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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A national financial inclusion strategy (NFIS) is a comprehensive public document formulated at the national level to systematically accelerate the level of financial inclusion in a given country. An NFIS is developed through a broad consultative process involving, among others, national public and private sector stakeholders engaged in the development of the financial sector¹.

To effectively execute and implement the NFIS, a comprehensive national communication strategy (CS) is required to support better stakeholder coordination and information dissemination. The CS should create awareness and understanding to persuade the target audience of the benefits of financial inclusion in relation to access and use of financial products and services to better their living conditions. The “senders” (message sent) and “receivers” (message received) must converge and the variance between the message sent and the message received must be minimal.

The CS would set forth the strategic direction through its purpose, goals and objectives. It would include a situational analysis through a Strength, Weakness, Opportunity and Threat (SWOT) assessment. A Known Knowledge Attitude and Plan Assessment and landscape mapping are also important assessments that will help determine the precise strategies that are needed to cover target audiences, developing messaging and identifying appropriate communication channels. These will also assist in determining an appropriate budget and monitoring and evaluation framework.

The purpose of the CS is to ensure a fully integrated approach to communication which is aligned to the NFIS that will facilitate the achievement of its goals and targets. More specifically, it should ensure that the message reaches the target audience in a timely manner through the ongoing support and commitment from all stakeholders. The main objective of the CS is to enable effective engagement of all the NFIS stakeholders to better collaborate on the identified needs, share and disseminate appropriate and complete information to the target audience and the general public. This entails supporting the provision of a common shared vision on the implementation of the NFIS. In a SWOT Analysis for a CS, the participation of a multiplicity of stakeholders and the confidentiality of some of the private sector data for monitoring the NFIS are a challenge.

Also, given the competing needs for resources, the inadequate allocation of sufficient resources for the implementation of the NFIS can be a threat hence the need for a CS.

In the development of messaging, the messages should be integrated and embedded across the stakeholder spectrum. These should be developed to achieve uniformity of format and core theme across the entire web of all the stakeholders that participate in the implementation of the NFIS. The messages should assure the right positioning and differentiation of the target audience, the understanding of the key transition points and challenges, the appropriate messaging and the relevant channel for communication. The content and tone of the messages, supporting materials, delivery mechanism, the frequency and the target coverage are essential and these should be cognisant of the resource availability. The messaging should allude to and demonstrate the contribution of the NFIS to the global goals such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and national development goals such as poverty alleviation, employment creation, and overall economic growth. The messages should incorporate the financial inclusion indicators, and these are elaborated in the AFI Financial Inclusion core indicators.

The cost of communicating NFIS depends very much on the different channels one uses to get the messages across to the target audiences. Some of the channels may cost more than others. Nevertheless, the important thing is to weigh the cost of transmitting the message and the benefit that the target audiences receive. If the organizational structure of the NFIS governance mechanism has a number of separate and functionally independent players, a choice should be made between a centralized or decentralized budget.

¹ AFI, 2016 , National Financial Inclusion Strategy - A Toolkit Guideline Note No. 20 Available at: <https://www.afi-global.org/sites/default/files/publications/2016-08/Guideline%20Note-20%20FIS-Toolkit.pdf>

INTRODUCTION

The implementation of the NFIS cuts across and goes beyond the financial sector. It involves different stakeholders both in public and private sectors, within and outside the financial services sector.

To ensure better coordination and support for the stakeholders, a comprehensive national communication strategy for the implementation of the NFIS with a clear purpose, goals, and objectives is required. This should provide an organizing framework for stakeholder management and communication outreach that will be able to facilitate the NFIS implementation. The clear articulation of the target audience, relevant communication channels, and appropriate messaging are amongst the key success factors of a good CS for the NFIS to reach diverse target audiences.

It is important that the CS is coordinated by a Secretariat on behalf of the governing body responsible for financial inclusion in the country and this could be a National Financial Inclusion Council (NFIC), National Financial Inclusion Taskforce (NFIT), or the appropriate governance structure that has been established to oversee financial inclusion. The CS is to be implemented based on the NFIS.

