STAR
Ghana

Strengthening Transparency,
Accountability and Responsiveness

STAR-GHANA COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY
2016 – 2020

April, 2016

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AESC	Audit and Endowment Sub-Committee
CBOs	Community Based Organisations
COPL	Communities of Practice and Learning
CS	Civil Society
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
DFID	UK Department for International Development
DPs	Donor Partners
EU	European Union
FAQ	Frequently Asked Questions
FC	Funders Committee
GP(s)	Grants Partner(s)
GSC	Grants Sub-Committee
KM	Knowledge Management
KSP	Knowledge Sharing Platform
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning
M&E	Monitoring & Evaluation
ODI	Organisational Development Institute
PMT	Programme Management Team
SC	Steering Committee
SDDirect	Social Development Direct
STAR-Ghana	Strengthening Transparency, Accountability and Responsiveness in Ghana

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1   PART 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1   Overview

Strengthening Transparency, Accountability and Responsiveness in Ghana (STAR-Ghana) is a voice and empowerment programme which supports civil society to strengthen accountability and responsiveness of the state to citizens' issues. The programme's goal is to contribute to a vibrant, well informed and assertive civil society, able to contribute to transformational national development for all citizens in an inclusive manner.

The programme is in its second phase of implementation, the first phase having ended in April 2015. The second phase builds on the results and learning from phase one to achieve a step-change in how citizens are supported to address the underlying constraints to democratic governance, and inclusive and sustainable national development in Ghana.

The programme has a dual focus - catalysing the efforts of civil society towards systemic change and working towards the creation of a national institution/endowment fund to sustain support for these efforts beyond the life of STAR-Ghana.

The communications strategy seeks to define an approach for facilitating and promoting the sharing of information, replicable models, lessons and results within the programme, between the programme and its stakeholders and among stakeholders. The ultimate aim is to use communications as a tool to achieve programme objectives and to support citizens to hold the state accountable and responsive at all levels of governance.

The strategy will champion citizen voice communications, support the development of the autonomous entity and contribute to the body of evidence of what works and what doesn't work in the Ghana context. The programme outcome and outputs all require robust, coordinated communications to guarantee their success.

1.2   Lessons learned from Phase I

Mainstreaming communication in Phase I enabled the programme to communicate with a diverse range of audiences, as communication was embedded in other streams such as sustainability, capacity building, monitoring and learning, and the grant making process. Examples of this include: the organisation of information sessions for interested civil society organisations (CSOs) or prospective applicants and grant award ceremonies to support transparency in the grants process; learning events that were integral to monitoring, learning and capacity building, as well as to the civil society support work-stream. Communications in phase II will be integrated into other programme strategies and not be a stand-alone activity.

Initially, the phase I communication strategy focused on work and achievements of grant partners. Following a number of reviews, the programme recognised the need to raise the corporate profile and the value added of STAR-Ghana. Thus, communications in the second phase will focus on the *Big STAR concept* by which we mean taking a more integrated approach to communicating how the linkages in the work of donor partners, grant partners, steering committee, the programme management team and other stakeholders add value and contribute to the programme impact.

The strategy also focused more on the provision of information by the programme rather than facilitating conversations among stakeholders. This strategy seeks to deliberately create spaces for dialogue and collaboration and facilitate partnerships between grant partners, the media and key stakeholders right from the inception of project implementation using grants signing ceremonies, orientation meetings, learning events, policy dialogues and conferences to provide opportunities to raise the profile of the programme and its goals, and to share programme news and the experience, lessons learned and replicable models from grant partners.

Though Phase I maintained a vibrant website, through which it communicated with its national and international stakeholders and reached out to other target groups via social media, specifically Facebook and Twitter, the various channels employed were not effectively linked together into a coherent approach.. This strategy seeks to effectively link digital channels by cross-promoting content.

There was no clear link between the communities of practice and the communication strategy. In this strategy, communications will support the communities of practice with multi-media knowledge products. The creation of *Learning Labs* creates a digital channel for grant partners and communities of practice to share experience, lessons learned and replicable models.

1.3   Structure

This strategy is divided into four parts. The first part provides a strategic overview and describes the communication interventions that will be used to deliver the programme outcome, the principles, purpose and objectives of the strategy.

The second part focuses on how communications is linked to the programme outcomes and goals, the relationship between Communication and the programme log frame, the theory of change, the M&E framework as well as the grants framework.

The third part focuses on engaging key programme stakeholders for programme effectiveness.

The final part focuses on external and internal communication as a tool for ensuring operational effectiveness and engaging key programme stakeholders

1.4   Purpose and Objectives

1.4.1   Purpose

The overarching purpose of the communications strategy is to support the achievement of the programme's strategic objectives by building a coherent and consistent profile for STAR-Ghana, engaging key stakeholders and by facilitating the sharing of information and learning across the programme and beyond.

