

ANNEX: NIGERIA GOVERNORS' FORUM COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

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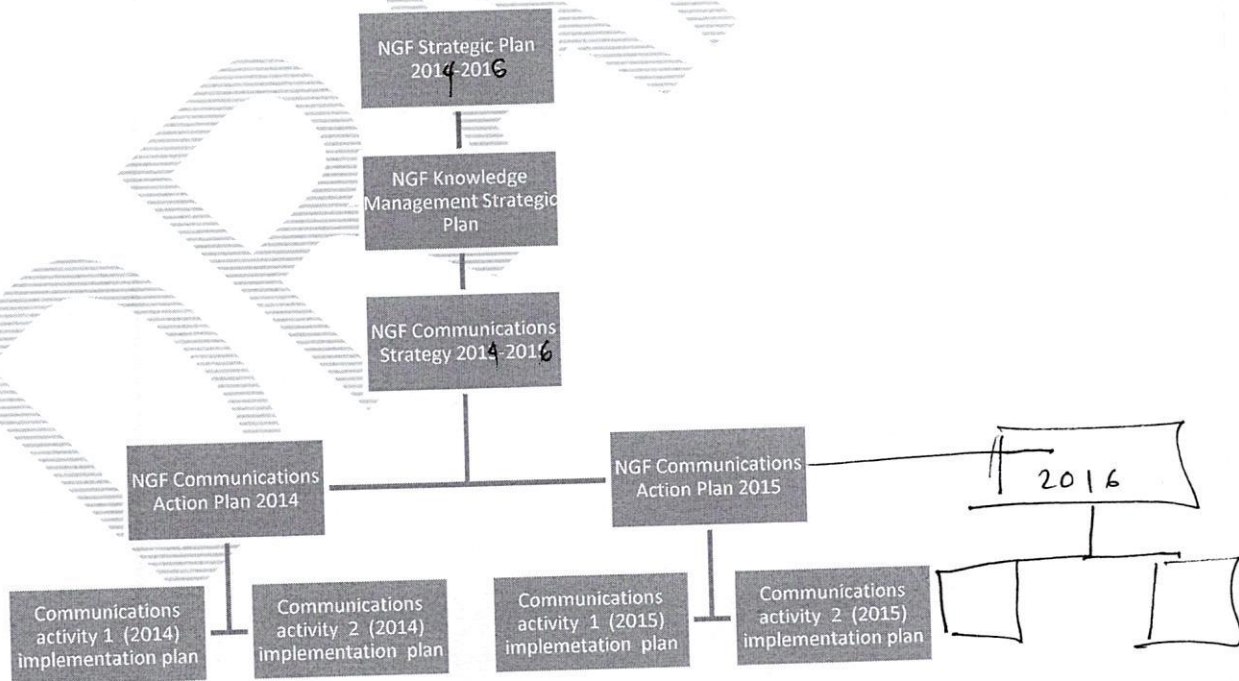
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NGF Communications Strategy

In the age of knowledge, the ability to communicate is key to accessing and harnessing that knowledge. Communication does not just happen. It must be structured, planned and carried out. The *NGF Communications Strategy 2013-2015* sets out the overall direction (goals, objectives, audiences, messages) for all NGF's communication activities and how they are to be planned.

This *NGF Communications Strategy 2013-2015* does not just guide advance planning but is also an important tool for reactive day-to-day communications that make up a large part of everyday work – responding to internal requests, requests for information from state government partners, and so on.

In the overarching *NGF Strategic Plan 2013-2015*, knowledge management has a central role. Supporting the *NGF Strategic Plan 2013-2015* is the *NGF Knowledge Management Strategic Plan* which in turn is supported by the *NGF Communications Strategy 2013-2015*. The *NGF Communications Strategy 2013-2015* guides the development of *annual communications action plans*, which in turn guide *communications activity implementation plans* for all communications activities. The following diagram shows how these strategies and plans support each other. (Only two communication activities are shown for 2014 and 2015 in the diagram. There will of course be more.)



