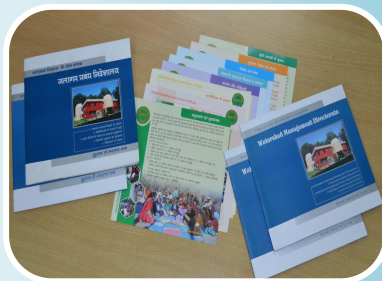


Uttarakhand Decentralized Watershed Development II Project (GRAMYA II)



Communication Strategy



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COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

UTTARAKHAND DECENTRALIZED WATERSHED DEVELOPMENT II PROJECT

INTRODUCTION

The Government of Uttarakhand through the Watershed Management Directorate (WMD) has received IDA grant from World Bank for implementing Uttarakhand Decentralized Watershed Development Project (UDWDP)-II. UDWDP-II would build upon the successful experiences of UDWDP (Gramya)-I and scale up the coverage in UDWDP-II to 509 GPs in 18 developmental blocks in 8 Mid Himalayan District of the State. The PDO is *to increase the efficiency of natural resource use and productivity of rainfed agriculture by participating communities in selected micro watersheds of the State of Uttarakhand.*

The UDWDP-II project would treat a total of 2.638 lakh ha. in the middle Himalayas ranging from 700 mt. to 2500 mt. above sea level. About 59300 households are expected to benefit from project interventions. The Gram Panchayats (GPs) and the rural communities will play the most prominent role in its planning and implementation. Based on a fixed budget amount, each GP will develop a Gram Panchayat Watershed Development Plan (GPWDP) in consultation with the community through each village's Revenue Village Committee (RVC). The government, through the Watershed Management Directorate (WMD), along with NGOs and other partner institutions, will provide technical assistance, carry out capacity building activities and ensure other support to the GPs and village communities.

Being a process- and people-led project, it becomes imperative to communicate complete information and right messages in a holistic manner to every village community member and project functionary to enable them to take informed and collective decisions. Similarly, it is critical to receive feedback from the village communities, GPs and project functionaries to enable to project to make appropriate changes and evolve to

ensure maximum effectiveness and efficiency. The project has to be understood by all in its right perspective so that they may fulfill their respective roles and responsibilities to the fullest extent possible.

The communication strategy (CS) will form an integral part of the overall implementation strategy. Its mission will be to support the realization of project objectives and bring about people-led development through UDWDP-II. The CS will cover all aspects of the project – implementation strategy and planning, interaction among project functionaries, interaction between the target communities and the project functionaries, selection and execution of GPWDPs and sub-projects, gender sensitivity among project functionaries, training of various project functionaries, media outreach and involvement of external stakeholders in this project.

OBJECTIVES OF THE COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

- Creation of an enabling environment for the communities and GPs to take informed decisions and themselves develop plans for watershed management and other development activities which lead to project objectives being met
- Facilitate an informed dialogue among village communities, GPs and project functionaries from government, NGOs and other institutions
- Positive and correct perceptions related to UDWDP among all target audiences such as village communities; Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) with a focus on GPs; NGOs; village-, district- and state-level project functionaries; partner institutions media; other opinion leaders such as elected state legislators and relevant bureaucrats; and the general public
- To empower GPs, target communities and project functionaries with correct and complete information on UDWDP
- Clarity of vision of UDWDP among project functionaries, GPs and village communities

- Social mobilization and enhanced people's participation in implementation and management of UDWDP; translates into selection of superior quality of sub-projects
- Increased participation by women and other vulnerable groups to avail of opportunities under UDWDP by exercising their voice and choice in the project
- Increased accountability of project functionaries and GPs to village communities and transparency in all processes within the project
- Development of superior GPWDPs that wholly meet the project's objectives
- Attract superior quality of personnel in government and NGO offices related to UDWDP leading to more effective and efficient implementation of the project
- Develop friends and stakeholders for UDWDP at all levels – state legislators, PRIs, Community, bureaucracy

TARGET AUDIENCE

Primary audience: village communities, GPs

Secondary audience: Project functionaries

Special audience: PRIs other than GPs, media, polity, bureaucracy, development professionals/organizations

KEY FOCUS AREAS

- i. Clarity of concept and vision of UDWDP among village communities, GPs and project functionaries
- ii. Detailed information on watershed management and natural resource management to the village communities and GPs
- iii. Detailed information on the process of participation in UDWDP and associated rules and safeguards

