



Norway's International
Climate and Forest Initiative
(NICFI)

PATSPPO Communication Strategy

February 2021

PLANNING

PATSPO Communication Strategy

Provision of Adequate Tree Seed Portfolios

February 2021

List of Acronyms

AFE	Amhara Forest Enterprise
AOCC	African Orphan Crops Consortium
BSOs	Breeding Seedling Orchards
CEEFRC	Central Ethiopia Environment and Forest Research Centre
CSO	Civil Society Organization
EFCCC	Environment, Forest and Climate Change Commission
EEFRI	Ethiopian Environment and Forest Research Institute
EOC-DICAC	Ethiopian Orthodox Church-Development and Inter Church Aid Commission
GIZ	Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (German Society for International Cooperation)
ICRAF	International Centre for Research in Agroforestry
ILRI	International Livestock Research Institute
MoA	Ministry of Agriculture
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NICFI	Norway International Climate and Forest Initiative
OFWE	Oromia Forest and Wildlife Enterprise
PATSCO	Provision of Adequate Tree Seed Portfolios
REDD+	Reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation
RNE	Royal Norwegian Embassy in Ethiopia
UNDP	United Nations Development Program

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1. Current Situation

Provision of Adequate Tree Seed Portfolios (PATSPO) is one of the major projects implemented by World Agroforestry (the International Centre for Research in Agroforestry – ICRAF) in Ethiopia. The project, which has so far been implemented for four years (2017-2020), is financed by the Norwegian International Climate and Forest Initiative (NICFI) through the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Ethiopia (RNE).

ICRAF and the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs/Norway International Climate and Forest Initiative (NICFI) represented by the RNE, entered into a grant agreement in May 2017 for the implementation of the PATSPO Project. While implementing the project, ICRAF is working in coordination with the Ethiopian Environment, Forest and Climate Change Commission (EEFCCC), the Ethiopian Environment and Forest Research Institute (EEFRI) and NICFI/RNE.

The PATSPO project is designed to ensure access to high quality seeds of the most important tree species used for forest landscape restoration and all other tree planting activities in Ethiopia. PATSPO is therefore necessary to achieve the ambitious restoration targets of Ethiopia's Climate-Resilient Green Economy Strategy.

The project impact is expected to:

- Support Ethiopia reach its national forest restoration targets for the next 20 years (until 2037) and beyond.

The project outcome is:

- Enabling the tree seed sector in Ethiopia to provide high-quality seeds of priority tree species for large-scale restoration plantings.

The project outputs are:

- Developing the tree seed sector in Ethiopia (by preparing strategies, giving policy recommendations, defining the roles and responsibilities of the actors in the sector, creating efficient seed delivery systems etc.);
- Modernising the tree seed and seedling knowledge and information systems (by providing the knowledge and information required to establish a national modality for conservation, improvement and utilization of tree genetic resources, leading to establishment of improved seed sources and conservation areas, as well as delivery of germplasm of the priority tree species in Ethiopia);
- Upgrading the existing seed sources and establishing new seed sources of priority tree species (The project has established breeding seedling orchards (BSOs) as breeding trials which at the same time serve as seed production areas producing genetically high-quality seeds.);
- Building and improving the capacity of the national institutions in management of tree genetic resources (through training, education and awareness programme for all major actors, by

providing essential equipment for the major national and regional organisations and by also contributing new knowledge to the higher education curriculums and by providing opportunities for upstream technology transfer, e.g. like to those in African Orphan Crops Consortium (AOCC) lab and the ICRAF Geoportal and spectral soil laboratory).

Project achievements so far:

- The Ethiopian tree seed sector has been assessed and tree seed policy and strategies have been developed.
- A tree seed network of stakeholders has been established.
- Habitat suitability maps have been developed.
- A support and information system has been developed.
- A national breeding programme has been designed.
- Twenty-two Breeding Seedling Orchards (BSOs) have been established.
- About 70 seed sources have been identified and described.
- Equipment and furniture have been provided to the Central Ethiopia Tree Seed Centre laboratory, to the Dima Tree Seed Centre and the Amhara Forest Enterprise Seed Laboratory in Bahir Dar. The cooling system of the centres' cold rooms have also been maintained by the project.
- The capacities of staff members of the five seed centres in the country have been strengthened through various trainings. Trainings were also given to farmers on tree seed collection and handling including mother tree selection.
- Various important publications have been printed in English as well as in Amharic and Afan Oromo. The publications have been used during trainings and have been distributed to relevant stakeholders.

