

COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

Implementing a resilience framework to support climate change adaptation in the Mt Elgon region of the Lake Victoria Basin



ADAPTIVE AND COORDINATED ACTIONS
FOR RESILIENCE TO CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACTS IN
THE MT ELGON WATER REGION OF THE LAKE
VICTORIA BASIN.

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INTRODUCTION

The project: *Implementing a resilience framework to support climate change adaptation in the Mt Elgon region of the Lake Victoria Basin* is being implemented in Kenya and Uganda within the Mt.Elgon region of the Lake Victoria Basin.

The project seeks to strengthen societal and ecological resilience to adverse climate impacts within the Mt.Elgon region of the Lake Victoria Basin through the application of a 'Climate Resilience Framework'.

The project goal is to enhance coordination and adaptive action between stakeholders, informed by timely, accurate and comprehensive information, for the Mt Elgon water tower in the Lake Victoria Basin.

To achieve this, the project will facilitate closer collaboration and coordinated action between government, civil society and research institutions and informed by science. The project is based on an innovative methodology structured around four key objectives:

1. Improving scientific knowledge of Climate Change information;
2. Demonstration of increased social and ecological resilience in hot spots of climate vulnerability using adaptation strategies including ecosystem based adaptation (EBA);
3. Integrating evidence from adaptation approaches into policies across sectors, and;
4. Enhancing learning on Climate Change adaptation strategies at local to regional levels.

THE RATIONALE FOR THE COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

The methodologies for this project provide a clear justification for this communication strategy specifically because the project seeks to carry out its program of work, at least in part, through a 'learning by doing approach'. This aims to build capacity of regional, such as LVBC, as well as local, such as local government, institutions and communities.

Achievement of the objectives of the programme can clearly be supported by development and implementation of a robust communication strategy. This is more so because the objectives emphasise raising awareness and strengthening transboundary coordination, for example through implementation of demonstration projects, facilitation of knowledge transfer, as well as by supporting learning and capacity building.

For example, one of the objectives' of the project is to enhance learning at local to regional levels, through better transboundary coordination and collaboration, access to information, networking and capacity building. The desire here is to ensure that individuals and institutions can learn from the project to better adapt and make effective use of improved climate information and best practice on adaptation to climate change as and when these become available. It is important, therefore, to have a communication strategy encompassing social learning and documentation of lessons, and that is effectively targeted at communities and institutions across scales.

The project also seeks to improve scientific knowledge and create awareness through the demonstration of preparedness for a changing climate future in the Mt Elgon region of the Lake Victoria Basin. This will be done to ensure that people are making informed adaptation choices. Effective communication will ensure that relevant information on scientific and local knowledge, for example with regard to practices around Climate Change adaptation, on water governance and policies, and on economic values that ensure environmental integrity are reviewed, packaged and disseminated to relevant target audiences.

The project will also raise awareness through the demonstration of increased social and ecological resilience in hotspots of climate vulnerability using various adaptation strategies. The project will develop the evidence base to demonstrate potentially sustainable adaptation as well as effective demonstration of new approaches and strategies; all of this requires a sound communication strategy.

The project will also use systems approaches for building climate resilience for regional policy frameworks and integrate them across sectors. This requires the dissemination of policy information and use of practical experience to inform policy. Effective communication is an important prerequisite for achieving this and activities could include, among other things, the convening of regional level working groups with multi-stakeholder representation to dialogue on policies.

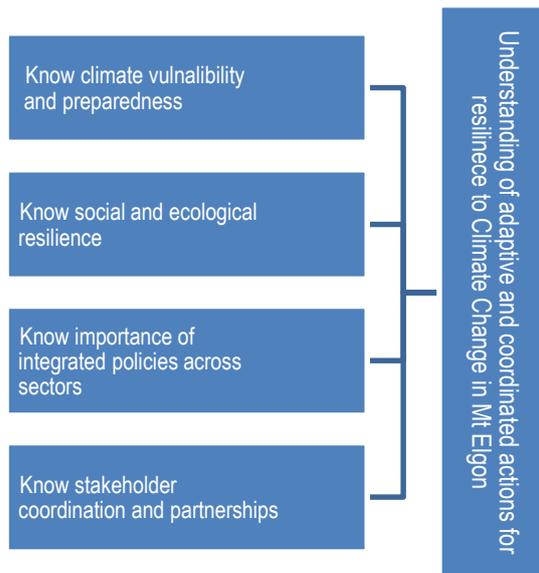
Finally, the branding and marketing plan calls for the creation of awareness on the project, USAID support, and the partnership.