This Guideline Note provides guidance for the development, processing, dissemination, and sharing of information to support the implementation of the NFIS. It suggests steps to be taken in developing actions, key messages to be delivered, defining target audiences and selecting communication channels to be used to deliver and receive information. It also includes budgetary provisions to enable execution of the strategy, allocated timeframe, coordination, as well as monitoring and evaluation of its outcomes.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the CS is to set the strategic direction for effective and efficient communication to enable NFIS implementation. Without a CS, attaining the goals and objectives of the NFIS will be difficult.²

The closeness of the link between the purpose of the strategy and the NFIS will foster a shared vision amongst all stakeholders. The CS should therefore encompass a fully integrated approach in communication that is effective and efficient. It should identify the right target audience in accordance with the NFIS, and subsequently the effective messaging and communication channels to use.

More specifically, the CS should communicate to the target audience the benefits of the NFIS and targets set therein, using the appropriate messaging and channels of communication, and ensure feedback of the effects of the communication within the relevant time period of the NFIS. To achieve these, it is important to ensure ongoing commitment and support from all stakeholders for all aspects of the NFIS.

² AFI, 2016 , National Financial Inclusion Strategy - A Toolkit Guideline Note No. 20 Available at: <https://www.afi-global.org/sites/default/files/publications/2016-08/Guideline%20Note-20%20FIS-Toolkit.pdf>

OBJECTIVE

The main objective of the CS is to provide a systematic, efficient, and effective approach for engagement among all the NFIS stakeholders for better collaboration on the identified needs, and to share and disseminate appropriate and complete information to the target audience and the general public.

Specific objectives of the CS include the following:

- > To enable stakeholders to have a shared vision, commitment, and coordinated approach in driving the financial inclusion agenda to achieve the intended goals
- > To establish a repository on the NFIS key milestones, implementation plan, and other relevant reports to be accessed by the stakeholders, the target audience, and the general public
- > To encourage participation of the private sector in promoting financial innovations to support the financial inclusion agenda and the generation of financial inclusion data
- > To build awareness of the target audience and the general public on the importance of financial inclusion, provide feedback on the key milestones in the implementation of the strategy, and demonstrate the impact of financial inclusion on national sustainable development

The CS for the NFIS has an inherent two-way approach; it feeds implementers (stakeholders) and the general public, and receives feedback from them.

SWOT ANALYSIS

The following is the SWOT Analysis for the CS:

STRENGTHS

- > Evidence-based NFIS with M&E framework
- > Clear financial inclusion core indicators
- > Availability of financial inclusion data (Findex, FinScope, etc.)
- > Existence of financial inclusion focal points within the central banks or ministries of finance.



WEAKNESSES

- > Limited participation of the multiplicity of stakeholders in the implementation of the NFIS
- > Sensitivities around some of the private-sector data necessary to monitor the NFIS
- > No clear understanding of the NFIS and its contribution to overall national sustainable development
- > Competing needs for resource allocation
- > Cost of implementing the CS



OPPORTUNITIES

- > The central banks and ministries of finance
- > Global and regional support for financial inclusion
- > Capacity building programs on financial inclusion
- > Relationship between financial inclusion and the SDGs, and national sustainable development goals.



THREATS

- > Low levels of local political support
- > Limited interest from the private sector to collaborate and provide the data
- > Consumer perception towards the financial system
- > Lack of resources required to implement the CS



COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

Communication channels are the mechanisms and tools through which key messaging reaches the intended target audience.