PATSPO has eleven staff working in Addis Ababa and eight others working in four regions including Oromia, Amhara, Tigray and Southern Nations and Nationalities and Peoples Regions. The project is being supported by highly experienced experts and consultants working, doing research and teaching in tree seed and relevant areas.

During the last four years, PATSPO has produced a substantial amount of information materials targeting all the major stakeholders. Extension and training materials such as posters, cap, mug, booklets, technical reports and blogs (articles posted on ICRAF website), a newsletter, and other information publications have been produced by PATSPO, which are aimed at educating people about tree seed collection and handling and informing stakeholders about what PATSPO is doing.

Most of these materials are available on the PATSPO homepage:

<https://www.worldagroforestry.org/project/provision-adequate-tree-seed-portfolio-ethiopia>

A communication strategy is much needed to guide the future work on information and communication activities in PATSPO. This strategy aims at strategizing the communication of PATSPO with various stakeholders so that communication work is done in a planned and strategic way.

It is hoped that other development projects in Ethiopia can be inspired by reading this communication strategy.

2. Communication Objectives

This communication strategy supports the implementation of PATSPO activities and thereby PATSPO's objective of ensuring access to high quality seeds of the most important tree species used for forest landscape restoration and all other tree planting activities in Ethiopia. The strategy aims to help the project make important contribution to achieve the ambitious restoration targets of Ethiopia's Climate-Resilient Green Economy Strategy.

The achievement of the objectives of PATSPO will be supported by the communication strategy through identification of what communication is required for each of the major stakeholders and activity areas of PATSPO, who are the audiences, how the communication will be done and by whom.

The objectives of the communication strategy are to:

- Raise awareness of PATSPO activities among a defined group of stakeholders and other user groups (the Ethiopian people, CSOs, NGOs, people living around BSOs)
- Secure the commitment and support of stakeholders through information and communication (RNE, Oromia Forest and Wildlife Enterprise (OFWE), Amhara Forest Enterprise (AFE), EFCCC, EEFRI, ICRAF and other stakeholders, etc.)
- Influence specific policies or policymakers around key aspects (EFCCC, Ministry of Agriculture (MoA))
- Encourage participation among researchers or partners (research organizations, universities in Ethiopia, partner universities in Denmark and other countries)

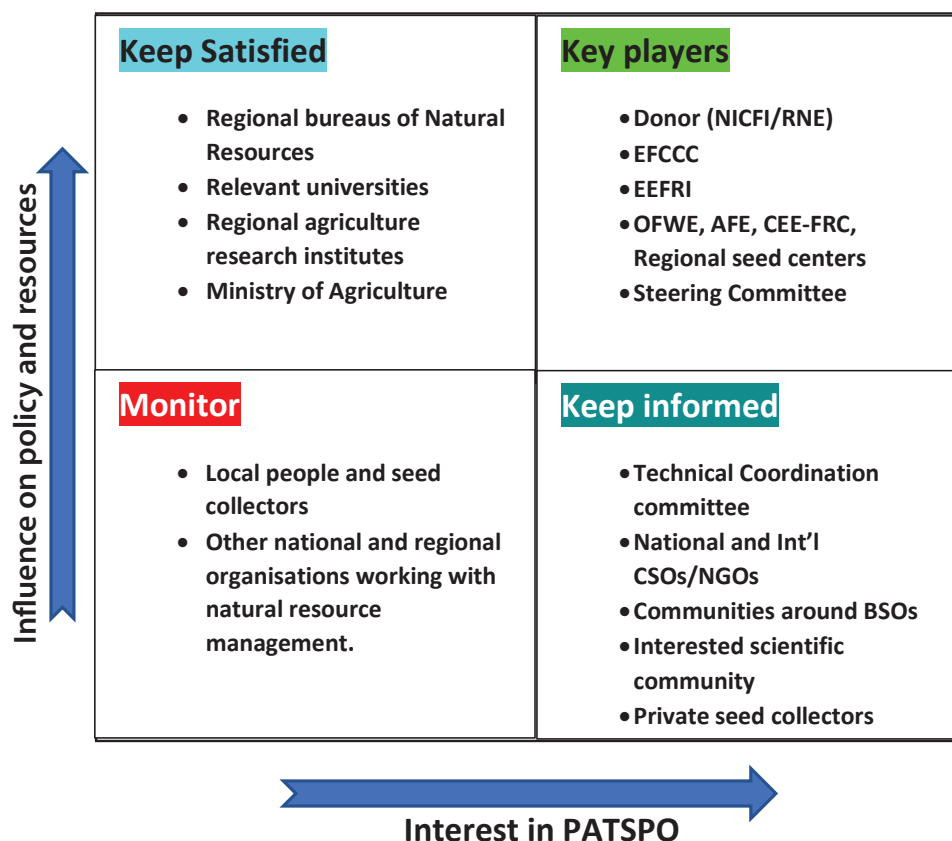
Based on this strategy, each stakeholder shall be provided with selected and targeted information about PATSPO with a frequency that makes them feel sufficiently informed. They should not be receiving information which they might feel is irrelevant to them.

