharing visits, exhibitions, and other events will be organized to gather a specific group of audiences in order to communicate key messages to them.

j) Copyright

The SHARE project owns all publicity material and information it has paid for or created. Consequently, the reproduction of any such material requires the approval of the Consortium partners. Copyright of SHARE allows the project (partners) the freedom to allow others to use the material without paying fees to the original producer. It also gives the project the authority to prevent misuse of the material by the producer or anyone else.

11. Evaluation and Amendment

Consider performing a communications audit to assess the effectiveness of our strategy with both internal and external audiences. We should use open questions with appropriate prompts and benchmarks and, if possible, get someone independent to do the work. We should consider and discuss the results carefully and use them to amend the strategy. Example audiences to consider are our staff, donors, key local and national targets and media.

Media scanning and feedback of the survey questions would be useful tools to evaluate the achievements of the communication and visibility strategy and to amend accordingly.

SHARE BER Project Communication & Visibility Plan				
SN	Activities planned	Timeframe	Responsible	Remarks
1	**Communication and Visibility Team**			
1.1	Establish a Communication and visibility team lead by PHE EC and comprising representatives from all implementing partners	April-May, 2014	All partners	
2	**Development of a brand toolkit**			
2.1	Development of a brand toolkit comprising assets, templates and messaging to be used in the production of all materials such as letter head, design power point template, Banner template, policy brief template, case study template and other and shared for all implementing partners after approval by concerned	May, 2015 January, 2016	Communication team	
3	**Design, print and disseminate information and promotional materials (printed materials) through the identified communication channels/ medias**			
3.1	Project brief on project's main components (English and oromiffa)	March-December 2015	PHE EC	English version is finalized and disseminated
3.2	Produce toolkits containing research findings	End of 2016-2017	PHE EC/IWMI	
3.3	Produce toolkit/guidelines on multi sectoral engagement, approach and practice and use in dissemination and advocacy	April-June 2015 through 2017	PHE EC	
3.4	Produce case stories from the field on different project interventions	2016-2017	All implementing partners	

3.5	Prepare signboard /sign post to be erected at project main and sub offices showing the logos of all partners and donor	January-July, 2015	Farm Africa	Done
3.6	Produce annual newsletter of the project/ produce Leaflets on the results of the project	January, 2016 & 2017	PHE EC in collaboration with partners	
4	**Mass media/Appearance in local and international mass media**			
4.1	Dissemination of project innovations and good practices using mass media (TV documentary and radio)	January 2016, 2017 and at project end	PHE EC	On process
	Production of films and documentaries that promote the SHARE BER	2016-2017	PHE EC	
4.2	Dissemination of press releases on trainings, seminars, conferences, reports from the field missions, etc.			
4.3	Response to media inquiries (national, regional, international) such as interviews with the PC, implementing partners and other staff	2016-2017	All implementing partners	
5	**Online promotion**			
5.1	Website (separate or FA or Implementing partners)	2015-2017	Farm Africa	
5.2	Social media (face book, you tube, linked in, …)	2015-2017	All partners	
6	**Meetings/Forum/Exchanges/ Public events**			
6.1	Conduct SMC and TCT meeting	2015-2017	SHARE BER PC (SMC) and implementing partners at field office (TCT)	Ongoing activities

6.2	Establish Higher Level Partners Forum and conduct meeting and field visit	2015-2017	All implementing partners	
6.3	Workshops	2015-2017		
6.4	Trainings	2015-2017		
6.5	GO & Community meetings and visits	2015-2017		
6.6	Organizing dissemination forums as to the research results and outcomes which needs to be linked to the IWMI outputs and outcomes	June, 2016	PHE EC & IWMI	

In addition to the above main communication and visibility activities, the bellow relevant project activities are also activities which need support of communication team.

A1.2(b) Peer-to-peer exchange visits (community to community, kebele to kebele across the eco-region)

A1.3 © Training and capacitating on eco-regional approach and integrated land use planning

A1.4 (b) Introduce the geodata base to relevant government offices through training/workshop

A1.7 (c) Develop guidelines with key partners on key areas (benefit-sharing, community hunting, co-management of protected areas conservation planning etc.)

A2.1 (a) Develop detailed approach to SHARE research paper

A3.4 (d) Develop toolkit to provide guidance on working along riparian ecosystems and the eco-regional approach in NRM

A3.7 (a) Organize settlement management workshop at different level

A4.2 (c) Provide training and associated tools to improve quantity, quality and value of sustainable natural resource based livelihoods e.g. honey, bamboo, garden coffee, natural oils;

A5.7 Compile toolkit on the multi-sectoral approach and use in dissemination and advocacy;

Design PHILMON PRESS