1.5   Principles and strategic approach

A strong brand identity and clear messaging about the programme is critical to contributing to a vibrant, well informed and assertive civil society, able to contribute to transformational national development for all citizens in an inclusive manner and to also supporting any future transition to an independent national entity by building a vision for STAR-Ghana that is accepted and shared by civil society and other stakeholders. Communications will be integrated within all the other work streams to enable the programme communicate with a diverse range of audiences. This will enable the programme effectively communicate the evidence of change produced by the programme.

STAR-Ghana's approach to communication is to:
- Organise communications around the programme's 3Cs and Learning: Convening, Catalysing and Coordinating and Learning.
- Integrate communications across programme strategies and not as a stand-alone activity. Strategically, communications serves as the information bridge between the programme and key stakeholders such as civil society and citizens who are the linchpin in growing public demand for government accountability.
- Prioritise the voice, perspectives and participation of excluded groups like women, young people and people with disabilities.

1.5.1   Objectives

The specific objectives of the communications strategy are to:
- Promote STAR-Ghana and ensure transparent messaging and a clear programme identity which enables stakeholders to engage with the purpose of the programme.
- Encourage and amplify the voice of citizens, especially the voice of women, young people and people with disabilities, to local and national decision makers and service providers.
- Make gender equality and social inclusion a news-worthy issue that generates media coverage by pitching stories that place the voice of marginalised citizens at the centre.
- Support the community of practice and learning by capturing and sharing learning, innovation, best practice and replicable models among grant partners and beyond to build a body of evidence of 'what works' and 'what doesn't work' to strengthen transparency, accountability, responsiveness and active citizenship.
- Communicate the results, added value and impact of STAR-Ghana to the donors and beyond, and contribute to development of the case for the future entity.
- Ensure transparent communications at every stage of the grants process.
- Based on the results of the needs assessment, consider supporting grant partners to integrate strong communication and media strategies and building the capacity of media organisations to fulfil their role in accountability processes.
- Increase public awareness and understanding of STAR-Ghana's role in development by publicising its contribution to change, successes and approach.

PART 2: AN INTEGRATED APPROACH TO COMMUNICATIONS

2   INTRODUCTION

This Communication Strategy is directly aligned with the communities of practice and learning, programme log frame, theory of change, the M&E framework, the grants manual and operations manual to enable a more rounded and integrated communication of STAR-Ghana's work.

At the impact and outcome levels, communication will be used to amplify citizens' views, provide opportunities for citizens to have their voices heard in local and national policy debates; and support the communities of practice and learning by capturing and sharing learning, best practice and replicable models, as well as challenges among grant partners and beyond to build a body of evidence of what works.

To help achieve the programme impact and outcome, communications will work to directly support each of the four programme outputs.

2.1   Communications to support learning

STAR-Ghana will work with and through internal and external communities of practice and learning to harvest the learning, lessons and achievements.   Innovative, creative and accessible multi-media knowledge products will be developed from peer learning processes and stories gathered from grant partners' projects.

The programme will also gather case studies and audio-visual content providing the dynamic content for use across all communications channels that tell the best stories from the programme demonstrating:

- Best practice and innovation: sharing interesting and innovative examples of an approach or project supported by STAR-Ghana
- Results: demonstrating how and why a particular approach has achieved expected or unexpected results using a specific example.
- Learning: sharing the challenges or reasons why a particular approach did not work as well as expected with recommendations and advice from grantees or communities on what they would do differently.

STAR-Ghana will develop *Learning Labs*, a multi-strand initiative, using various digital channels (website and social media) to share lessons, success stories and best practice.

In addition, a sub-group of communicators from the communities of practice and learning will be formed to share experience and skills in areas such as citizen voice communications as well as to provide stories and case studies, and to work together on key communication moments. STAR-Ghana will explore the potential to enhance grant partners' capacity in advocacy communications and their ability to communicate change. This could take the form of guidance and training in the following: interviewing, case study templates, media relations, how to develop and use info-graphics, social media and photography.

STAR-Ghana will facilitate linkages between key research and think tank organisations, media and policy partners.

2.2 Communications linkages to the Theory of Change

This section focuses on how change will happen using key communication approaches and interventions like story gathering, capturing of change moments and human angle change stories.

STAR-Ghana will also facilitate linkages, alliance building and dialogue between and among key stakeholders. The communications strategy will draw out the key learnings from the Theory of Change to determine how communications and media work can be used as a driver for influencing change. Interventions may include media work or initiatives like SMS[1] Voices.