Relevant and cost-effective communication channels must be employed to get key messages across to the target audience. Although face-to-face transmission of messages is considered more persuasive as it provides a dynamic and effective way for dealing with stakeholders, it is often costly. The challenges are found in the limited resources (including finance), the social environment, population densities, geographic landscape, and time constraints. The alternative channels of transmission could include the following:

TABLE 1: CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION

PUBLIC MEDIA	FOLK OR TRADITIONAL MEDIA	EVENTS/ LOBBYING	MARKETING
Local & national	Social media (Facebook, Twitter Instagram etc.)	Launch events	Fliers & Brochures
Print, broadcast & online	Email	Public speeches	Video clips, Website & Branding
	Face-to-face meetings	Conferences / Seminars	Advertizing
	Call conferences	Tours	Use of celebrities and financial inclusion champions
	Written messages	Funding bodies	
	Instant messenger services	Town hall meetings	
	Collaborative technologies (e.g. Google Docs)	Interest groups	
		Showcases/ exhibitions	

TARGET AUDIENCE

To ensure the effectiveness of the CS for NFIS implementation, the target audience - and the relevant and appropriate communication channels - must be clearly defined. The precision of the message depends on how well-defined the target audience is. Therefore, a clear understanding of the financial inclusion landscape, the proper segmentation of the NFIS target groups, and their characteristics are critical ingredients to determine the range of the target audience.

In defining the audience, six questions should be asked:

1. Who do we want to reach out to?
2. What are the most pressing financial inclusion information needs and desires?
3. Where do they get information?
4. When are they most attentive to the information source?
5. Why should they be informed?
6. How do they provide feedback to information received?

The description of the target audience should specifically include the following:

1. CURRENT LANDSCAPE

Provide baseline data on existing Knowledge, Attitude and Practice (KAP) relating to the basic subject matter of the financial inclusion information intended for the targeted audience:

This is a critical comparative indicator for testing the veracity of the CS and the progress towards attaining the intended objective. It is an assessment of the current information gap and channel suitability for the audience spectrum. It enhances the understanding of the vision, definition, and the target for financial inclusion. Statistics and current relevant case studies can provide the evidence. Audience sampling would provide statistical data that can lead to a better understanding of the audience and channel effectiveness.

2. MAPPING CURRENT CHANNELS

List out researched targeted audiences' preferred channels of receiving and sending information and their basic operational mechanism and structure. Determine the appropriateness for communicating with the target audience by addressing the following questions:

1. What channels are most accessible to the audience?
2. Is the channel affordable and sustainable over the long term?
3. Is audience access to the channel sustainable and cost-free?
4. Does the intended message fit the channel and meet the expectations of the audience?
5. Does the channel provide for flexible access and usage?

3. LANGUAGE

Provide the messaging in the language and dialect that is suitable and appropriate for the target audience and understanding sociocultural and professional norms:

This includes having a clear understanding of the lifestyle and the expectations of the respective target audience to appropriately position and deliver the message.

4. TECHNOLOGY

The use of technology is essential not only to diversify the delivery channels but to enhance coverage and to minimize the cost of disseminating the information. Taking a socio-technical systems approach is important as it applies an understanding of the social structures, roles and rights of the relevant stakeholders to inform the design of systems that involve communities of people and technology. The guiding principle is that the technology should be appropriate for the communication purpose and in common use by the targeted audience.

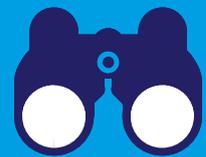
DEVELOPING CORE MESSAGES TO DELIVER/ COMMUNICATE

Getting across the main messages about the implementation of the NFIS underpins the very basis of having the CS. However, the messages should be integrated and embedded across the stakeholder spectrum.

Where the network of partners is diverse in functions and responsibilities, messages should be developed to achieve uniformity of format and core themes across the board. However, delivery should be flexible, with partners being partly responsible in line with their work schedule and strategic objectives.

Against this background, the primary focus in developing the communications message should have the following:

- > UNIFORMITY
- > INTEGRATION
- > CONSISTENCY
- > FLEXIBILITY



In addition, the messages should emphasize the right positioning and differentiation of the target audience, understanding of the key transition points and challenges, appropriate messaging, and relevant channels for communication. These are essential and should be cognizant of the resource availability.