- iv. Roles and responsibilities of each entity, especially those of village communities, RVCs, GPs, WMD, multi-disciplinary teams (MDT), field NGOs and partner NGOs
- v. Effective participation by the village community and GPs (as evident by agreeing to contribute time and money and carry out O&M activities for assets created)
- vi. Equitable role of women at all stages of the project as they are the real managers and users of natural resources and are most affected by any changes in natural resources scenario or management practices
- vii. Effective inclusion of vulnerable groups such as landless, marginal farmers, transhumant populations, scheduled castes and tribes, women-headed households and handicapped persons
- viii. Communicate success stories/experiences from earlier projects in the state and elsewhere, especially those from community-driven and watershed management projects
- ix. High level of synergy between communication and capacity development strategies/activities
- x. Experience sharing among various GPs and village communities within the project
- xi. Refining of communication and project strategies based on feedback received through the monitoring and learning processes
- xii. Importance of Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF)
- xiii. Gender mainstreaming at all levels
- xiv. Transparency, accountability, social monitoring
- xv. Governance ,legal issues and grievance redressal

KEY MESSAGES

SOCIAL MOBILIZATION PHASE
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is watershed management?• Importance of GPWDPs in realizing long-term social and economic benefits• Ownership by communities and GPs; government and NGOs are facilitators• Self-determination of village watershed development plan and activities, and accompanying benefits, by the communities and GPs• Management by communities and GPs• Contribution of time and money by the communities/beneficiaries• Decision-making to incorporate everyone's voice and choice• Equal role of women in decision-making and management is necessary to develop sustainable and effective plans• Extra efforts to include and benefit vulnerable groups; social equity to be enhanced through the project• Seek/offer capacity building wherever and whenever required• Complete transparency in the entire process of planning and decision-making• To follow all set out safeguards and processes• Each entity to fulfill its role and responsibilities towards the common objectives of the project• Landless, marginal farmers and women can form SHGs to undertake income-generating activities• GPWDP a good combination of people's voice and technical interventions
IMPLEMENTATION PHASE
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Complete accountability and transparency in the whole process of implementation• Follow all safeguards and seek assistance wherever and whenever required• Efficient and effective use of funds• Maintenance of accounts and other documentation as per the requirements; monetary and other benefits accrue to GPs to fulfill specific norms• Effective planning for long-term O&M of assets and natural resources• Savings to be utilized for initiatives that benefit the overall village and/or vulnerable groups• Understanding and Application of ESMF• Strong monitoring by the community• Integration of ESMF in all project interventions• Sensitization of stakeholders regarding post project sustainability• Awareness generation to increase the use of alternative energy sources• Innovative approaches for Energy conservation

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Awareness generation regarding other Govt. projects Awareness toward accessibility of other programs for effective watershed development • Public participation in monitoring the project process • Technical skill development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rainfed agriculture techniques - Irrigated agriculture - Water conservation - ICM/IPM • Agribusiness / Market linkage
CONSOLIDATION/ WITHDRAWAL PHASE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainability of project interventions • Roles, responsibilities and mechanisms for future O&M • Convergence with other development programs • Awareness generation regarding other Govt. projects • Awareness toward accessibility of other programs for effective watershed development • Models of watershed development

APPROACH AND TOOLS

1. IEC activities will be carried out by the IEC cell of WMD which will be part of the proposed State Watershed Research Management and Training Institute (SWRMTI) in the Directorate.

2. Appointment of IEC Expert: An IEC expert will be appointed to manage and implement communication activities in the project. The desired qualifications and terms of reference for this post are given as Annexure-1. The IEC expert, in consultation with project functionaries and stakeholders will develop project specific and other relevant communication materials. Key messages identified for different stages would be disseminated using a variety of communication tools.

At the field level, decentralized approach for IEC would be followed through field level project functionaries, FNGOs and, PNGOs.

3. Identification of partners and service providers : S/he will identify partners and service providers who could help implement communication initiatives and activities in the project. These could be NGOs, private firms, individuals and other organizations. Some services that would be outsourced would be production of audio-visuals and audio programs, design and content of posters, brochures and other print material, content for folk performance.

4 . Participatory communication needs assessment (PCNA): Some basic communication material would be produced based on past experiences in watershed and other development projects. However, based on the results of PCNAs carried out in villages, targeted communication material and messages would be developed.

The MDTs and FNGOs or partner NGOs would be trained in carrying out PCNAs when they conduct the participatory rural appraisal in each village/GP. The PCNA would bring the information gaps among different sections of the village community, the type of preferred and effective communication tools, what communication activities to carry out at what time, the role of village community in communication activities, potential synergy in capacity building and communication activities, and identification of potential leaders/partners from the community for carrying out communication activities in the village.

5. Project name, logo and anthem: A very simple and easy-to-understand name in Hindi i.e GRAMYA-II will be used to the project and UDWDP-II be known by this name for all practical purposes. Similarly, the simple and easy to reproduce logo, which has been developed for GRAMRA phase-I, will also be used. Further, an anthem in simple, colloquial Hindi will also written and that will sung at the beginning of all meetings by village communities and project functionaries. This anthem will focus on key aspects of the project and the role the communities will play in enhancing their quality of life through this project. The common name, logo and anthem will result in a distinct identity of the project as well as lead to a higher degree of social mobilization of the village communities and GPs.

