USAID Transform WASH
Engagement and Communication Plan

October 2017

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About USAID Transform WASH

USAID TRANSFORM WASH sets out to improve water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) outcomes in Ethiopia by increasing access to and sustained use of a wide spectrum of affordable WASH products and services, with a substantial focus on sanitation.

It does so by transforming the market for low-cost quality WASH products and services: stimulating demand at community level, strengthening supply chains and building the enabling environment for a vibrant private market.

USAID TRANSFORM WASH is a USAID-funded project implemented by PSI in collaboration with SNV, Plan International, and IRC. The consortium is working closely with government agencies - including the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Water, Irrigation and Electricity, the National WASH Coordination Office and regional governments.

This document sets out an engagement and communication plan that aims to identify advocacy objectives, key messages, and activities of the USAID Transform WASH project. Communication is an essential element of the culture and practice of the project, which has a stated objective of creating a learning agenda, internally and externally, around its market-based WASH approach.

1. Introduction

This document sets out an engagement and communications plan that aims to identify advocacy objectives, key messages, and activities of the USAID Transform WASH project. Communications is an essential element of the culture and practice of the project, which has a stated objective of creating a learning agenda, internally and externally, around its market-based WASH approach.

The goal of USAID Transform WASH – a USAID-funded five-year project implemented by PSI in consortium with SNV, Plan International, and IRC ('the Consortium') – is to improve WASH outcomes by increasing access to and sustained use of affordable WASH products and services, with a substantial focus on sanitation. In collaboration with the Government of Ethiopia, the project aims to transform the market for WASH by stimulating demand at the community level and strengthening the supply chain and the enabling environment necessary for a vibrant private market. The project will engage at national and sub-national levels to generate a WASH market driven by increased consumer demand that is met through successful and sustainable business models. This will contribute to a reduction in preventable deaths and illness due to diarrheal disease, particularly in children under five years of age.

This project employs a cyclical process of action research to trial and test market approaches, learning from the process and improving designs and approaches. Key lessons will be generated and shared.

2. USAID Transform WASH project objectives

The overall objective of the project is to improve WASH outcomes in Ethiopia by increasing access to and sustained use of a wide spectrum of affordable WASH products and services, with a substantial focus on sanitation.

The specific project objectives are as follows:

- *Increase WASH governance and management capacity at the subnational level*
- *Increase demand for low-cost, quality WASH products and services, with a focus on sanitation*
- *Increase supply for low-cost quality WASH products and services, with a focus on sanitation*
- *Increase the knowledge base to bring WASH innovations to scale*

3. Objectives of the policy engagement and communications plan

The overall goal of this plan is to support the Consortium in achieving project objectives. In particular, communication will achieve the following benefits:

External:

- *Increase external knowledge and understanding of the project.*
- *Convince key stakeholders to engage with the project to enhance project results.*
- *Improve the learning process within and between the project's learning alliances at various levels.*
- *Share project results and reflections more widely with national and global sector practitioners and key policy makers to influence policy-making and practice.*
- *Share final outcomes and lessons of the project nationally and internationally.*

Internal:

- *Facilitate documentation of lessons, results and progress.*
- *Support effective internal communications between the partners within the Consortium.*

4. Key external audiences

The success of USAID Transform WASH will affect, and depends upon, a number of critical audiences. The most significant audiences will vary in different segments and phases of the project, and defining these audiences, along with the knowledge and behaviors we want to foster, will be a key function of the project as it develops. For example, key audiences for the sanitation marketing segment are small businesses and households. For the engagement and learning segment, important audiences include government agencies at national, regional, zonal and woreda level; sector platforms; donors; private sector; micro-finance institutions; research and knowledge institutes; professional associations; and NGOs and community-based organisations. Some of these stakeholders will become members of the learning alliances.

5. Key messages

The Key messages will evolve through the project, based on evidence generated by the action research and on the needs of the target audiences.

