GOU-UNEP PROJECT ON STRENGTHENING ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY AND MANAGEMENT CAPACITY AT THE NATIONAL AND LOCAL LEVELS AS A CONTRIBUTION TO POVERTY ALLEVIATION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

COMMUNICATION STRATEGY 2006-2008

JUNE 2006

1. INTRODUCTION

Project Goals and Objectives

The Government of Uganda in partnership with UNEP is implementing a project on poverty and environment called "Strengthening environmental policy and management capacity at the national and local levels as a contribution to poverty alleviation and sustainable Development".

The project will build capacity for mainstreaming of environment into national Development strategies, amongst others, by building capacity for integrated ecosystem assessments specifically capturing the links between ecosystems and ecosystem services and their impact on human welfare. It draws attention to the linkages between poverty reduction and sustainable environmental management and brings it into the focus of Development policies and poverty reduction strategies. The project will also enhance existing initiatives in poverty reduction, enhancing economic opportunities and protecting the environment. The specific objectives of the project include but are not limited to:

- Raising awareness about the poverty-environmental linkages and bringing these linkages into Development policies and poverty reduction strategies.
- Build human and institutional capacity in integrated ecosystem assessments and mainstreaming ecosystems and human wellbeing issues into national Development strategies and policies.
- Support existing initiatives in the review of existing poverty reduction policies, programmes and plans for their relevance to the environment.
- Facilitating the formulation of integrated and coherent policies mainstreaming ecosystems and ecosystem services into the existing national Development and poverty reduction strategies.

- *Strengthening and consolidating existing partnerships in environmental management at local, national, regional and global levels; and*
- *Enhancing valuation of ecosystem services such as water catchments values, valuation of environmental impacts among others.*

In order for the project to be able to influence or contribute to policy and planning processes in the country there is need for the publicity for its activities and findings.

2   Objectives of the Communication Strategy

Because the poverty-environment linkage is not well understood by policy makers in Uganda, there is need to communicate it widely for it to be mainstreamed in development policies and poverty reduction strategies at both local and national levels in Uganda. Specifically, the communication strategy is necessary:

- To raise awareness of stakeholders about the poverty environment linkage.
- To communicate the benefits of incorporating the poverty environment linkages into development policies and poverty reduction strategies.
- To communicate the wins the project has made so as to show that linking ecosystems, ecosystem services, poverty reduction and human wellbeing contributes to poverty reduction and sustainable development.
- To communicate research findings from project consultancy studies and the integrated ecosystem assessment so as to influence policy and planning.

So why communicate?

- You want other people to know where you are going so they come in and participate.
- Getting everyone on board.
- To increase public and private sector participation in ENR management
- To communicate key challenges and milestones
- To influence policy and decision making

Who are the target audiences of the Communication strategy?

The communication strategy seeks to influence policy and decision makers at local and national levels who have an impact / influence on the use/management of Environment and Natural Resources (ENR) specifically the critical ecosystems, poverty reduction

issues, environment/natural resource policy related issues, women, youth, farmers and indigenous people.

I) Central Government

At the Central Government Level, the communication strategy will seek to inform political and technical leadership of all line ministries in general but specifically, the messages will be targeted to:

Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development

This is the Ministry that allocates resources. In order for the project to make known its usefulness to the country there is need to make MFPED technical staff aware of the importance of mainstreaming the environment into the country development plans and poverty reduction strategies.

a) Ministries that have ENR components

These are: Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF), Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Industry (MTTI), Ministry of Water and Environment and the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development.

b) Ministry of Local Government

This is the ministry in charge of district local governments that manage critical ecosystems and current the implementation of many government programmes including the poverty reduction polices.

c) Ministries whose activities have a direct impact on the success of the efforts of the ENR sector

These include: Ministry of Works, Housing and Communications, Ministry of Energy and Minerals, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education

II) Semi-autonomous institutions

These are institutions that belong to the ENR sector because they carry out activities that support / complement the activities of the ENR sector. Such institutions include Uganda Wildlife Authority, Uganda Wildlife Education Centre, National Environment Management Authority and National Forestry Authority.

III) Local governments

The communication strategy seeks to reach Local Authorities, both political and technical. Environment management in Uganda has been decentralized (Land Act, 1997) as part of a wider strategy to achieve efficiency and effectiveness in natural resource

management. At the same time sustainable environment management can best be achieved in partnerships with local governments through monitoring of land, wetland and forestry use. Local governments are closer to the action that may promote or degrade natural resources.

IV) Parliament

The publicity will seek to reach members of Parliament in general and the Parliamentary Committee on Natural Resources particularly in order to solicit their commitment to ensure mainstreaming of environment into national development strategies as well as to facilitate the formation of integrated and coherent policies mainstreaming ecosystems and ecosystem services into the existing national development and poverty reduction strategies.

V) Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)

A number of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) are involved in activities that promote sustainable use of the environment. Examples include National Association of Professional Environmentalists (NAPE), ACODE, Environmental Alert (EA), Uganda Environment Education Foundation (UEEF) and others. The role of these CSOs in management of Uganda's environment cannot be underestimated; therefore the project implementation process seeks to create partnerships with the CSOs among other stakeholders.

VI) The Media

The media are both a target audience and a channel of communication. If well informed, both the electronic and print media can lead to dissemination of information from the project to the public and other stakeholders. One of the potential media houses for the dissemination of information is the Environmental Journalists Association of Uganda (EJAU) which is also vertically linked to the African Environmental Journalists Association.

Communication channels and messages themes for target audiences

The following table provides the recommended channels of communication to stakeholder, their roles and message themes.

Audience	Role	Dissemination channels	Message themes

Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development	Coordinates development policies and poverty reduction strategies (PEAP) and allocates and disburses resources	• Brochures • Website • Progress reports • Newsletter • Policy briefs • Quarterly meetings	• Project goals and objectives and their linkages to PEAP goals • What is the poverty environmental-linkage • Importance of mainstreaming the environment into country development plans. • Linking the project to national development plans and programmes. • Key environmental challenges and policy issues
MAAIF, MTTI, MWE, MLHUD	Influence decisions of the environmental sub-sectors in these ministries Allocate resources to environmental sub-sectors under these ministries	• Website • E-mail • Brochures • Newsletters • Regular meetings • Policy briefs • Bulletins	• Project goals and objectives and linkages to goals of these ministries. • Critical ecosystems under these ministries, their changes and impacts on the achievement of their (ministries) goals. • Benefits of environmental mainstreaming into the country's development plans and programmes. • Key environmental challenges faced and policy issues
MWHC, MOLG, MEMD, MoH, MoES	Carry out activities that have a direct impact on the success of efforts of the project/ENR sector	• Brochures • Policy briefs • Newletters • Newspaper pull outs • Website • Bulletins	• Project goals and objectives and their linkages to these ministries. • Importance of environmental mainstreaming to the realization of the missions and goald of these institutions. • What is the poverty environment linkage

			• Benefits of mainstreaming the environment into country development plans • Key environmental challenges faced and policy issues
Semi Autonomous institutions such as, UWA and UWEC	Promote the sustainable management of the environment and natural resources Key players in the ENR sector	• E-mail • Regular meetings • Brochures • Newsletter • Policy briefs • Website • Bulletin	• Project goals and objectives and their linkages to these ministries. • What is the poverty environment linkage • Benefits of environmental m or mainstreaming in the realization of the mission, goals and objectives of these institutions. • Key environmental challenges faced and policy issues in these institutions.
Local Governments	District policy-making, they direct resource allocation to where resources are most needed and manage natural resource use. Monitor natural resource use in their areas.	• Brochures • Workshops • Newspaper pull outs • Newsletters • Policy briefs • Website	• Project goals and objectives and their linkages to local governments' plans and programmes. • Benefits of environmental mainstreaming into local government development plans • Key environmental challenges faced and policy issues.
Members of Parliament (Committees on Natural Resources and the Economy)	Support / promote policies that will lead to poverty reduction and sustainable development. Approve sector budgets.	• Website • Brochures • Newspapers • Newsletter • Progress reports • Meetings	• Project goals and objectives and their linkages to local governments • What are the poverty environment linkages • Benefits of

			environmental mainstreaming into national development policies and plans. • Benefits of formation of integrated and coherent policies mainstreaming ecosystems and ecosystem services into the existing national development and poverty reduction strategies. • Effects of ecosystem change to human well-being
Civil society organizations	Advocacy work and engagement in environmental management. Training on the linkage between ecosystems, poverty reduction and human well-being	• Newsletters, Reports • Brochures • Workshops • Bulletins • Website • E-mail	• Project background and goals and the possible roles of CSOs in the realization of project goals. • Awareness raising about the poverty environment linkages • Key advocacy messages on poverty-environment linkages
Donors	Set priorities for technical and financial assistance programmes	• Newsletter • Website • Progress Reports • Brochures	• Progress in project implementation • Achievements, constraints
Media	A major dissemination channel	• Newspapers • Brochures • Sector website • Press conferences and briefs • Radio and Television programmes	Project background and goal and objectives • Importance of ENR /environment to development and human wellbeing • Poverty-environment linkages • Achievements in project implementation

General Public	Holding government accountable to the people	• Radio • Television • Newspapers • Press conferences	• Project background and goals • Linkages between ecosystems, poverty reduction and human wellbeing • Demand that government protects the environmental rights of the public • Responsibilities of key institutions in environment management.

b) Further recommendations on public information channels

i) Radio Programmes

It will be necessary for the project to book radio talk shows on popular programmes. The programmes include *Spectrum* on Radio One, *Capital Gang* on Radio Capital, Radio Simba's *Mukulikeyo* and Radio West which runs a similar programme called *Mukurikyeyo* in the evenings from 6.00 pm. Talk shows make sense because issues are thoroughly presented and listeners are able to ask questions and clarifications and get immediate response. They are cost effective programmes and the sponsor gets value for money.