2.3 Communications linkages to the programme log-frame

This section focuses on the main communication approaches and interventions that will be used to deliver on the programme goal, outcome the outputs.

Impact: **Contribute to a vibrant, well informed and assertive civil society, able to contribute to transformational national development for all citizens in an inclusive manner.**

> The focus of the communications strategy will be communicating STAR-Ghana's contribution to the impact by supporting citizens' participation directly through the use of SMS voices, supporting the work of Grant Partners to effectively communicate their work and engage with citizens. STAR-Ghana will work with key media partners to provide opportunities for citizens' engagement and contribution in national, regional and local level discourses.

2.3.1 Outcome: STAR-Ghana supporting increased effectiveness of citizen influencing
Capture and amplify citizens' voices, providing opportunities for citizens to have their voices heard in local and national policy debates. STAR-Ghana will champion the use of innovative and creative tools to share citizens' voice such as SMS Voices.

2.3.2 Output 1 – STAR-Ghana will provide effective convener, catalyst and coordinator (CCC) role. Develop communications plans to support concerted and coordinated action by a cross section of civil society actors. This includes facilitating opportunities for joint communications and media activities around key issues, campaign moments or to mark days such as International Women's Day.

2.3.3 Output 2 - Effective strategic partnerships in place with policy level organisations and Parliament. STAR-Ghana will seek to support and strengthen strategic partnerships with media and communications coverage on key and topical national and policy issues. High-profile events, such as grants signing ceremonies, orientations and

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[1] The SMS Voice Platform is a text messaging project that will capture and amplify citizens' views, providing opportunities for citizens to have their voices heard in local and national policy debates .

learning festivals, will be organised to connect grant partners with key stakeholders and duty bearers.

2.3.4 <u>Output 3 - Grants component effectively managed, helping grant partners to link citizens and local issues to policy level.</u> Based on an assessment of the capacity needs of grant partners, STAR-Ghana will consider providing media training to enhance grantees capacity to strategically engage the media. Other capacity training may also include advocacy and communications skills.

2.3.5 <u>Output 4 - Ghanaian owned, strategic and fundable organisation established</u>**.**
STAR-Ghana will create high quality communications and information materials including newsletters, thematic materials and programme publications, as well as promotional materials to support the development and funding strategy for the autonomous corporate entity. A resource mobilisation strategy will be developed to support the funding needs of the corporate entity. To ensure national ownership a participatory and consultative process led by the steering committee will be undertaken to facilitate dialogue among and between key stakeholders to capture the views and solicit buy-in of a cross-section of Ghanaian civil society and governance institutions leading up to the formation of the national entity.

2.4   Communications linkages with Monitoring Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Framework

STAR-Ghana will seek to disseminate findings and results identified through monitoring and evaluation through key external channels including Learning Labs, website, social media and newsletter, as well as through the media. Communications will support the development and dissemination of creative and accessible multi-media knowledge products. Communications will also play a key role in following up key stories of change identified through MEL processes to develop creative content for use across media and communications channels.

In addition, it is important to track the impact of STAR-Ghana's communications. Further work is required to refine the particular measures to be monitored but could include the following metrics:
- Media monitoring
- Brand awareness tracking survey
- Focus groups and surveys to ascertain perceptions about STAR
- Feedback surveys on the effectiveness and accessibility of knowledge products, communication channels and events
- Tracking requests for information and contact with STAR-Ghana
- Website and social media analytics

2.5   Communications support to grant-making process

This section focuses on how communication will support the grants process and its communication support to grantees. STAR-Ghana will communicate, in simple and clear language, the steps involved in the grant application processes, including all basic

information, deadlines and any conditions that are attached. Without compromising rigorous standards, STAR-Ghana will simplify the grant application documentation and procedures and make the information available electronically on www.star-ghana.org. It will also advertise calls for proposals in the national papers and where possible advertise on district assembly notice boards to enable smaller and remotely located community based organisations to participate in the process.

Information sessions will be used to:

- Set the tone for participatory and transparent relationship at every stage of the grant application process and into project implementation
- Provide a clear and detailed explanation of the application process and answer questions.
- Enable applicants to articulate what their intentions are as the sessions provide space for engagements and addressing key applicant concerns and issues
- Ensure that the most relevant and realistic applications go through the process

STAR-Ghana will provide regular updates online during the grants assessment process including publishing the number of applicants at each stage of the selection process and the number of awards given. Constructive feedback will be available for unsuccessful applicants. STAR-Ghana will use grants signing ceremonies to officially launch the projects and orientation workshops to connect grant partners to the various Ministries, Departments and Agencies and the relevant Parliamentary committees.