Situation analysis

The NGF is a learning organisation. Most of the activities of the NGF result in knowledge which, if shared and applied, can improve governance in the country. Sharing knowledge efficiently and effectively with a wide spectrum of stakeholders including members of the Forum itself, States, the Federal Government, ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs), development partners and civil society organisations (CSOs) is a core NGF

function. Effective communication is important for sharing knowledge and vital for carrying out the NGF's mission:

"To provide a platform for collaboration amongst the ~~Executive~~ Governors on matters of public policy; to promote good governance, sharing of good practice and to enhance cooperation at State level and with other arms of government and society." - NGF mission

Communications goal

The overall communication goal of NGF is:

- Effective two-way communication that shares knowledge on governance with all NGF's members and stakeholders.

Communications objectives

NGF communications objectives to achieve the NGF communication goal are:

1. To support best practices in good governance
 - By enabling Governors to share best practices for better performance
 - By providing relevant information and reports for better planning and performance
 - By engaging stakeholders to replicate best practices at State level
2. To improve governance and grow democracy
 - By fostering improved relations and facilitating effective communication between the Presidency and Governors
 - By ensuring that appropriate messages from NGF are presented and disseminated
 - By engaging the media as catalysts and watchdogs for good governance
3. To facilitate the States' Peer Review Mechanism
 - By mentoring and training
 - By enhancing learning
 - By building capacity
 - By capturing knowledge at all stages of the SPRM
 - By developing products for sharing and peer learning
4. To influence formulation and operation of policies
 - By providing information to enable appropriate bills
 - By getting State inputs on bills impacting States before they are passed
 - By sensitizing state legislators on the preparation and implementation of the Fiscal Responsibility Law (FRL) and Public Procurement Law (PPL)
 - By providing financial and technical support on FRL and PPL
 - By sharing information to engage stakeholders on inward investment
 - By sharing information to encourage private sector investment in states

Core functions

NGF communication functions are:

- Establishing and maintaining a distinctive NGF 'brand'

- Maintaining a coherent house style and 'feel' in all NGF KM communications through consistent use of language, fonts and colour schemes
- Conveying key messages supporting the strategic objectives of the NGF to NGF audiences
- Providing protocols for the content, direction and approval of NGF external communications
- Identifying, designing and implementing communications activities to further NGF objectives
- Identifying and providing assistance and access to information and knowledge resources on good governance

Target audiences

NGF's target audiences are the groups with whom NGF needs to communicate to achieve NGF's objectives:

- Governors
- Media
- Presidency
- National and State Assemblies
- Civil society organisations (CSOs) and citizens
- Ministries, departments and agencies
- Development partners
- Professional networks
- Private sector

Knowledge, beliefs and customs vary widely from one group to another (and within groups) and the ways in which each group acquires knowledge are not the same. Because each target group has specific characteristics and is faced with different issues and situations, each has to be approached differently. For example:

- NGF communications with Governors aim to perpetuate best governance practices and to extend the impact of best governance practices in the country
- NGF communications with political decision-makers aim to develop understanding of best practices in governance so that they can be adopted widely
- NGF communications with the development community, stakeholders and funding agencies aim to gain visibility for the NGF, share NGF knowledge and develop exchanges of knowledge on governance.

Key messages

Key messages take into account the information or knowledge NGF wants to convey and the needs of the audience NGF wants to reach.

Key messages to support best practices in good governance

- NGF bridges the gap in information between Governors and the governed
- NGF gathers lessons on governance from States
- NGF promotes the use of best practices in governance

Key messages to improve performance and grow democracy

- NGF provides State governments with access to international and local expertise and processes
- NGF provides State governments with easy access to new governance tools and better ways of doing things in governance

Key messages to facilitate the States' Peer Review Mechanism

- NGF shares accurate information on States
- NGF partners with the media to create awareness of NGF's vision, mission and activities

Key messages to influence formulation and operation of policies

- NGF works with key MDAs of the Federal government
- NGF provides information and data to enable the Presidency to formulate cohesive policies
- NGF works with State governments to help them develop better policies
- NGF supports the National Assembly (NASS) to generate bills for public good
- NGF provides NASS with information on implementation of policies in States

The messages can and should be used again and again – on the covers of policy briefs, reports and more information-heavy documents, at the foot of e-mails and in other communications, to present a clear, consistent story about NGF.

The key to effectively communicating with different stakeholders is to match the information to the audience. Communications should focus on what audiences are interested in and their needs. This means providing information in a format that will be useful to them and delivering information through the channel or channels they prefer.