It should be possible for the project to arrange some free talk shows in programmes such as *Nekolera Gyange* on CBS, and Simba's *Mukulikeyo.*

ii) Newspapers

This strategy proposes two types of newspapers articles under this medium: there will be those that must be paid for and those that do not need to be paid for. The first option runs as an advertorial and may involve members of the NTC or project secretariat preparing articles to be published as an advert by newspapers, or commissioning one good journalist to prepare the materials. Care must be taken to keep the text to a minimum so that readability is enhanced.

For cost effectiveness, this will be produced by one media house and given to other media houses for distribution. For example, if it is produced by *The New Vision*, they would run 40,000 copies as an insert in the paper, give another 30,000 to the Monitor Publications to circulate in the Monitor either on the same day or the next day. This way, the project would not have to pay double costs of production, and would pay the Monitor

Publications for only distribution, which is a small fee. One such insert per year is adequate.

The best publicity days for the New Vision and Monitor, according to research done by Steadman Group, are Sundays, Fridays and Wednesdays, in that order.

The second type of newspaper articles is where journalists on their own initiate the story. They may approach a member of the project secretariat or anyone else on the NTC with questions. Care will be taken to answer such questions thoroughly and appropriately to enable the journalist write their story, that way the project will get useful publicity without paying a cent.

iv) Television

The project will make use of TV without incurring too much cost, TV stations will be invited to participate in key project events such as the launching of the integrated ecosystem assessment report. In Uganda we have Uganda Television, and Wavamuno Broadcasting Corporation (WBS). TV will enable the project to reach the urban audiences who love to watch news.

Occasionally the project will consider a TV talk show. Opportunities will be exploited to screen on TV the documentary film to be produced by a partner CSO, Environmental Alert. The launch of the integrated ecosystem assessment report itself will be a large media event to be exploited optimally.

v) Publications

The project is involved in the development of publications. Already there are three reports i.e. the report on the review of poverty reduction policies, plans and programmes for adequacy of coverage of environmental concerns, the second report is on the linkages between ecosystems, ecosystem services, poverty reduction and human well-being in Uganda and related report produced by IISD and UNEP.

The first type of publication will go out is a two-page ***brochure*** that introduces the project and provides the project profile, its vision, statement of goals and objectives as well as the planned activities.

The second publication is a ***Frequently Asked Questions brochure*** **(FAQ)** about the project. This brochure could be produced on A4 art paper full colour. It assumes all the questions that anyone would want to know about the project and provides an answer to each question. It is also possible to combine the first brochure with the FAQ brochure for even greater cost effectiveness.

The NTC needs to start and maintain a *quarterly newsletter* devoted to reporting highlights and milestones of the project. This need not be limited to only this initial phase of publicity but can develop further and continue.

It is essential for all members of the NTC and NSC to be continually updated on the progress of the project. While the newsletter will be the ideal for sharing progress with stakeholders, a *quarterly bulletin* would serve well for internal communication within the project. However the sustainability of this bulletin and the demand it places on staff time needs to be considered.

v) Press conferences

It will be necessary for the project to establish regular contact with journalists. What has worked well elsewhere is for projects to identify journalists that report on ENR issues and invite them for a briefing. The briefing will contain key information.

When the project organizes workshops, opportunity will be used to invite in some of the members of EJAU primarily for their own education and information and secondly to motivate them cover ENR and specifically project issues. Such interactions will make journalists gain great interest in the project and start writing stories on their own initiative.

vi) E- mail and Internet

The project will continue to use e-mail to share information with stakeholders who have an e-address. The project will continue posting information on the Intranet website developed by UNEP for the focal countries and opportunities will be explored to link it to the NEMA website. Information that will be posted on the Website includes the project goals and objectives, all publications, policy proposals and any progress reports.

Feedback, Monitoring and Evaluation

For effective communication to take place, it has to be two-way. The project will need mechanisms through which feedback from the stakeholders will be received. Some of the proposed channels in this strategy inherently provide a feedback mechanism themselves. Such mechanisms include talk shows, meetings, e-mail and workshops. The project should take advantage of such opportunities to listen, interact, discuss, and to share ideas and information so that the implementation process is enriched.

Whenever a report or newsletter is sent out, it is necessary to request for feedback in the cover letter. This could be in a simple form to be filled or a simple questionnaire that takes less than three minutes to fill in.

It is ideal to carry out a comprehensive review of any communication strategy after one year of implementation. Since the project aims to have a new work plan by end of August

this year the effectiveness of this publicity strategy will be carried at the same time next year. Findings will then be used to inform the revision of the strategy to make it appropriate for project implementation.