Some of the key messages that will frame the communication activities and products are:

Current situation:

- *Low use of improved latrines and poor hygiene lead to illnesses and deaths.*
- *Diarrheal diseases remain a leading cause of death among children under five.*
- *Government has comprehensive strategies for water, sanitation and hygiene.*
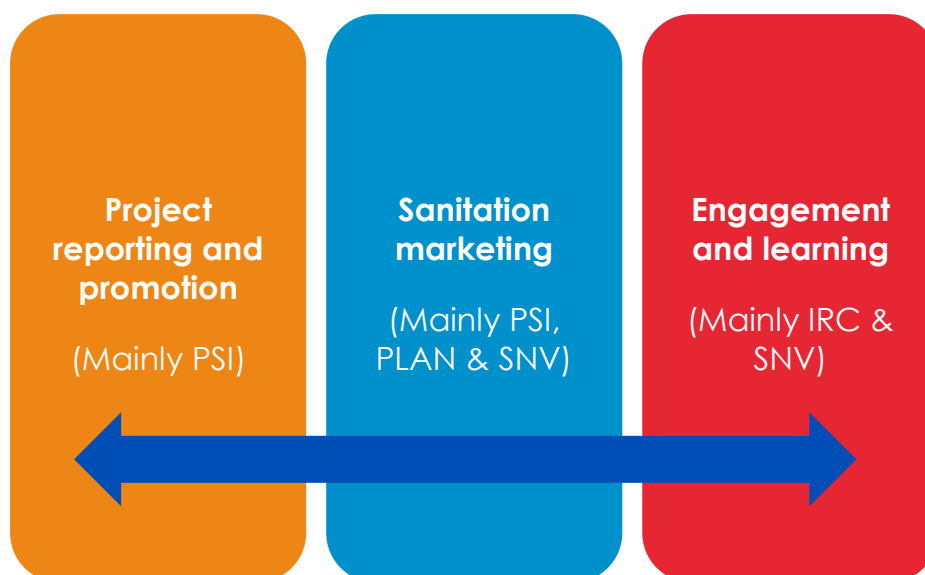
Building on existing efforts, USAID Transform WASH:

- *Develops and tests successful sanitation marketing business models that meet the demand for WASH products that are attractive to own and use.*
- *Uses innovation to stimulate demand to own and use affordable and quality products and services.*
- *Engages with government and producers to strengthen the enabling environment for a thriving WASH market.*
- *Develops innovative finance mechanisms to stimulate the WASH market.*
- *Generates evidence for effective change.*
- *Learns to improve sanitation marketing approaches and products.*
- *Brings stakeholders together to jointly develop solutions for WASH sector challenge.*
- *Scales up good practices and innovations in building effective markets.*
- *Creates a movement for change for improved sanitation[1].*

6. Scope of project engagement and communications plan

Internal and external communication is essential to engage with stakeholders, share findings and results and stimulate markets and demand through market development. We can distinguish three broad areas where targeted external communication and engagement is needed (see figure 1 below).

Figure 1: Main areas of external communications

| Project reporting and promotion (Mainly PSI) | Sanitation marketing (Mainly PSI, PLAN & SNV) | Engagement and learning (Mainly IRC & SNV) |

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[1] The commonly used term in Ethiopia is 'improved sanitation', however, in JMP and SDG the term used is 'basic sanitation'.

Project reporting and promotion: This is the responsibility of PSI as the prime partner in the project.

Market development to stimulate demand and strengthen the supply chain: PSI and Plan International are responsible for developing marketing methodologies, tools and messages to stimulate demand. PSI is also responsible for communication on the supply side with producers and SMEs. Engagement with microfinance institutions is led by SNV. These areas of social marketing, developed by the responsible partners, are largely outside the scope of this Engagement and Communications Plan.

Engagement and learning: engagement with stakeholders and building a body of knowledge about WASH marketing are essential to bring innovations to scale. This plan focuses on communication to influence key stakeholders and on learning, particularly in sharing in a timely and effective way lessons emerging from action research. Products will be produced to share innovations and disseminate the lessons of what works and does not work so that successful business models can be scaled up.