The key messages must be clear and easily understood by the target audience. Messages should be event-focused where appropriate and/or be able to draw and hold the attention of the targeted audience. These could be sequenced as set out below:

PRE-IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NFIS

- > To circulate the NFIS document to the stakeholders
- > To launch the NFIS and highlight the intentions and content of the strategy, the responsible actors, the institutional arrangements for implementation and the intended benefits of the implementation.

IMPLEMENTATION

To publicize the following:

- > Vision, mission, objectives and the intended results of the NFIS
- > Content of the NFIS
- > Implementation stakeholders for the NFIS
- > To encourage and promote access to formal financial services
- > Expected targets and action dates

POST-IMPLEMENTATION

The communication framework can help in the M&E of the NFIS in terms of the following:

- > What has been achieved and what remains to be achieved?
- > What has been the value addition?
- > What is the future direction?

Furthermore, when communicating financial inclusion to the general public, it is important to recognize a particular setting of a region or place, so that the mode of communication can be context-specific. Different regions, villages, or communities (urban or rural) may not get the information if the mode and channel of communication is standardized. There are three ways in which core messages can be conveyed using the available channels. These include:

1. THE COGNITIVE-INFORMATIONAL APPROACH

This is also referred to as Knowledge-Attitude Behaviour Approach. Knowledge shapes a person's attitude towards a certain behavior to consume a certain financial product and/or service. Communicating a message about access to and use of financial products and services, and its impact on human lives, has a linear relationship with increased knowledge of the importance of financial inclusion. This engenders favorable attitudes with corresponding behaviors. Increasingly, the more knowledge the target audience has, the more it persuades them to have access to and use of financial services.

The cognitive-information behavior can be further disaggregated into declarative knowledge and procedural knowledge. These two behaviors have different impacts on the target audience's attitude. Declarative knowledge stresses factual information about a particular product/service while procedural knowledge informs and provides advice about specific consumers' behaviors with regard to financial inclusion. An example of the latter could be advisory services on a financial product.

2. THE EMOTIONAL-EXPERIENTIAL APPROACH

This approach is underscored by the notion that people change their attitudes based on emotions or feelings. For financial inclusion, communication could be designed to induce positive emotions such as feeling financially competent and secure if, for example, a customer has access to a credit facility with a bank. Positive emotions increase encouragement, which can lead to wider information consumption by the target audience or the public.

3. NORMATIVE APPROACH

This value-belief framework is particularly influential with regard to behavior shaped by normative factors. People's motivation to have an account with the bank, for example, relates to personal values such as savings for future consumption as a safety net, or having a superannuation for social security. It is said that normative appeals are persuasive and could be good predictors for pro-financial savvy behaviour.

TIMETABLE FOR RELEASE OF COMMUNICATION

Having a timetable for the release of financial inclusion information provides for timeliness of information dissemination and creates an expectation with the target audience.

This ensures that they stay engaged in the activities of the NFIS. Putting together an effective timetable for a communication strategy should include working backwards from task deadlines and accommodating long lead-in times to ensure timeliness. Part of the strategy should include using catchy statements and persuasive phrases to attract interest and capture attention. It should also ensure the availability of relevant spokespeople and venues well in advance. The strategy should coordinate the roles of players, and identify who is told what and when, thus creating a timetable of activities. Monitoring the timetable should be ongoing and adjustments made as necessary.

TABLE 2: SMART GOAL TESTING³

TESTING CRITERIA	MAIN QUESTIONS TO BE ASKED AND REMARKS
SPECIFIC	Is the target clear, straightforward and specific? > Only clear and specific targets can provide clear signals to stakeholders.
MEASURABLE	Is the target measurable and can its progress be tracked using relevant indicators? > If a target is not measurable, progress toward the target cannot be systematically monitored. > Tracking progress creates strong incentives to meet the target. > Tracking provides insights into challenges and opportunities. > Being measurable compels the use of reliable indicators to monitor progress.
ATTAINABLE	Is the target attainable while still being ambitious? > The target needs to strike a balance between being ambitious/aspirational and realistic. > Unattainable targets tend to damage the credibility of stakeholders.
RELEVANT	Is the target relevant in relation to the country context, stated goal(s) and/or objectives? Is it in line with strategic priorities and strategic measures? > A target that is not aligned with any one of these cannot be considered sound.
TIME-BOUND	Is the target associated with a specific timeframe? > A target without a deadline does not send a strong message that it will be achieved. > Specifying a deadline encourages stakeholders to act in a timely way.