All activities within PATSPO are subject to limitations and constraints as they must be within scope and adhere to budget, scheduling, and resource requirements. Communication is no exception to this rule. There may also be legislative, regulatory, technology, or organizational policy requirements which must be followed as part of communications management. While communications management is an important aspect of project management, it must be done in an effective manner and within the constraints of the allocated budget, time, and resources.

3. Target Audience

The target audience of PATSPO communication are its stakeholders. The major stakeholders include: RNE (the Norwegian government), ICRAF Nairobi, EFCCC, EEFRI and its regional research centers, OFWE, AFE, Tigray Bureau of Agriculture and Natural Resources as well as central and regional tree seed centers.

Other stakeholders include: Reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD+), Ethiopian Biodiversity Institute, German Society for International Cooperation (GIZ), Wondo Genet College of Forestry, MoA, Amhara Bureau of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Oromia Agricultural Research Institute, Oromia Bureau of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Oromia National Regional State Forested Landscape Program, United Nations Development Program (UNDP), World Bank, World Vision Ethiopia, Farm Africa, Ethiopian Orthodox Church-Development and Inter Church Aid Commission (EOC-DICAC), Amhara Region Forest Landscape Restoration Program, ILRI, the people of Ethiopia among others.



The above diagram shows a square divided into four quadrants. The x-axis (horizontal) shows 'interest in PATSPO', while the y-axis (vertical) shows 'influence on policy and resources'. The quadrants are titled (clockwise starting from top left) keep satisfied, key players, keep informed and monitor.

In each of the boxes, there is a prioritisation of communications with these audiences. The key players (top right section) are clearly those PATSPO wants to spend the most time communicating with.

NB - It is likely that some of these audiences will become more or less influential and have a greater or lesser interest in PATSPO over time.

First Priority Audience ('Key Players'): These are the key organisations groups PATSPO communicates to directly and often.

Second Priority Audience (‘Keep Satisfied’ and ‘Keep Informed’): Organisations groups of less importance who PATSPO wish to receive quite a lot of information material, but not the same material to all of them.

Third Priority Audience (‘Monitor’): Organisations groups which PATSPO provides with limited information, while at the same time monitors their attitude towards PATSPO.

Whether our target audience is external or internal the Communication Officer of PATSPO will need to assess each major stakeholder or group of stakeholders. For each stakeholder, we need to ask ourselves the following questions:

- What is it that we want to change?
- What do we want the target audience to know?
- What do we want them to feel? What perception do we want to create?
- What do we want them to do? What action do we want them to take as a result?

Examples of a "result" could be the following:

- Do we want to change their attitude towards PATSPO?
- Do we want them to donate funds?
- Do we want them to take action or make a decision?

Considering these questions and results will give the Communication Officer some important hints on what information should be made available for each stakeholder and in what form.