COMMUNICATION GOAL

To contribute effectively to assist in achieving the project goal and objectives, the goal of the Communication Strategy is: *Increased understanding of adaptive and coordinated actions for resilience to Climate Change impacts in the Mt Elgon region of the Lake Victoria Basin.*

THE COMMUNICATION OBJECTIVES

To achieve the above goal, this communication strategy has four communication objectives as follows:



Communication Objective 1: Climate vulnerability and level of preparedness

To raise awareness on climate vulnerability and to increase the level of preparedness for a changing climate future in the Mt. Elgon region.

Communication Objective 2: Social and ecological resilience

To raise awareness and demonstrate climate change resilience through the integration of ecosystem services, economic diversification, adaptive governance and learning in water and land management

Communication Objective 3: Integrated policies across sectors

To promote the integration of climate change adaptation into existing regional policy frameworks using projects from the project interventions.

Communication Objective 4: Stakeholder coordination and partnerships

To strengthen regional stakeholder collaboration and coordination through partnerships for climate resilience.

KEY MESSAGE AREAS

In keeping with the communication objectives outlined above and considering the goal of the project, this strategy identifies 4 key message areas around which communication professionals will design specific messages. In designing the messages, different content will be generated for different target groups depending on the expected actions from the target audiences.

What to Communicate?

Communicate -

- Climate vulnerability and the need to increase/improve the level of preparedness
- Social and ecological resilience – what is it and how can it be implemented
- Integration of climate change and climate change adaptation policies across sectors
- Stakeholder coordination and partnerships

Message 1: Climate vulnerability and level of preparedness

Communication objective: *To raise awareness of climate vulnerability and of the need to increase the level of preparedness for a changing climate future in the Mt. Elgon catchment.*

The key messages under this objective will help relevant target audiences to appreciate how vulnerable Mt Elgon catchment is to the impacts of Climate Change and to what the nature of these impacts will be. These messages also need to include planned responses to address these vulnerabilities so that stakeholders can improve and increase their level of preparedness throughout the catchment.

Specific messages will be guided by the following message areas:

- There are predictions of climatic changes in the Mt Elgon region and there exists critical evidence of climatic changes in the region in time and space to plan for adaptation approaches. The messages here should be clear on how the Mt Elgon transboundary ecosystem and its communities can adapt to a changing climate using applied climate science.
- There are Climate Change impacts on key livelihood resources in Mt Elgon and these will result in people's vulnerability.
- There are scenarios (biophysical and socio-economic) for regional adaptation strategies and some of these result in investment opportunities. The messages should be clear on how applied science can be used to identify investment opportunities around adaptation.

Message 2: Social and ecological resilience

Communication objective: *To raise awareness and demonstrate climate change resilience through the integration of ecosystem services, economic diversification, adaptive governance and learning in water and land management.*

The messages under this objective will focus on helping people understand social and ecological resilience, as well as to implement actions that will help achieve this, through demonstrable action within the Mt Elgon region. This will support the 'learning by doing' approach that is a key part of the project's approach. Specific messages will be guided by the following message areas:

- There are a number of adaptation actions (including EBA) that can address Climate Change impacts, improve livelihoods and enhance climate resilience in the Mt Elgon catchment of the Lake Victoria Basin.
- There are benefits in implementing ecosystem based adaptation actions to reduce vulnerability of communities to the impact of Climate Change.
- Enhancing social and ecological resilience has benefits and value that can be demonstrated even in hotspots of climate vulnerability.