Learning starts with good documentation of the work being done and the results and reflections emerging from innovation undertaken by project partners. These results will be translated into knowledge products that will influence stakeholders inside and outside the project. Learning alliances will use these knowledge products to inform and improve their work. Learning notes and other products will also influence the broader sector in Ethiopia and networks concerned with sanitation marketing internationally.

There is a circular process that mutually supports the action research undertaken in the project, the process of reflection, and the creation of effective knowledge products (see figure 2 below). There is an action research approach document that aims to explain the relevant concepts as well as how action research is to be applied in the USAID Transform WASH project. Action research is an essential element of the culture and practice of the project, which has a stated objective of creating a learning agenda, internally and externally, around its market-based WASH approach.

Figure 2: Engagement and learning cycle
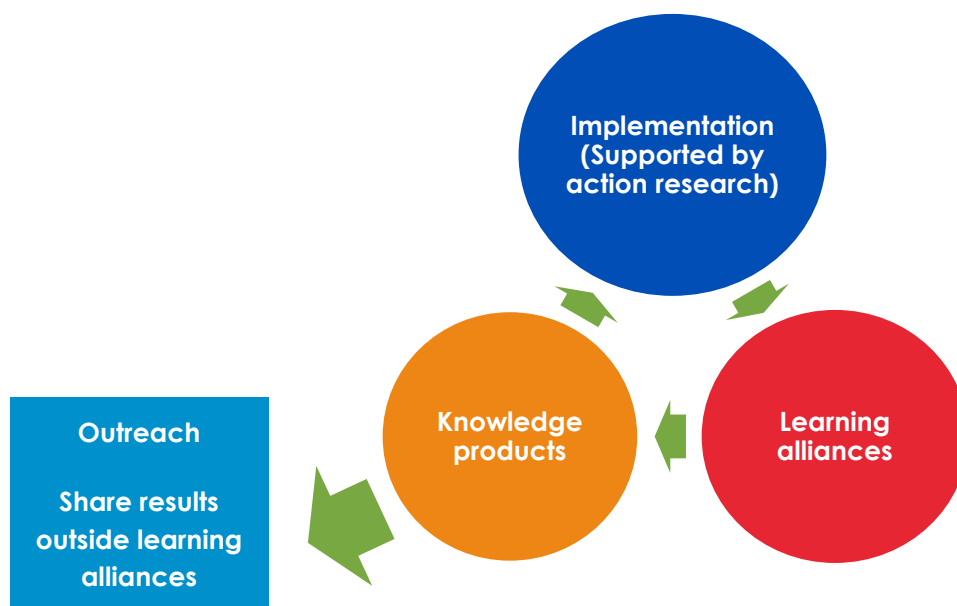
7. Key external audiences

The project places a premium on sharing work internally and externally to ensure that learning leads to greater success for the consortium and the wider WASH community. Management meetings between consortium leads will ensure effective communication among partners. A communications working group is being established with representation from each partner organization's communications personnel and will meet regularly to coordinate activities and address communication concerns. John Butterworth (IRC) will liaise between this communications group and the broader project. All staff of consortium partners will be informed about the progress of the project. A USAID Transform WASH Slack team has been set up and will be the main mechanism for internal communication among partners. An internal communications calendar will be set up to highlight and coordinate upcoming events.

8. Products, tools and channels

To achieve this plan's objectives, we will make use of a number of communications tools and products and prioritise the most effective and feasible methods appropriate for each phase of the project. Further guidance and an operational plan i.e a more detailed document that shows the link among the key audiences, communication objectives, key messages by audience and tools and persons responsible to achieve the objectives will be developed.

Standard templates for meeting/workshop report, action research report, learning note, briefing note and power point will be put in place. The communications working group that is composed of communication experts from each consortium member will meet on quarterly basis to discuss on all communication works. This communication working group will also meet as required in case of urgent matters.

We will take existing government guidelines relevant to sanitation and communications into account.