2.6 Communications support for the role of Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI)

Though GESI is mainstreamed within the communication strategy, the strategy seeks to make GESI news worthy issue in Ghana" that the media picks up. STAR-Ghana will adopt a two prong approach to communicating GESI issues: social inclusion 'inward', within the organisation as well as in its 'outward facing activities' (such as grant funding): Inward processes and commitments will ensure that STAR-Ghana and its stakeholders understand and share a commitment to gender equality and social inclusion, thus communication in STAR-Ghana will be reflective of GESI issues and considerations. While the outward approach will ensure that STAR-Ghana analyses and outlines a diverse range of catalytic spaces and techniques that could be marshalled to nurture the active participation of women and other marginalised groups (including, for example, the use of social media in accountability initiatives, "photo voice" for policy influence, and formal dialogue forums and multi-stakeholder platforms that have different thresholds of participation). STAR-Ghana will also capture and share change moments and impact stories and also leverage global movements and pressure for international coverage that exposes weak GESI commitments (budgets) and performance such as participate in the International Women's day celebrations as well as other international and national celebrations to champion the course of the marginalised.

PART 3: EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS

3   INTRODUCTION

This section focuses on who the key internal and external programme stakeholders are as well as their roles and how to effectively engage and maintain a constructive relationship with them.

3.1   External Stakeholders

STAR-Ghana's key external stakeholders and their relationship to the programme include:

- **Grant partners**: Grant partners are local and national level CSOs that have formed formal or informal coalitions, networks or platforms and who through an application process have been selected and supported by STAR-Ghana to carry out research and/or advocacy on policy issues and to build capacity of institutions, groups and citizens to claim rights.
- **Parliament:** STAR-Ghana is targeting Parliament as one of the key institutions in policy formulation and implementation. STAR-Ghana seeks to strengthen Parliament's oversight capacity to demand accountability from public institutions and officers.
- **Parliamentary Committees:** STAR-Ghana will work with specific parliamentary committees whose mandates are aligned to STAR-Ghana's thematic areas.
- **CSOs:** In addition to grantees, STAR-Ghana is interested in information sharing with other CSOs and in including their participation in decision-making processes that bring about policy change.
- **Coalitions, networks and platforms:** STAR-Ghana will work with coalitions, networks and platforms, whom, while not programme grantees, are engaged in similar work. STAR-Ghana will bring these coalitions, networks and platforms together with grantees as a community to learn and share experiences and exchange ideas.
- **The general public:** The general public is the linchpin to fostering and growing public demand for government accountability and should remain well informed of all aspects of STAR-Ghana.
- **Private sector:** STAR-Ghana will support the role of private sector specifically, private sector associations in policy formulation and in creating the proper environment for business to thrive.
- **Traditional authorities:** Traditional authorities will play a critical role in development and the accountability cycle. They are one of the interlocutors grantees will engage in their work.
- **Media:** As both tactical and strategic STAR-Ghana partners, media are instrumental to the entire programme.

- **Government of Ghana:** STAR-Ghana will build a good working relationship with the Ghanaian government as a whole and among its members, ministries and agencies. This requires open lines of communications. The government and its agencies play numerous critical roles in developing the policies and infrastructure required for private sector growth and development.
- **DFID and donor consortium:** DFID and the donor consortium are both key internal as well as external stakeholders and audiences. As the main funders of STAR-Ghana, DFID and other donors in the consortium need regular information about the results of the programme success stories, including human interest stories, and challenges met and overcome.
- **Other donors:** Potential new donors including governments, individuals, high net worth individuals, private sector, trusts and foundations, international NGOs, multi-lateral and UN agencies, the World Bank and other IFIs. Donors that are not directly financing STAR-Ghana but provide the finance for government programmes and policies, as well as CSOs funding, are also important stakeholders in the programme.

3.2   Internal Stakeholders and Roles and Responsibilities

STAR-Ghana's key internal stakeholders and their roles in relation to the communications strategies include:

- **Steering Committee:** The Steering Committee is responsible for the overall management, strategic oversight and direction of STAR-Ghana. The Steering Committee supports the programme's aim of promoting a culture of transparency and accountability to enhance pro-poor policy making and the equitable management of public resources, all in line with the requirements of internal good governance. Regular information must flow between the Steering Committee and other internal stakeholders.
- **Grants Sub-Committee**: The Grants Sub-Committee signs-off on all grants-related communication material before it is made public.
- **Audit Sub-Committee:** The Audit Sub-Committee is a three member committee responsible for the oversight of the endowment funds to be provided for the organisation, the financial framework of the new entity, and the annual audit requirements.
- **Programme Management Team (PMT):** The PMT is the implementation unit for STAR-Ghana and is responsible for implementing programme strategies as approved by the SC. The Senior Management Team is led by the Programme Director and supported by the Head of Programmes, Head of Operations, and Head of Finance. The PMT senior management team liaises with the SC on key decisions and actions within STAR-Ghana.
- **DFID:** DFID is currently the chair of the Funders Committee of STAR-Ghana and together with other donors provides financial support to the programme. As such, DFID should remain informed of certain overall programme developments. The lines of communication must be clear in ensuring that DFID is informed of key STAR-Ghana

activities before they are put in the public domain. Regular Communications should be undertaken to ensure that DFID is abreast with key programme decisions.