BUDGET & FINANCING

The cost of implementing the CS depends very much on the different channels one uses to get the key messages across to the target audience.

Different channels may cost more than others. Nevertheless, it is important to weigh the cost of transmitting the message against the benefits that the target audience receives. If the NFIS governance structure is such that there are separate and functionally independent players, a choice should be made between a centralized or decentralized budget. In making this choice, guidance must be taken from the following:

1. The diversity of the cost centres and the budgeting point
2. Are all the channels in the same locality with all the players assuming responsibility for messaging? (decentralised budget)
3. Is access to the budget flexible and within the operational reach of all partners? (centralized budget)
4. Is it appropriate for the institutional finance functions? If so, can the budget be centralized?
5. Are activities complex and do they occur infrequently? (centralized budget)
6. Are activities high-risk, requiring extensive controls? (centralized budget)
7. Is data integrity preserved? (centralized budget)
8. Is decision-making fast? (decentralized budget)
9. Can duplication and processing costs be reduced? (make budget centralized)

In essence, budgeting and its controls are not tailor-made. Depending on the operational requirements for efficiency and timely delivery of the core messages, budgeting may incorporate centralized and decentralized formats to suit the operational needs and the decision-making process. The executing authority of the NFIS should ensure that the budget for the CS is adequately allocated periodically (i.e. quarterly, annually, etc.), and is separate from other commitments.

³ AFI, 2016, National Financial Inclusion Strategy - A Toolkit Guideline Note No. 20

DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY

Delegating authority for approval is important in a CS. This will ensure that accountability and responsibility in the implementation of the strategy is maintained. It will discourage the release of communication to the stakeholders from any source and by anyone. It is important that the right messages - not erroneous or inappropriate ones - go out to the target audience. The delegation of authority will ensure that the communication released and the channels used have been sanctioned by the appropriate staff and disseminated responsibly to the target audience.

In the delegation of authority, the approval or sign-off process for communications should go through as few people as possible. It is best left to those with the relevant skill set. This will ensure that the implementation of the strategy is executed effectively and efficiently. Having more people to approve the process may result in differences or competing views and therefore may hinder the timely execution of the communication.

Delegation of authority in the budgetary approval process is also important because communication budgets - while varying in size - are not unlimited. Proper administering of the communication budget to the most impactful outcomes is needed.

A COMMUNICATION STRATEGY - TANZANIA CASE STUDY

INTRODUCTION

The National Financial Inclusion Framework (NFIF) is a unique public-private stakeholders' initiative set up to build an inclusive and effective financial system in a coordinated manner.

The CS is a mechanism set out for key stakeholders - including implementing institutions of the NFIF - to be able to engage among themselves and inform the general public about the progress regarding implementation of the framework. It also gets feedback from the public to help fulfil its aim in achieving the target set to increase access to and usage of formal financial services in the country. Key stakeholders are ministries, government agencies, regulatory authorities, associations and networks and development partners.

TRANSITION

The CS is coordinated by a secretariat on behalf of the Financial Inclusion National Council (FINC) and is implemented based on the National Financial Inclusion Framework (NFIF). Tanzania implemented the first CS from 2014 to 2016, communicating the first NFIF which ended in December 2016. Currently, it is implementing a second CS following the launch of the second NFIF (2018-2022).

IMPLEMENTING APPROACHES

Two approaches have been adopted to facilitate implementation of this Strategy. These approaches include an internal one, which is specifically for implementing institutions of the NFIF, to ensure that there is a common understanding among themselves about tracking performance of approved activities and managing resources. Implementing institutions are from ministries, government agencies, regulatory authorities, associations and networks.