Messages need to be reiterated repeatedly, tailoring and weaving them into communications for specific audiences using an appropriate tone, format and language, and using channels that target audiences trust.

A selection of messages

Appropriate messages for communicating with target audiences can be chosen or adapted from the following:

NGF stands for "Nigeria Governors' Forum"

Nigeria Governors' Forum is registered under Part C of the Companies and Allied Matters Act, (CAMA), 1990

Nigeria Governors' Forum draws its legality from Section 40 of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria as amended

Nigeria Governors' Forum is a non-partisan association

Nigeria Governors' Forum promotes unity, good governance, better understanding and co-operation among the States

Nigeria Governors' Forum provides a forum for discussion and exchange of ideas

Nigeria Governors' Forum helps strengthen and promote Nigeria's federal system

Nigeria Governors' Forum helps establish and maintain smooth federal-state relations

Nigeria Governors' Forum upholds and promotes accountability and transparency

Nigeria Governors' Forum promotes peace and peaceful conflict resolution

Nigeria Governors' Forum promotes good governance and sharing of best practices

Nigeria Governors' Forum promotes understanding among Governors and States
 Nigeria Governors' Forum ensures a healthy and beneficial relationship between the States and other tiers of government
 Nigeria Governors' Forum is deliberately working towards reminding the Governors of the standards that the people of Nigeria expect from them
 Nigeria Governors' Forum monitors, evaluates, learns lessons and promotes best practices
 The State Peer Review Mechanism (SPRM) provides the basis for NGF and States to document and share knowledge at various levels
 The SPRM provides a platform for collective learning, interactions, sharing and applying best practices
 The SPRM enables the Nigeria Governors' Forum to get the right knowledge across to the right persons at the right time using the most appropriate methods or means
 The SPRM enables stakeholders within and between States to access and share innovations emerging from each State
 The Nigeria Governors' Forum supports States to document and share their reforms for learning, to enhance replication across States and stimulate innovation
 The SPRM is an ongoing exercise
 Peer learning is proving to be a successful method for bringing about significant change across Nigeria's 36 States and the nation at large

Channels

NGF communications make use of appropriate channels – to communicate with target audiences – documents, print media, broadcast media, electronic media (web, web 2.0, mobile communications). Whilst each channel has its own characteristics, messages must be consistent. Politicians, for example, read newspapers as well as policy briefs, and messages in each channel need to be the same!

Audience	Audience needs	Key messages	Channels
Governors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support for good governance best practices Support to improve performance and grow democracy Support to facilitate the States' Peer Review Mechanism Mentoring and training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NGF bridges the information gap between the Governors and the governed NGF works with State governments to help them develop better policies NGF provides State governments with access to international and local expertise and processes NGF gathers lessons from other States and provides easy access to new tools and better ways of doing things 	NGF content management system (CMS), meetings, email, media <i>Conferences/Retreats, Phone/video communications</i>
Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accurate news about NGF activities and achievements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NGF partners with the media to raise awareness of the NGF vision, mission and activities NGF provides accurate information on States' performance 	Meetings, press conferences, NGF website, training courses, communiqués
Presidency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better relations and effective communication between the Presidency and Governors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NGF works with key MDAs in the Presidency NGF provides information and data to enable the Presidency to 	Dissemination forum, NGF website, meetings, issue

Audience	Audience needs	Key messages	Channels
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information to help formulate and implement policies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> formulate cohesive policies NGF promotes best practices 	briefs, policy briefs, media
National and State Assemblies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information to enable appropriate bills to be passed State input on bills impacting their welfare before they are passed Sensitization on preparing and implementing FRL and PPL 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NGF supports National and State Assemblies in developing bills for the public good NGF provides National and State Assemblies with information on implementation of policies in States 	Dissemination forum, reports, meetings, media
CSOs and general populace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accurate information about NGF activities and achievements Information to enable CSOs and citizens to engage in governance as catalysts and watchdogs Information to enhance learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NGF helps State governments talk to each other and exchange information and ideas NGF makes the voice of the populace (masses) heard NGF helps Governors to serve citizens better 	Mass media, website, publications, meetings, media
MDAs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information for planning and to improve performance Information to enable them to replicate best practices at the State level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NGF provides relevant State data for planning NGF fosters better relations and cooperation between federal and State MDAs 	Mass media, website, publications, meetings
Development Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information to build capacity Information on best practices to improve the performance of Governors Information which could lead to greater engagement with stakeholders on inward investment Financial and technical support on FRL and PPL 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NGF provides accurate information and data to partners NGF improves access to State information NGF work is highly relevant to the work being done by development workers and NGF is keen to share any useful information they need 	Meetings, website, mass media
Wider professional networks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information to build capacity Access to information resources Information on best practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NGF fosters relations and cooperation with similar fora for learning and sharing experiences 	Website, publications
Private sector actors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information which could lead to increased private sector investment in States 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NGF provides accurate information and data for corporate social investment in States 	Meetings, website, mass media