- **Funder's Committee:** STAR-Ghana donors, including the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) and the European Union (EU) have vested interests in STAR-Ghana and should remain appraised of overall programme developments through communicating with relevant country directors, staff, ambassadors and other representatives. The lines of communication between the Funders Committee and STAR-Ghana would be through the chair of the funder's committee as per the terms of reference. STAR-Ghana will at all times necessary acknowledge their contribution to the programme.

- **Christian Aid**: Christian Aid leads the consortium contracted to manage the programme providing technical and administration support. Christian Aid also has specific responsibility for the management of all grants disbursed. STAR-Ghana and Christian Aid should agree on and put in place a system that clearly delineates whom among STAR-Ghana staff should communicate with Christian Aid, determines what they should communicate, how regularly they should communicate, etc.

- **The Consortium:** Christian Aid is leading a consortium of Ghanaian and international service providers to implement STAR-Ghana. The other members of the consortium are Mango, Social Development Direct (SSDirect), (Overseas Development Institute (ODI), On Our Radar and Nkum Associates. The consortium members should be appraised and regularly updated on key programme developments. Christian Aid and the PMT should devise a system that clearly delineates whom should communicate with the other consortium members, determine what they should communicate, how regularly they should communicate, their role and the support they provide to the PMT etc

PART 4: OPERATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS: COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

4   INTRODUCTION

The section outlines the external and internal communication activities, channels and tools needed to engage with key programme stakeholders to meet the communication objectives.

4.1   External communications

4.1.1   Story gathering

Creative content will be gathered in the form of infographics, photography, film and first person stories providing the dynamic content for use across all channels and to share with the media. Throughout these there will be a focus on the added value from STAR-Ghana and on citizens' own perspectives on the impact of grant partners' work. This will include the following:

- STAR-Ghana change champions: profiles of change champions from citizens to CSO workers who have made a significant contribution to change. These profiles will enable the sharing of experiences and challenges, as well as exploring innovative methods or unexpected outcomes. Change champion stories will be shared across all STAR-Ghana channels and pitched to the media.
- Multi-media case studies that demonstrate best practice and learning, results and innovation.
- Ensure geographic representation in stories and content to avoid an 'Accra-centric' narrative.

4.1.2   Catalysing communication moments

Opportunities for shared communication campaigns will be facilitated creating a focus for joint activity by grant partners. This could be in the form of high profile events such as photo exhibitions, film festivals, social media storms and joint media activities. The aim will be to create momentum behind advocacy and policy issues, whilst helping to also build the visibility of STAR-Ghana among key stakeholders and citizens. In addition a rolling plan of content will be maintained to keep website and social media channels updated with news from across the STAR-Ghana programme.

4.1.3 Parliament

Parliament is a critical STAR-Ghana stakeholder. Strengthening the role of Parliament in its oversight function and improving transparency is a primary STAR-Ghana objective. Parliament is also a crucial actor in the dialogue and engagement process with the state. It is a target of civil society actions for good governance and, at the same time, a change agent working with the programme and its partners to increase transparency and accountability.

For these reasons, an interaction between the programme, led by the Steering Committee, and the leadership of Parliament early in the implementation phase is necessary. It will help to re-establish relationships and provide ideas for bridging the programme's work with the current parliament and the post-2016 one.
An early meeting with the leadership of Parliament will enable the programme team move quickly towards helping to consolidate achievements gained in phase I.

The Parliament outreach component will include:
* Engagement activities and mechanisms that bring Members of Parliament and citizens closer together in general and around key thematic issues.
* Conducting Parliamentary press briefings and "question time," especially for citizens in rural areas.
* Supporting Parliament's efforts at policy dialogue and information dissemination.
* Facilitating Parliament and CSO linkages and engagement around key, topical and thematic STAR-Ghana issues.
* Building awareness among CSOs, targeted Members of Parliament, the media and citizens to promote the passage of the Right to Information Bill, and when passed, how to fully implement it.

4.1.4 Media

The media played a significant role in phase I of the programme by enhancing the programme's visibility and brand as well as helped to raise the profile of the programme and the work of grant partners. There is a vibrant media landscape (radio, print, online and broadcast) in Ghana with the media playing a role in challenging the government however there is limited capacity to follow up on progress.