6. Use of Audio and audio-visuals: Communication tools should be very people-friendly. Preferably they should be audio or audio-visual in nature. Spots (short advertisements) on radio may prove to be very useful to establish an identity for the new project as well as communicate basic information on watershed and natural resources management, and concept of community-and process-driven projects. The AIR and FM Radio Stations will act as the ideal partner as its waves cover practically whole of Uttarakhand and it already broadcasts some programs in Garhwali and Kumaoni languages.

A sponsored weekly half-hour radio program produced and broadcast exclusively for UDWDP-II could also be considered. It would be important to include the voice and views of local communities and GPs in the content of such a program such that the design and content are highly participatory in nature, and it gives the look and feel of a people's radio program: in their language or very simple Hindi, contains what they want to say and hear, and at a time most convenient to them.

Audio-visuals have proved to be a very useful and strong tool in rural areas. The same will be true of Uttarakhand villages where avenues for entertainment are few and audio-visuals would transcend problems related to literacy. A variety of films and documentaries could be procured for projection among village communities. These could be commercial film as well as films on watershed and natural resources management. Several films that highlight the importance of self-determination by the communities, on SHGs, and community working are also available. Efforts should be made to screen a maximum number of such films in each project village. The projectors or DVD players and TV could be hired or borrowed locally for such screenings. Some specific audio-visuals may also be produced highlighting the processes and experiences of earlier community-driven watershed projects in Uttarakhand and these could be used for orientation and training of village communities, GPs and project functionaries.

7.Folk performances: Folk art and performances are a projection of community's aspirations and culture. Folk performances should be used liberally at all stages of the project to inform and mobilize the village communities. There are certain distinct advantages of folk performances. They are in local dialect, based on local culture, highly entertaining and result in two-way communication between communities and project functionaries. However, the most important role they play is that of catalyzing higher involvement of women and vulnerable groups. Most villages have one or more folk groups within or in the vicinity. They could be trained by MDTs, partner NGOs and/or FNGOs to carry out communication activities. Large amount of content for such performances could be prepared at by professional lyricists and playwrights and distributed to folk teams to be adopted and adapted into their performances.

8.Print publications: Wherever print material is used, it should be dominantly pictorial in nature, and use simple, colloquial text in large font size. The number of words used in print material should be minimal and special focus should be placed on use of colours and designs that emanate from local customs/taste and are culturally acceptable. Field testing is a must for all communication material and only after informed input by the users, should any material be finalized.

9.Media outreach: Positive and correct perceptions about the project in the media are very critical for receiving continuous support from various stakeholders such as policymakers, bureaucracy and partner organizations. A comprehensive media outreach strategy will be developed by the project. This will cover important dailies in Hindi and English, TV news channels and magazines. It is recommended that a proactive media strategy be adopted to ward of any criticism among the media of the project based on misinformation they may receive from other sources. Further, comprehensive media outreach will ensure greater amount of transparency and accountability within the project.

Important media publications and journalists need to be nurtured with good information to ensure positive coverage for the project. Key project functionaries at state and district

level may also be provided training on how to handle the media and carry out effective media relations. Some other key features of a media strategy will be the following:

- Preparation of bilingual "Media Kits" on UDWDP for ready dissemination to the media and other stakeholders and decision-makers; to be updated regularly with success stories and latest figures/data
- Site visits by the media (print and broadcast; local and national) to view and report success cases
- Fortnightly/monthly column on issues related to UDWDP in at least one of the major daily publications of Uttarakhand ; panel of project functionaries/writers could be formed for this purpose
- Media outreach at all events related to UDWDP; hold press conferences or issue press releases/advisories for important events/landmarks
- News clipping service for UDWDP-related news to be done the office of Manager-Communication
- Tie up with State level organizations like Deptt. Of Information, dealing with/into information dissemination about Govt programs. Private agencies could also be considered as and when required.

10. Synergy with capacity building activities: Training or capacity building activities are critical media for communication activities. It is recommended that there is a high level of synergy between communication and capacity building activities, as the objective of both activities is the same: to create an enabling environment for the village communities and GPs to best plan and implement the project. Training programs can act as effective venues for communication messages. Exposure visits fulfill the purpose of both communication and capacity building initiatives. Often, the first exposure of project functionaries and some village community members to the project may be at a training program. It is important to ensure that messages given out during such programs are in line with project vision and the communication strategy.

Participation of CBOs and community members in State/ National level exhibitions and fairs should be ensured. Project could help to explore such platforms and events as an effective capacity development tool.

11. Different workshops: like Disclosure, Experience sharing and Subject specific workshops could be organized to develop community's capacities and also to ensure effective implementation and monitoring of project activities.

