COMMUNICATION & VISIBILITY STRATEGY

OCTOBER 2020

COMMUNICATION & VISIBILITY STRATEGY

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AFARD	Agency for Accelerated Rural Development
C&V	Communication and Visibility
CAO	Chief Accounting Officer
CBO	Community Based Organization
FGDs	Focus Group Discussions
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
KIIs	Key Informant Interviews
KRA	Key Result Area
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats
TA	Technical Assistance
TBD	To Be Determined
UGX	Uganda Shillings

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INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The Agency For Accelerated Regional Development (AFARD) is a registered local, not-for-profit, non-denominational, non-governmental organization formed in July 2000 by sons and daughter of West Nile for the economic transformation of the region. Its vision is, "a prosperous, healthy and informed people of West Nile region" and its mission is, "to contribute to the molding of a region in which the local people, including those who are marginalized, are able to participate effectively and sustainably and take a lead in the development of the region'.

Currently, AFARD operates in eight of the 11 districts of West Nile region (Pakwach, Nebbi, Zombo, Arua, Yumbe, Moyo, Obongi, and Adjumani). AFARD is a member of national and district NGO networks e.g. Uganda National NGO Forum, Participatory Ecological Land Use and Management (PELUM), Uganda Water and Sanitation Network (UWASNET), and Uganda National AIDS Services Organization (UNASO) among others.
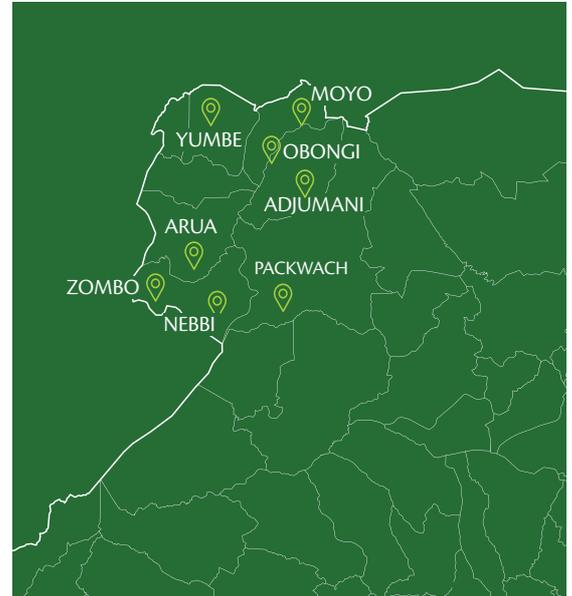
Over the years, AFARD has accumulated vast knowledge, experience and expertise in the areas of sustainable agriculture, enterprise development, youth skilling, preventive community health, and community-led advocacy. However, at the organizational level there is limited strategic communication and visibility structure in place to facilitate effective stakeholder engagement. This does not place AFARD as a visible player in the socio-economic development of West Nile region. It is for this reason that AFARD found it prudent to develop a Communication and Visibility (C&V) Strategy. To achieve this objective, a situation analysis was conducted to enable AFARD appreciate the scope of issues that should inform their C&V strategy basing on a field engagement with various stakeholders. This C&V strategy therefore aims at increasing the impact and visibility (corporate image) of AFARD regionally and at the national level by informing and engaging its key external stakeholders and the public on activities and results of its projects.

1.2 BACKGROUND

Since its formation in 2000, AFARD has successfully implemented several projects with funding from European Union, Danida, Austrian Development Agency, FAO, UNICEF, Irish Aid, Gorta/Self Help Africa, Global Fund for HIV/AIDS, Cord Aid, HORIZONT3000, Civil Society Fund, AWO – International; Kindernothilfe (KNH), Manos Unidas, Sall Family Foundation, Total Bv, and the Embassies of Canada, Ireland, and Netherlands, among others. To track progress and change therein, it is paramount for AFARD to institute transparency and accountability systems at all levels and be able to openly and honestly show how and what is changing within the communities. In order to do this AFARD set to institute participatory and digitalized monitoring and evaluation and documentation system in order to share results and timely information with the stakeholders. However, at the organizational level there is limited harmonized strategic communication and visibility structure/system. In place to facilitate the kind of information dissemination required. This in return does not place AFARD as a visible player it is in the socio-economic development of West Nile region.

It is in this regard, therefore, that AFARD sought services of a consultant to develop a C&V Strategy that also includes Information and Communication Technology (ICT) guidelines as per the institutional audit recommendation. This strategy is envisaged to guide the implementation of the organization's Strategic Plan 2020-25.

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SITUATION ANALYSIS

2.1 APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

2.1.1 Approach

The assignment was undertaken in a participatory, inclusive, and consultative manner to ensure that all critical stakeholder voices are heard. There was intensive review and benchmarking of existing policies and strategies for organizations implementing community development projects.