Lessons from phase I show that the media, if given the right opportunities and capacity, will improve coverage of and public discussions about policy, tracking of government expenditure and the timely delivery of public goods. As a gatekeeper of public knowledge and information, the media are both a tactical and strategic partner and have a key role in information dissemination and awareness creation relating to STAR-Ghana, the programme's grant partners and other partners.

STAR-Ghana will assess the capacity of the media and explore building the skills of targeted journalists and media outlets to enable greater engagement in more rigorous and

investigative journalism which can help the media fulfil their role as the "fourth estate" and thus part of the accountability processes. STAR-Ghana will work with media experts to train journalists from key networks and community radio in investigative reporting over time as per the technical proposal.

Specific approaches to media engagement will include the following:

- Build innovative and strategic partnerships between the media and generate coverage of grant partner activities, strategic partnerships, policy dialogues and other key programme activities.
- Seek to profile through the media stories on issues related to transparent, accountable and responsive governance of public goods and service delivery, particularly in the thematic priorities identified by STAR-Ghana.
- Focus on making GESI a news-worthy issue in Ghana by identifying good stories and compelling change champions, as well as a cadre of committed journalists and bloggers.
- Increase media coverage of Parliament's effectiveness in fulfilling its oversight, legislative and representative mandates.
- Provide platforms that raise and amplify the voices of vulnerable, marginalised and deprived communities and groups, and enable them to define and articulate issues of importance to them.
- Identify and focus on media channels that reach key GESI constituencies and support them to make effective use of these channels to have their voices heard.
- Strengthen the ability of media to expand and improve coverage and public discussions relating to policy, tracking of government expenditure and timely delivery of public goods particularly around STAR-Ghana's thematic priorities.
- Strengthen media networks that enhance the effectiveness of media influence in promoting accountable and transparent public governance.

The media outreach component will include:

- Extensively tracking the media landscape in Ghana, including audience reach (especially reach with decision makers and key GESI constituencies), key journalists, political allegiances and linkages with other media development programmes. This will be attached as an addendum to the Communication strategy.
- Sustaining and establishing new relationships with media outlets, journalists and bloggers.
- Maintaining strategic links with media institutional partners such as the National Media Commission (NMC) the Ghana Journalists Association (GJA), Private Newspaper Publishers Association (PRINPAG), Editor's Forum, Ghana Independent Broadcasters Association (GIBA) and Ghana Community Radio Network (GCRN).

- Mechanisms to foster media and civil society engagement on targeted policy issues and legislation, including the passage of Right to Information and Broadcast bills and key GESI policy issues.
- Pitching story ideas to local and national media outlets and journalists.
- Arranging television, radio, print, and online interviews surrounding STAR-Ghana, grantee, CSOs events and activities.
- Media outlets publishing profiles on STAR-Ghana, Grant Partners, CSOs.
- Submitting articles to national, regional, and international journals.
- STAR-Ghana press kits.
- Responding to media requests in a timely fashion.
- Maintain a database of media contacts.

4.1.5 Citizen voice and outreach

STAR-Ghana will champion the use of innovative citizen voice communications approaches that capture and amplify citizens' views, providing opportunities for citizens to have their voice heard in local and national debates, and to provide opportunities for citizens to capture and share their perspectives of change. SMS Voices will enable citizen reporters to open instant dialogues with local government officials via SMS. Beyond the considerable and measurable direct benefits of the dialogues, the platform will generate powerful qualitative and quantitative insights into the issues concerning communities. Other approaches include the use of participatory film-making and photography to share communities' experiences of change or to raise issues around accountability.

At the core of achieving STAR-Ghana's goal of establishing a national entity, is ownership and buy-in from citizens. STAR-Ghana will undertake regional outreach programmes to inform Ghanaians about the programme. These outreach programmes will include a combination of town-hall events and interactions with the media and information sessions. These outreach programmes will be directly led by the Steering Committee with support from the PMT. Options to conduct brand awareness tracking will be explored.

Grant Information sessions will be used as part of the roadshows as it provides opportunities to announce the start of the programme and also inform stakeholders about key programme activities (calls) being undertaking and what the programmes key messages are on issues such as results, GESI and the changes we need to see happen. It also presents an opportunity to discuss the grants process with prospective applicants and the general public.

4.1.6 Website and social media

The opening up of the internet and the growth in the use of social media and blogging in Ghana is taking civic engagement to a new level with more people taking to social media to demand accountability and change. STAR-Ghana will actively build its social media presence to benefit from this expansion. Partners will be encouraged to cross-promote content through their own online and social media channels, along with focused outreach with key bloggers.