Currently we envisage the most useful tools to be the following:

- *Websites[2] of USAID and the consortium partners: highlighting news, blogs, stories, action research reports, learning notes, briefing notes, meeting reports, etc from the project*
- *Sani-mark newsletter (electronic and print) - quarterly newsletter in English and Amharic, 4 pages each. This newsletter has been published by the World Bank's Water and Sanitation Program (WSP) since October 2014 (four issues published until December 2016). Sani Mark is handed over to USAID Transform WASH in June 2017. The newsletter is intended to share information mainly on new technologies/models of sanitation marketing.*

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[2] https://www.ircwash.org/blog/transforming-wash-sector-ethiopia-business-usual-no-longer-option

Figure 3: Sani Mark Newsletter Issue No. 1

- *Action research report*
- *Learning notes: a short paper (8-12 pages) that draws out lessons from action research.*
- *Briefing notes: a short paper (4-8 pages) that quickly and effectively informs about an issue.*
- *Conference presentations and academic articles*
- *Short video interviews*
- *Photos*
- *Blogs[3]*
- *Social media, mainly twitter and face book (guidelines to be discussed)*
- *Database of interested contacts for regular emailing / texting*

Other communications tools that we are considering using in the project are:

Electronic
- *Radio - regional radio stations and FM 98.1 that is transmitted in regions (Covering learning seminars, events, other USAID Transform WASH workshops, etc)*
- *TV- EBC and regional TV stations (To transmit documentaries/films)*
- *Facebook (Regular updates of all activities)*
- *Twitter (Regular updates of all activities)*

Print
- *Newspapers*
- *Brochure introducing the project (The 4-pager)*
- *Posters*
- *Success stories (ultimately to be collected in a booklet)*

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[3] https://www.ircwash.org/news/world-bank-targets-smarter-sanitation-communication-rural-ethiopia

Consideration will be given to longer-term outcomes of the products, such as a toolkit drawing together key lessons, a short documentary film and an international seminar to share results.

Most of the materials will be produced in English and/or Amharic. Some materials may be required in regional languages.

Platforms and events
Events, such as learning seminars, will be organised to influence key audiences and share lessons. We will also participate in other relevant local, national and global WASH events where we can learn and contribute. The communications working group will identify relevant conferences and events where the project might want to have a presence.

The following platforms are relevant to the communication agenda:

- *Learning alliances meetings*
- *Sanitation marketing multi-stakeholder platform (USAID Transform WASH has taken over the secretariat role from WSP in June 2017)*
- *WASH Ethiopia movement*
- *WASH media forum*
- *Urban sanitation platform*
- *National hygiene and environmental health task force*
- *Multi-stakeholder forum*
- *Regional hygiene and sanitation forum*
- *National and international conferences*
- *Global events (Eg. World Toilet day, Global Handwashing Day, World Water Day, Menstrual Hygiene Management day, World Health Day Environment Day)*

9. Documentation

Good documentation is the basis for learning and influencing stakeholders and represents the collective memory of the project. It is vital that significant project work and events are documented to a good standard. Documentation includes things such as research reports but also lighter written materials, photographs and video interviews for project websites and future publications.

Documentation should be light and timely so that reports and products can be quickly shared. Long reports are rarely read; learning notes and briefing notes to aid learning will be 4-8 pages. Articles are best at around 500 words with blogs slightly longer at 800 words. Photographs should be as active as possible with captions indicating the what, where, when, who and why the photo was taken. Video interviews should be short and conducted where the speaker can be easily heard and background noise is not distracting. In the field, video should capture activities as well as talking heads.

Documentation should usually be about the content of what is done and learned, rather than the process of doing it, although it may be important to capture how something was done. This project is ultimately about changing people lives and the documentation should

reflect these ambitions. Where material is to be used on project websites, an approval process will be agreed between USAID and the project.