12. Enforcement of Right to information Act: This will benefit the project in several ways: complete information for good decision-making by all, higher involvement of village communities, increased faith among the village communities in project functionaries and GPs, equal working relationship among village communities, GPs and project functionaries, and increased efficiency in the project.

13. Feedback and learning: In brief, the purpose of feedback and learning will be the following:

- To gauge the effectiveness communication tools or message delivery systems and make appropriate corrections
- To modify the strategy and/or messages based on the feedback received
- To show the impact of the communication strategy in meeting project objectives

The project will receive feedback from the village communities, GPs and project functionaries on the communication activities from process monitoring, any other monitoring and learning exercise incorporated into the project plans and personal interaction among them, and by specific efforts of the Center of Excellence/HRD cell. Such feedback would identify areas of concern, gaps in information and knowledge, changing needs of the target audiences, and measure the efficacy of each communication medium/tool. This ensures a dynamic process of learning leading to improved performance of the project. Following are some other possible feedback mechanisms/tools:

- (i) Pre-addressed and pre-stamped postcards may be distributed extensively among the village community and GP members. They will be requested to write their feedback/ views/ comments and mail it to WMD using these postcards.
- (ii) If a radio program for UDWDP is produced, a large amount of content creation and recording for the radio program will be done at the village level. Narration of views and comments by the village communities and GPs will ensure regular feedback to the project functionaries. Notably, as women generally show greater interest in listening to radio programs, it could be a good opportunity to involve them in content creation too and get to know their views and needs. It is proposed that the FNGOs would organize regular meetings or discussions with village communities around the radio programs. This would enhance the message conveying capacity of the program and bring about a two-way communication between the project functionaries and the village communities.
- (iii) The folk performances would be in the form of a two-way interaction between the audience and the performers. Thus, the performers and project functionaries present will get to know what issues are most important to the village communities. Some sections of the performances will be dedicated exclusively to issues most relevant and important to women. These sections will enable the project functionaries to interact with women in a productive and useful two-way communication.

14. UDWDP Newsletters: The village community members, GPs and other stakeholders will be encouraged to contribute their experiences, views, and comments by way of articles for any newsletter(s) that may be published by the project. They could also contribute songs or tales. Provision of a financial incentive could be considered to the contributors whose article/story/song is selected for publishing. Such an incentive would greatly increase the upward flow of information from the villages to the project.

Timeline for UDWDP II communication strategy

S. No.	Month	-6	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	zero	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5	+6	+7	+8	+9	+10	+11
	Activity																		
1.	Hiring of Manager-Communication																		
2.	Finalization of the communication strategy																		
3.	Identification of service providers and partners																		
4.	Production and collation of basic communication material																		
5.	Training of project functionaries in carrying out PCNA and implementing communication activities																		
6.	Launch of the project																		
7.	PCNAs carried out and results collated																		
8.	Production and collation of further and specific communication material																		
9.	Sustained communication activities																		
10.	Feedback and learning																		
11.	Refinement and changes in communication strategy/approach																		

Annexure 1

Professional profile of IEC Expert

- Degree cum professional experience in either of the following: rural development, communications, journalism, sociology
- At least 7-10 years of professional experience in the area of communication, preferably rural and development communication
- Excellent analytical and writing skills
- Excellent inter-personal skills
- Fluent in Hindi and local dialects of Uttarakhand ; working knowledge of English
- Ability and willingness to travel to remote villages in the state
- Takes initiatives and shares strong belief in community-driven development

Job profile of IEC Expert

- Carry out a communication needs assessment (CNA) exercise and preparation of a communication strategy based on the CNA
- Overall responsible for implementing the communication strategy which leads to higher and more informed participation by the communities and Gram Panchayats (GPs), thus furthering the objectives of the project
- Build a team comprising experts, NGOs, village- and GP-level motivators, and project functionaries that will facilitate reaching of complete and correct information on the project to the village communities and GPs ensuring complete clarity and transparency
- Build and maintain stakeholders among government, NGOs, academic institutions such that it leads to overall positive perceptions and support for the project
- Conceive and produce (or coordinate production) of various communication tools such as print material, audio-visuals, radio program/jingles and events
- Implement project's media strategy which would, among other responsibilities, include preparation of media kits, issue of press releases, organizing media visits, and placement of articles in publications such that there is support for the project among the media and its readers/viewers
- Ensure targeted distribution of all communication tools (print and electronic)

- Regular interaction with communities, GPs and project functionaries to assess and meet their communication-related needs
- Constant monitoring and modification of the communication strategy (including use of results of process documentation/monitoring and social audits) to make it more effective and efficient
- To gauge the effectiveness of communication tools or message delivery systems and make appropriate corrections
- To show the impact of communication strategy on project implementation