The other approach is the external one, which will raise awareness on the importance of financial inclusion, give feedback on key milestones in the implementation of the framework to the general public, and deepen private-sector participation in supporting financial inclusion.

CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION

Different channels of communication have been identified and these include meetings, conferences, workshops, exhibitions and showcases, television and radio talks, product innovation challenges, brochures/leaflets with financial inclusion messages, celebrity endorsements, religious leaders, websites, media engagements, drama groups, speeches, and publications and promotion materials.

INTERNAL APPROACH

During the period 2014 to 2016, the Secretariat conducted all meetings for implementers as planned. The meetings were conducted at three levels of committees as per the coordination structure, namely, the National Council (NC), the National Steering Committee (NSC), and the National Technical Committee (NTC) and the Secretariat (NS).

EXTERNAL APPROACH

Only one meeting for stakeholders was conducted to inform them about what transpired in the implementation of the First NFIF and to get feedback. In addition, the Secretariat managed to conduct meetings with political leaders and local governments, arrange exhibitions, showcases, and television and radio talks. The feedback and ideas collected from these meetings, which involved the general public, were taken as input during the development of the 2nd Framework.

CHALLENGES

The following are the key obstacles with regard to the implementation of the NFIF CS:

1. Limited resources in terms of funds and personnel
2. A short-term implementation period of NFIF (2014-2016). Three years was not enough to conduct mid-reviews and present the findings to stakeholders and the general public.
3. Delayed implementation. The full implementation of the framework started a year later, beginning in 2015 and not in 2014 as planned, due to a lack of funds.
4. Unavailability of a website, which could have better informed the general public about the progress made in the implementation of the NFIF
5. Absence of a database: this could have supported data collection which would have been an invaluable part of feedback from stakeholders and the general public.

ACTION REQUIRED

To address these challenges, the following has been done:

1. **Resource mobilization:** the second CS is well planned and budgeted to attract the support of funders/donors. The Central Bank as Secretariat and leading institution has allocated finances for all committees' meetings.
2. **The period for NFIF 2:** this has been extended to five years to give room for the Secretariat to conduct mid-reviews and brief the public regarding progress. The period for NFIF 2 is from 2018 to 2022.
3. **Website:** a website has been developed to publicize financial inclusion issues, including the progress on implementation.
4. **Establishment of a financial inclusion database:** a database is now in place to receive feedback from stakeholders.

CONCLUSION

It is important to have clarity in every aspect of the CS, beginning with a statement of purpose that clearly specifies the reasons for the strategy and how it is linked with the NFIS. The closer the link, the more accurate and direct the communication will be.

It is important to have clarity in every aspect of the CS, beginning with a statement of purpose that clearly specifies the reasons for the strategy and how it is linked with the NFIS. The closer the link, the more accurate and direct the communication will be.

The need for data collection for the CS is also important because baseline data will help clarify the appropriateness of clear and concise strategies, and actions to take. It will also serve as a benchmark to measure the effectiveness of the results of the communication strategy against baseline data.

There should also be keen awareness of audience and messaging in developing the CS. It is important to clearly identify the varying levels of the target audience and the messaging that is required to reach them. This is of utmost importance. Accompanying appropriate communication channels are essential for the effective delivery of the communication strategy. Institutional approvals for release of communication and timeliness of disseminating information are also critical to ensure successful execution of the strategy.

Finally, the success of the CS can only be assured if the appropriate resources are made available to enable its implementation.

ACRONYMS

AFI	Alliance for Financial Inclusion
CS	Communication Strategy
FINC	Financial Inclusion National Council
FINF	Financial Inclusion National Framework
KAP	Knowledge, Attitude and Practice
M&E	Monitoring & Evaluation
NC	National Council
NFIC	National Financial Inclusion Council
NFIS	National Financial Inclusion Strategy
NFIT	National Financial Inclusion Taskforce
NS	National Secretariat
NSC	National Steering Committee
NTC	National Technical Committee
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals



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