Message 3: Integrated climate change and climate change adaptation policies across sectors

Communication Objective: *To promote the integration of climate change adaptation into existing regional policy frameworks using projects from the project interventions..*

The key message under this objective is that climate resilience is best achieved when policies are integrated across sectors and using systems and ecosystem-based approaches. Specific messages will be guided by the following message areas:

- Climate resilience and adaptation should be integrated in regional and national policies and strategies and these should include ecosystem-based solutions.
- Climate resilience and adaptation should be integrated in into poverty reduction strategies and national development plans.

Message 4: Stakeholder coordination and partnerships

Communication objective: *To strengthen regional stakeholder collaboration and coordination through partnerships for climate resilience.*

This objective seeks to emphasise the importance of a multi-sectoral and co-ordinated/joint approach to dealing with Climate Change issues through effective partnerships. This will include promoting the partnerships through which this programme is being delivered in line with the Branding strategy. Specific messages will be guided by the following message areas:

- Climate resilience building is best achieved through learning and exchange between sectors and actors.
- The project is made possible with the generous support of the people and Government of the United States of America, the commitment of the governments of Kenya and Uganda, and the technical support from IUCN, the African Collaborative Centre for Earth Systems Science (ACCESS), and Lake Victoria Basin Commission (LVBC).

TARGET AUDIENCES/COMMUNICATION METHODS

Resilience building is a highly technical matter and to ensure that it is well communicated, this Communication Strategy will mostly utilise two-way methods of communication especially amongst target audiences that do not have adequate exposure to the subject matter, for example the local communities. This approach will also support the project's 'learning by doing' approach. There are many communication activities that the project might implement but given the time and availability of resources, this Communication Strategy suggests a list of 26 possible communication activities.

Message area	Target audiences	Communication method	Indicative communication activities
Climate vulnerability and level of preparedness	Local communities	Participatory videos	1. Organise participatory video sessions on climate vulnerability and preparedness in selected communities throughout the project area
		Demonstration tours/Exchange visits and extension service	2. Organise 2 demonstration tours and visits for communities between Uganda and Kenya to showcase the levels of climate vulnerability ¹
		Community meetings/workshops	3. Convene community meetings on climate vulnerability and preparedness in selected communities throughout the project area
	LVBC, Kenya and Uganda Government Departments responsible for the management of water, land and the environment, policy makers, technocrats/practitioners and NGOs	Workshop/Conference presentations and displays	4. Present project's outputs on resilience building (covering both vulnerability and social and ecological resilience) in major regional and basin-wide conferences and workshops through Paper Presentations and displays

¹ Exchange visits to showcase vulnerability & social/ecological resilience to be handled concurrently.

		Media products (print, radio and TV news and feature stories),	5. Commission 2 feature stories on climate vulnerability and preparedness and publish in leading newspapers in each country
		Exchange visits between Kenya and Uganda	6. Organise 2 demonstration tours and visits for technocrats and decision makers between Uganda and Kenya to showcase the levels of climate vulnerability ²
		Publications (newsletter stories, website stories)	7. Publish stories on relevant project activities on climate vulnerability and preparedness in LVBC, ACCESS and IUCN newsletters 8. Publish relevant project activities on climate vulnerability and preparedness through LVBC, IUCN, ACCESS and other relevant websites
Social and ecological resilience	Local communities	Demonstration tours/Exchange visits and extension service	9. Organise 2 demonstration tours and visits for communities between Uganda and Kenya to showcase social and ecological resilience ³
		Participatory videos	10. Organise participatory video sessions on social and ecological resilience in selected communities throughout the project area
		Community meetings/workshops	11. Convene community meetings on social and ecological resilience in selected communities throughout the project area
	LVBC, Kenya and Uganda Governments and NGOs	Workshop/Conference presentations, displays, and pop-up banners	12. Present project's outputs on resilience building (covering both vulnerability and

² Exchange visits to showcase vulnerability & social/ecological resilience to be handled concurrently.

³ Exchange visits to showcase vulnerability & social/ecological resilience to be handled concurrently.