While IRC has responsibility for part of the documentation of USAID Transform WASH. However, it will be the responsibility of each partner to ensure that significant events and activities are captured and to ask for support where it is needed. Coordination by communication staff from each partner organisation will be important in this respect (see Roles and responsibilities below). It will be important for each partner to have access to a small and light camera that can produce images fit for publication and that has video capacity for capturing events and activities and for conducting interviews.

Locations (and responsibilities) for the collection and safe storage of materials will be agreed. Project materials will be catalogued and stored in more than one place. The primary storage area(s) will be in the cloud – Dropbox for documents, and Flickr for photos and videos. However, materials will also be stored on hard drives kept by partners. At a minimum, separate hard drives should be maintained by PSI and IRC. It would be desirable all four partners keep materials on their own hard drives.

A template is prepared for logging materials as they are stored. This will include date, producing organisation, author, type of material, location, short description of content, and one space for any remarks. Photos and videos should also be tagged for easy retrieval at a later date and a list of common tags will be prepared. Main responsibility for keeping this catalogue up to date will lie with IRC, but again all partners should keep a copy of the most up to date version, which will be kept in Dropbox.

10. Branding and templates

The name of the project is USAID Transform: Water, Sanitation and Hygiene that we will be referred as 'USAID Transform WASH' in all documents.

Project materials will be branded according to branding and marking plan included in the USAID cooperative agreement. The project will not have its own logo, but USAID and other logos will be used as specified in the guidance. A set of templates are produced by IRC for the production of research reports, briefing notes, learning notes and other regularly produced materials, and for power point presentations.

10.1 USAID graphic standards manual and partner co-branding guide

10.1.1. Naming

Project names should be clear, concise and represent the work of USAID. Rarely does an acronym succeed at communicating program goals and they should be avoided in almost all circumstances. Program names may be translated into a local language but USAID must remain in English at all times.

You should include: USAID (people need to know where the assistance is coming from) and a basic description of the project in simple language.

10.1.2. Brand application

At a minimum, USAID's logo should be displayed at visually equal size and prominence as each of the other partner's logos. To show partnership with the host government, where applicable, a host country symbol or ministry logo may be added. Projects should not create their own logos.

10.1.3. Co-branding

The USAID logo should be placed in the lower left corner with partner logo(s) to the right. It is important to ensure all partner logos are of visually equal weight and nothing has more prominence than the USAID logo. All seals should be same height as the USAID seal. Any bold type logos should be same height as USAID type mark (descenders may fall below the line). And if the logo uses illustration, fine lines or small text, you may manually size the logo. Minimum clear space on all sides of the USAID and partner logos is equal to the width of the "US" in the USAID type mark.

10.1.4. Social media & Websites

Social media is often part of an integrated communications campaign. It should always be used to communicate directly with stakeholders or beneficiaries in host countries. It should never be used to promote a program or contractor. Social media channels may be approved as part of a project's marking plan.

To avoid confusion with official USAID social media channels, the USAID logo should not be used as a profile picture. A photo reflective of the project should be used as a profile picture. A USAID-branded photo should be displayed as the banner photo, and acknowledgement of USAID support should appear in the "Profile" or "About" section.

10.1.5. Photography

It is best practice to accompany every photo with a caption that tells the viewer who, what, where, when and why of the subject matter. Photographers should be credited.

11. Roles and responsibilities

The primary responsibility for communication in the project lies with IRC, but communication is an everyday activity for everyone involved in the project. Communications related to specific activities of the partner organisations initially lies with the relevant partner. IRC will support as requested.

Project reporting and promotion: main responsible body is PSI

Sanitation marketing (demand and supply): mainly PSI, Plan and SNV

Learning and sharing: mainly IRC and SNV

Approval of all communication messages and materials: PSI

Communication staff from each partner organisation will meet regularly to effectively coordinate communications activities.

12. Monitoring and evaluation

The delivery of outputs will be monitored and verified based on the indicators of the project's monitoring framework.

This document will be revisited at intervals to see that it is still valid, while detailed engagement and communication plans will be produced at least annually, and thereafter kept up to date.