The STAR-Ghana website: www.starghana.org, is the global portal to the programme and will enable STAR-Ghana to extend its communications reach to millions of people. Phase one of the website saw a significant traffic from within and outside Ghana. This is a pointer to the extent to which the site was relied upon for information about the programme and its activities. STAR-Ghana will actively use www.starghana.org to make available documentations and publications and to provide access to research results and STAR-Ghana activities and initiatives. It will also serve as a place to obtain feedback from external target audiences, especially on the activities and programmes of the organisation. The Communications Manager is responsible for updating and keeping the website and its social media pages current at all times.

STAR-Ghana will also create an online *learning lab* section to provide downloadable resources and integrate an online discussion type pad forum allowing STAR-Ghana's COPL to participate in real-time discussions on relevant and topical issues. There will be a particular focus on GESI where evidence, frameworks, strategies and reflections on best practices can be shared.

In addition to information from phase I, the following will be required:
- relevant summaries of the business case and logframe
- information on members of SC, FC, consortium and the programme management team;
- migration of key contents from the phase I website
- a frequently asked question (FAQ) sheet on how phase I will be different from phase II
- contact details of key stakeholders developed and uploaded.

4.1.7 Printed materials

STAR-Ghana will produce a range of publicity materials, to support the communication strategy with external stakeholders, including:
- FAQs document that has answers to anticipated questions on Phase II, funding windows, grants, the grant process, call for proposals, the application process, media engagement, etc.
- A programme brochure on STAR-Ghana specifying how phase II is different from phase I.
- Press kits, addressing the purpose, vision, values and goals and other general information about the programme to facilitate communication with the media in particular.
- A quarterly newsletter aimed at donors, grantees, CSOs, Parliament and the media highlighting the impact of grant partners' work, and where they have influenced

policymaking, elaborating on STAR-Ghana overcoming challenges, new collaborations, advertising upcoming events and activities, etc. The newsletter will include a focus on following stories over time to enable the reader to see how change builds over time.

- Branded materials such as folders, note pads, sign posts will be developed to enhance the programme's visibility and brand.
- Impactful fundraising and marketing products designed specifically packaged for targeted potential donors which articulate a case for support through the use of info-graphics, clear marketing messages, demonstrable results and track-record.

4.1.8 Contacts Database

STAR-Ghana will create and maintain a comprehensive contacts database of targeted external stakeholders, institutions, grantees, CSOs, traditional authorities, Members of Parliament, government, key staff, domestic and international media outlets and journalists, policymakers, individuals, and others. A catalogue will be created to enable STAR-Ghana to tag contacts to specialist interests or skills such as GESI.

4.2 Internal Communications

Effective internal communications will ensure that staff, consultants, and other key internal stakeholders clearly understand and are able to articulate the purpose, vision, values and goals of STAR-Ghana.

Key activities related to internal communications include:

4.2.1 STAR-Ghana update email

The **STAR-Ghana update email** is a bi-monthly email news bulletin that brings major issues, relevant news regarding grantees, CSOs, and partner organization, parliamentary and private enterprise developments, relevant local and national events, success stories, programme updates and more to the attention of STAR-Ghana internal stakeholders.

4.2.2 Standardised template for all reports and assignments

STAR-Ghana will develop a reporting format (attached as annex 2) to standardise the range of inputs from consultants and programme staff. These reports will be shared among key stakeholders and uploaded on the website.

4.2.3 Staff Meetings/Retreats

The weekly staff meeting serves as a platform to share relevant information with all STAR-Ghana staff. Regularly scheduled staff retreats, learning events, and writing sessions create a platform for information sharing and consultation. Such forums should regularly take place every three to four months to provide an opportunity for STAR-Ghana management, staff and other key internal stakeholders to exchange, views and ideas, discuss challenges and consider developments within the organization.

4.3 Messages to Communicate

STAR-Ghana has a diverse and wide range of external stakeholders and audiences. While there are overarching messages for STAR-Ghana to convey to all external stakeholders and audiences, STAR-Ghana will also need to tailor targeted messages to individual stakeholders and audiences. Most of the external messages must come from the PMT, who should regularly, proactively and when there is something important to convey, communicate messages to STAR-Ghana's external stakeholders. The Communications Manager will play an integral role in external message development, the channel and tool selection and message dissemination. The Steering Committee will lead on strategic messaging and decisions and support the PMT to push tough agendas.

4.3.1 Messages to All Target Groups

Key external messages to all target groups attached as annex 3 include the following:

- What STAR-Ghana is.
- What STAR-Ghana stands for.
- STAR-Ghana values of transparency, fairness, inclusiveness and accountability.
- The ABC's of what STAR-Ghana does as an organisation.
- The importance of STAR-Ghana and its role in Ghana's national development agenda.
- The overall programme benefits to Ghana as a whole and to its citizens in particular.
- The expected drivers of change and the change that they expect to enact.