	(Departments responsible for the management of water, land and the environment): Policy makers and technocrats/practitioners		social and ecological resilience) in major regional and basin-wide conferences and workshops
		Media products (print, radio and TV news and feature stories),	13. Commission 2 feature stories on social and ecological resilience and publish in leading newspapers in each country
		Exchange visits between Kenya and Uganda	14. Organise 2 demonstration tours and visits for technocrats and decision makers between Uganda and Kenya to showcase social and ecological resilience ⁴
		Publications (newsletter stories, website stories)	15. Publish stories on relevant project activities on social and ecological resilience in LVBC, ACCESS and IUCN newsletters 16. Publish relevant project activities on social and ecological resilience through LVBC, IUCN, ACCESS and other relevant websites
Integrated policies across sectors	Policy makers from regional and national institutions including the LVBC, Government of Kenya and Government of Uganda	Multi-stakeholder policy dialogues	17. Convene at least one multi-stakeholder policy dialogue each year to discuss policy issues on climate resilience building ⁵
		Publications (policy briefs)	18. Develop and publish e-policy briefs on climate resilience in Mt Elgon (focussing on both vulnerability and resilience)

⁴ Exchange visits to showcase vulnerability & social/ecological resilience to be handled concurrently.

⁵ Should this not be possible due to budget constraints, then consider participating in at least one Policy Dialogue each year convened by other organisations to discuss resilience building

Stakeholder coordination and partnerships	Practitioners from regional and national institutions including the LVBC, Government of Kenya and Government of Uganda	Media products (print, radio and TV news and feature stories),	19. Develop media releases and articles to showcase the coordinated approach to resilience building through various media outlets in Kenya and Uganda
		Publications (newsletter stories, website stories)	20. Publish stories on the coordinated approach to social and ecological resilience building in LVBC, ACCESS and IUCN newsletters 21. Publish relevant project activities on the coordinated approach to social and ecological resilience building through LVBC, IUCN, ACCESS and other relevant websites
	Governments and citizens (general public) of the US, Kenya and Uganda; and International Cooperating partners	Signage on all publications produced under the project	22. In line with the branding and marking strategy, print relevant signage text on all publications under the project to communicate the project and the partnership
		Electronic or print banners for all meetings	23. Develop electronic banners on the project and its partnership to screen during meetings

		Acknowledgement on all media, web and newsletter stories and meeting speeches	24. In line with the branding and marking strategy, add relevant acknowledgement text on all publications under the project to communicate the project and the partnership
		Publications (project flier, pop ups)	25. Develop a flier on the project and its partnership. 26. Develop pop-up banner on the project and its partnership to project during meetings.

THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The following principles will guide the implementation of the communication activities in this strategy:

Message should be clear and specific: In crafting communication messages, implementers of communication activities will ensure clarity of message and be able to outline specific issues and required action.

Tailored to target audience: In considering that the target audiences are not homogeneous, the notion of “one-size-fits-all” will not be applied in implementing this strategy. Each message and communication method will be adapted to suit the target audience.

Strengthened by facts and practical examples: To ensure effective communication, messages will be backed by specific facts generated by credible research, images and practical examples which may be in the form of case studies. The demonstration tours will contribute tremendously to this principle.

Adapted to existing communication infrastructure: Implementers of communication activities will understand the communication environment of their target audiences with the Mt Elgon catchment and will adapt their communication methods and tools to the realities on the ground.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGY

To effectively implement this strategy, communication activities and budget will be included in the project’s quarterly workplan and linked to the Objective 4 of the project. The project will mobilise Information and Communication Specialists from the two countries to support project staff. Lake Victoria Basin Commission and the Project Steering Committee will advise on and assist with the implementation of this strategy.

NGOs and regional media bodies that are active in public information dissemination will be called upon to play an important role in the implementation of some aspects of this Strategy. The involvement of media also requires the development of a Crisis Management Plan that includes training of key personnel in media relations and facilitation of a speedy response whenever controversial issues come up.

Implementation of this strategy requires the strengthening of information systems for the project to ensure easy access of the available information that should be used in developing the content for the communication products.

IMPLEMENTATION MONITORING

A detailed Monitoring and Evaluation framework will be developed as part of the project monitoring framework to guide implementation. This will ensure that the communication outcomes are evaluated as part of the broader monitoring of the project.