4. Key Message for Target Audience

Key messages are the main points of information we want our audience to hear, understand, and remember. They provide clear information about what we do, why and how we do it, and what value we bring to stakeholders. We need to identify our target audiences to decide which key messages we need to transmit to them.

The kind of information material or communication activity most relevant for the different audiences and the responsible body for preparing the information material or organizing/carrying out the communication activity is presented in the table below:

Target Audiences- in order of priority	Approach	Responsibility
Project Steering Committee	Meetings, visits, relevant PATSPO publications	PATSPO
Project Technical Coordination Committee	Meetings, visits, relevant PATSPO publications	“
EFCCC	Lobbying, personal approach, seminar, regular meetings	“
EEFRI	Meetings, visits, relevant PATSPO publications	“

RNE	Progress reports, technical reports. personal approach, seminar, regular meetings	“
Forest Enterprises	Meetings, emails, newsletter	“
Regional seed centers	Relevant PATSPO publications, newsletter	“
Local people, seed collectors	Organizing visits to BSOs and other PATSPO activities	PATSPO, RTSCs
National and international CSOs/NGOs	Booklets, technical reports/manuals, newsletters, fact sheets	“
National and international scientific community	Technical reports, scientific articles, policy papers, policy brief	“
The people of Ethiopia	Website articles (blogs), newspaper articles, e-newsletter	PATSPO, the media
Local, National., International Journalists	Media visit, Journalist trip, relevant PATSPO publications	PATSPO

5. Communications Mix

PATSPO has dozens of stakeholders. They need to be addressed in different ways using different media for conveying the desired messages and information in ways that suit the different stakeholders best. The choice of communication materials will depend on what PATSPO wants to achieve, the level and type of message PATSPO wants to communicate, and the profile of the stakeholder.

PATSPO will likely make use of most of the communication tools listed below:

External Communications Mix

- Press: Interview, features, articles.
- Online: Website (PATSPO as well as ICRAF), ICRAF social media, e-mail newsletter.
- TV: News and features.
- Print: Progress reports, plans, technical reports, technical booklets/guidelines, brochures, posters, letters, leaflets, scientific reports, newsletters, stickers, etc.
- Public Relations: events, telephone calls, meetings, etc.

Internal Communications Mix

- Technical guidelines, reports
- Meetings
- Conference calls
- Informal communication
- Notice board
- Notes
- E-mails

- Daily talks among the staff members

We use variety of methods of communication (communication mix) to communicate PATSPO messages to different target audiences. The table below shows the different methods of communication PATSPO has been using or will be using to communicate messages relevant to the project:

Methods of Communication	Messages to Be Communicated
Reports	Carried out project activities, the activity results, the outputs of the activities
Newsletter	Big and small news about PATSPO and its major stakeholders.
Technical guidelines	Guidelines relevant to seed collection and handling, BSO establishment etc.
Scientific articles	Seed and seed-related research
Extension and teaching materials like posters, notes, etc.	Basic facts about the project, ways of ensuring quality of seeds, seed collection and handling etc.
Television and Radio	PATSPO activities and achievements
DVD videos (technical and general)	Seed collection and handling etc.
T-shirts, bags etc	PATSPO logo
Stakeholder Group meetings	PATSPO activities and achievements
Community Group meetings	PATSPO objectives, activities and achievements
Internal meetings	PATSPO activities and achievements, comments, new assignments
Events	PATSPO objectives, activities and achievements
Email	Blogs/news articles, newsletters and other important messages to stakeholders, progresses made (to internal staff)
Workshops	Key issues relevant to ensuring quality of tree seeds
Website	Various issues relevant to PATSPO, plans, technical reports, posters, blogs/news articles
Blog	Various activities and achievements of PATSPO

6. Organisational and Physical Setting of Communication Activities in PATSPO

Communication activities and materials, as described in this strategy, are important inputs for the realization PATSPO objectives. In order for PATSPO to carry out effective, consistent and quality communication activities, it is important that the Communication Officer works closely with all staff members of PATSPO to get the inputs needed for preparing relevant and updated information materials.

It is very important that a communication corner (a shelf in the PATSPO office corridor) is set to display available PATSPO publications and PR materials. The materials are provided to visitors. Soft copies are either sent through email to stakeholders on the PATSPO mailing list or/and posted on the PATSPO website for anyone to read.