4.3.2 Messages to Specific Target Groups

STAR-Ghana will convey targeted messages to individual external stakeholders and audiences. Exact messages will vary according to the intended objective of the message. In general, most messages will entail specific information on aspects of the programme. STAR-Ghana should ensure that all external messages are clear, concise and consistent and delivered in a timely fashion.

Key target groups and specific external messages to convey to them include the following:

- **Phase I Grantees and beneficiaries: CSOs, Parliament and Parliamentary Committees, the media, and general public:**
  STAR-Ghana should produce and disseminate to these target groups, a one to two-page document that clearly, concisely and in a detailed manner explains all that is entailed in the grant process. The document should detail:
- **Grants.** This should include the funding windows in STAR-Ghana's grants making portfolio. The grant manual should include what each funding window entails, giving examples of the kinds of CSOs that are eligible for each, explaining the differences in each window, etc. In particular, there is need to clarify the difference between

funding windows and thematic windows as there is already some confusion in the minds of CSOs about these terms.

- **The Grant processes.** STAR-Ghana should communicate, in simple and clear language, the steps involved in the grant application processes, including all basic information, deadlines and any conditions that are attached. Without compromising rigorous standards, STAR-Ghana should simplify the grant application documentation and procedures and make them available electronically on www.star-ghana.org.

- **Call for Proposals.** STAR-Ghana should frame the call for proposals in a way that reminds grantees and emphasizes that the ultimate objective of STAR-Ghana is to develop a vibrant, well-informed and assertive civil society, and to catalyse active citizenship, to advance systemic, transformational change around key challenges of poverty, inequality and inclusiveness. The media are a strategic element of the programme. The call for proposals should require grantees to indicate how they will engage the media, mainstream GESI and the support they may need to do so.

- **Information on Thematic Areas**: Once the Political Economy Analysis for the programme is finalised and thematic areas identified, STAR-Ghana should make these known to its partners and citizens by publishing these analyses on the STAR-Ghana website and also share them directly with potential grantees working in these sectors and other relevant external stakeholders.

- **Grant Partners:**
  STAR-Ghana must maintain constant communication with Grant Partners and keep them in the loop at key stages, including:
  a. Providing updates on how well the programme is going, challenges, and how these are being addressed.
  b. Creating a dialogue platform, such as a bi-annual consultative meeting or learning events, between the PMT and grant partners during which a frank exchange of information and views on the progress of work can take place. This will provide an opportunity for feedback from grantees and reinforce the value that STAR-Ghana is accountable, transparent, participatory in approach and willing to address grantee problems where necessary.
  c. Communicating key changes in programme implementation.
  d. Informing grant partners about capacity building opportunities and other news that may affect their work.

- **Parliament:**
  Non-competitive windows are grants that are earmarked specifically for Parliament. STAR-Ghana should clearly, concisely, and directly explain to this key stakeholder how these grants could help Parliament in its oversight role.

Parliamentary outreach programmes are critical to the accountability process. Parliament should take the lead and CSOs and the media should play an instrumental role in making the public aware of the objectives of Parliamentary outreach programmes, when and where they will take place and communicating the outcomes and next steps.

- **The Government of Ghana (Policy Unit of the President):**
  STAR-Ghana should continually deliver messages to the appropriate government ministries, departments and agencies that fall under its thematic areas their areas of operation, the issues they are working on, areas of needed support, and other relevant information.

  Regular updates on the progress of grantees and insights gained relating to policy impact and implementation.

  Messages should indicate how STAR-Ghana complements government's developmental efforts.

- **Donors, CSOs, Parliament, Media, and other key External Stakeholders:**
  Messages should be centred around:

  - Issues and topics CSOs are working on to enact change.
  - Challenges grantees and other interlocutors face.
  - Challenges in programme implementation.
  - Lessons learned.
  - Changes in policy and practice.
  - Issues that impact the objectives of the programme.
  - Most Significant Change Stories.
  - STAR-Ghana success stories.

5   MONITORING AND REVIEW

It is necessary to understand how STAR-Ghana is communicating and would like to communicate once fully established. Conducting a communications review, using a simple questionnaire circulated among current key internal stakeholders, will help provide the information needed to assess what works and help to shape future communications.

STAR-Ghana will monitor its communication activities through the following:
- Monitoring and evaluation of media coverage
- Digital and social media analytics
- Feedback questionnaires and surveys of events or activities.
- Focus groups to gauge if messages are understood, reaching and penetrating target audiences.

- Direct consultation with audiences, such as engagements with stakeholders and written evaluations following events.
- Evaluating participants' lists and contacts at events.