Communications planning

The NGF Communications Strategy covers a three-year planning timeframe 2014-2016. *Annual communications action plans*, for example for 2014 and 2015, set out the activities that NGF will undertake to carry the strategy forward each year. As well as regular communications activities, such as responding to enquiries and preparing news briefs for the website, the plan will show all other communications activities to be undertaken during the year. Communication activities may be internally generated, for example the launch of a report by NGF, or prompted by external events, for example a national conference on a governance issue.

Annual communications action plans

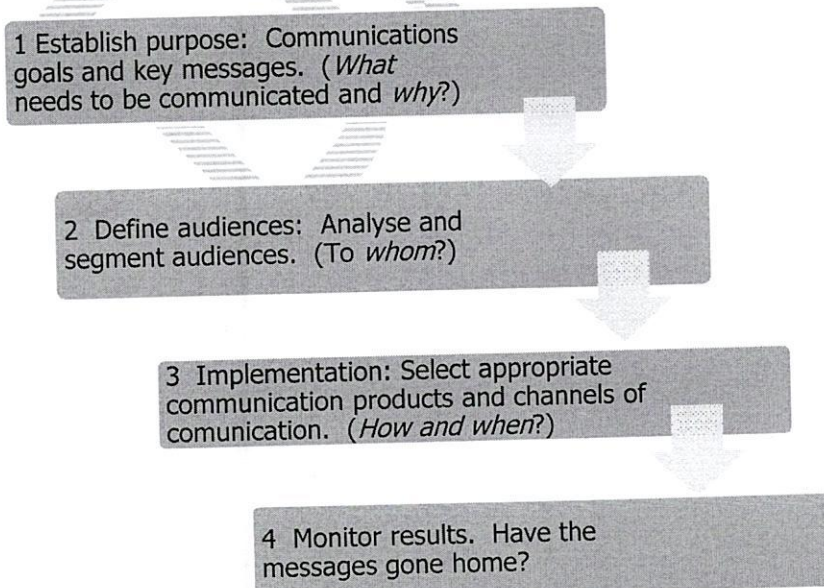
Annual communications action plans will:

- Specify activities to deliver the objectives set out in the NGF Communications Strategy to be carried out in the year in question
 - Routine activities such as updating the website, producing the annual report
 - All other communications activities as far as they are known (important unforeseen opportunities to communicate may arise during the year)
- Specify performance indicators
- Indicate resources to be used to carry out the plan

For each activity in *annual communication action plans* there will be a brief *communications activity implementation plan* which sets out in detail the communications objective of the activity, what has to be done, when it has to be done by, who will do it and what it will cost.

Communications activity implementation plans

For each communications activity in the annual communications action plan a *communications activity implementation plan*, specifying what audiences are to be targeted, what messages are to be conveyed, and identifying the person who will lead the activity, the resources to be used and the schedule, should be developed. A 4-step method for preparing a communications activity implementation plan is illustrated in the following diagram.



Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation is important to assess the effectiveness of a communications activity. Has the communication reached the right audiences? Have the messages been acted upon? Has the communication had the anticipated impact? Resources for communications are limited and monitoring and evaluation of communications activities ensures NGF gets value for money.

Progress can be tracked against annual communications action plans to assess:

- What was actually done compared to what was planned
- How successful the communications activities were, and
- How communications can be improved.

Monitoring methods can range from simple feedback questionnaires and analysing statistics on the use of the NGF website to extensive market surveys.