7. Communication Work Plan

Onwards the Communication Officer will develop an annual communication plan. This plan will define what kind of information material should be produced during the year, for what audience, how frequent, and who will be responsible for doing the different kind of materials. A detailed budget corresponding to the plan will also be prepared.

The Communication Officer prepares an annual communication plan and budget in close collaboration with the technical PATSPO staff. The plan will only include communication activities, which can be financed by the project.

This Annual Communication Plan and the budget will form a part of the overall annual work plan for PATSPO.

8. Budget

A budget for the annual communication activities will be prepared. The budget shall cover all communication/ information activities to be carried out by PATSPO during the year and according to the annual communication plan for the project. The annual budget for communication will include the production and distribution costs for all the communication materials to be prepared according to the annual plan.

9. Branding

Presenting the PATSPO brand correctly is crucial. This means being consistent with the PATSPO logo, name, typefaces, and colors. All this will combine to communicate the sort of project PATSPO is – active, passionate, solution- and delivery-oriented.

When communicating with the audience this simple checklist will be followed:

- ✓ Does it really show the enthusiasm?
- ✓ Is it optimistic? Is it positive and forward looking?
- ✓ Is it inspirational? Will it move someone to take action?
- ✓ Does it challenge? Does it confront the issues?
- ✓ Is it credible?
- ✓ Is it accountable demonstrating honesty and trustworthiness?
- ✓ Does it prove PATSPO's commitment?
- ✓ Does it show what has been achieved?

Keep in mind that the individual messages don't need to include all of the above. In other words, it is not needed to reflect every single brand value in every single message.

10. Evaluation and Updating

It's important to assess the communication strategy of the project at least annually with a view to make any changes or add any points, if necessary.

External evaluation:

- Have PATSPO achieved its objectives (i.e. raise funds, create awareness, introduce its activities, etc.)?
- Did PATSPO reach the right audience?
- Did PATSPO use the right tools?
- Were decisions made as a result?
- Did PATSPO come in on budget? If not, why not? etc.

Internal evaluation:

- Did PATSPO ensure the right communication within the organization?
- Did all staff members felt well informed?
- Did all staff member know what to do?
- Did PATSPO use the right tools (newsletters, meetings, seminars, workshops)?

The Communication Officer carries out an annual evaluation. The evaluation is done by looking into the responses given through email by stakeholders who received publications, newsletters and blogs sent to them, by sending questionnaires through email to carefully selected stakeholders, by doing telephone interview and by interviewing some internal staff in person. Some of the important questions asked during the evaluation will be the following:

- What do you read/see/hear?
- What works/doesn't work?
- What do you want to see more of?
- What information do you need that you are not currently supplied with?
- How often do you want us to communicate with you?

11. Concluding Remarks

PATSPO will have major impact in Ethiopia's forest development efforts by restoring degraded areas using quality trees raised from quality tree seeds and increase survival rate as well as productivity of forests planted using high quality seeds.

Little is known about the need for quality tree seeds in Ethiopia. When farmers visited the PATSPO Breeding Seedling Orchard (BSO) at Sekelemariam, near Dembecha town, Amhara Region in 2020, they were surprised and asked, "We only knew about quality crop seeds, are there also quality tree seeds?" After they were told about the importance of quality tree seeds, the farmers vowed to protect the BSOs established in their locality.

PATSPO is an important project; and to ensure the success of this project, it needs the support and cooperation of various stakeholders. One must believe in the importance of the project to provide the needed support. It is through communication that various stakeholders are made aware about the importance of PATSPO.

This strategy clarifies PATSPO's communication objectives, identifies PATSPO's target audience and puts them in order of importance, and indicates how to communicate with various stakeholders among others. It underlines the significance of branding and emphasizes the need to evaluate and update the communications strategy.

This communications strategy will thus help to effectively and efficiently communicate the objectives and goals of the project, inform its activities as well as its achievements. When stakeholders are aware about the project, they will be highly motivated to contribute their share for the successful realizations of the project goal, which is helping Ethiopia reach its forest restoration targets.



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