The Consultant employed a methodology that included among others the following:
- Desk review of all relevant organisational documentation including strategic plans, annual programme reports, annual work-plans, organization website and social media sites;
- In-depth interviews with the identified key stakeholders; and
- Observations (field visits using checklists)

2.1.2 Methodology

To assess the existing AFARD's C&V and ICT status, the consultant explored up-to-date information and data on various aspects of the information generation and management as well as the institutional policies, strategies, laws and regulations that guide their media management in order to succinctly identify the C&V gaps, tools and formats for generation, digitization, storage and dissemination; an implementation plan; ICT guidelines and monitoring and evaluation plan, among others.

Primary data was collected in Nebbi and Yumbe districts with purposively sampled respondents due to their specialist knowledge through Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with;

01 Board member   **05** management staff   **02** project staff   **02** model farmers   **02** local government representatives

In addition, 04 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were carried out with;

09 project staff   **22** community members in Parombo and Padel.

Through these methods, qualitative data that support evidence-based C&V Strategy formulation were selected. The two districts as sites for field work were selected because Nebbi is AFARD's Headquarter while Yumbe has a unique context given the humanitarian and migration issues therein. See appendix iii for details.

Secondary data was collected through the following: a) Document reviews of documents that relate to communication and visibility, namely: organizational policies and institutional framework; communication Plans/Policies (other organizational plans) especially community development ones including Plan International, CARE, Save the Children, PELUM World Vison, UNICEF Global, European Union, UNESCO, ERASMUS +, and Save the Children. See appendix iv for details; and b) Media Reviews: especially of published work on AFARD, as an organization and about its projects, i.e. the print, broadcast and online media, including online publications, to be appraised in reference to C&V strategies and plans. See appendix v for details.

Finally, given the wide scope of institutions involved in AFARD's work, a stakeholder analysis was conducted. The stakeholder mapping was important in order to enable the development of critical messaging targeting specific groups. This exercise enabled stakeholder mapping based on the strategic pillars in the strategic plan 2020-2025. It also emerged that AFARD has largely remained regional and needs to strengthen collaboration with central government since it already complements local government's work. While districts are important stakeholders given their locality of work, stakeholder engagement beyond donors and collaborative partners among NGOs is limiting for its future prospects. AFARD needs to continue collaborating with these stakeholders, updating them in a transparent manner of their contributions and the outcome of its work.

Table 1: AFARD's Key stakeholders as per the pillars of intervention

Pillars	Stakeholders			
	Internal	External		
		Government	Donors	Collaborative[1]
Nutrition[2] sensitive Agriculture	Staff, Board, Communities (groups)	Ministry of Agriculture, Local Government Production department MoH	Danida, FAO, Irish Aid, UNICEF, BMZ - Germany Development Cooperation, Gorta, Self Help Africa, Global Fund for HIV, Cord Aid, Civil Society Fund, AWO - Internal, KNH, Manos Unidas	Uganda National NGO Forum, PELUM, UWASNET, UNASO, Universities, True African, Media, Agriculture and Finance Consultants (AFC), Private sector
Inclusive market participation	Staff, Board, Communities (groups)	Ministry of Trade Local Government Commercial department	EU, HORIZONT 3000, SNV, Total BV, The Embassies of Canada, Ireland, Netherlands	PELUM, Universities, Media Agriculture and Finance Consultants (AFC), Private sector
Voice and accountability	Staff, Board, Communities (groups)	District Information Department, Community Development Office	EU, UNICEF	Uganda National NGO Forum, Universities, Media
Organizational development	Staff, Board	District Information Office	Banks	Private sector

2.1.3   Data Analysis

The findings were analyzed based on predefined themes for the gaps and opportunities for AFARD's C&V. A detailed synthesis of information from a review of documents, field notes, and interview and focus group discussion notes was done to generate the final findings.

2.2   KEY FINDINGS

2.2.1   Stakeholders Analysis

Understanding its stakeholders is essential for AFARD in order to successfully implement the C&V strategy. Various stakeholders have different mandates that in turn determine their level of interest and influence. These are broadly categorised as:

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1.   Collaborative stakeholders include the religious and cultural institutions, academia, private sector and networks

2.   For the purpose of the C&V, all cross-cutting issues like agriculture, financial Inclusion, environmental conservation and health (sanitation and hygiene, reproductive health and HIV/AIDS) are under pillar 1.

AFARD BOARD MEMBERS
AFARD STAFF
DONORS/FUNDING PARTNERS
DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS
COLLABORATIVE PARTNERS
BUSINESS COMMUNITY
MEDIA
GENERAL PUBLIC

Each of these categories comprise of several organisations and groups with specific mandates. Their selection was based on their relevant contribution to the C&V development, approval or implementation. What follows is an analysis of who is playing what role and the contribution they are likely to make. These larger groups can be clustered according to their engagement in the AFARD projects:

STAKEHOLDER	MANDATE	ROLE IN THE C&V STRATEGY
AFARD BOARD		
Board Members	Supervise management and provide strategic direction of the organization	Raising awareness of the strategic plan and the C&V Strategy
AFARD STAFF		
ED	Oversee the management of the organization	• Supervise its development • The Face of AFARD • Popularize it among staff and partners • Ensure allocation of resources for implementation
Managers	Supervise implementation of Projects	Supervise implementation of C&V that falls in their mandate
Feld Officers	The link between AFARD and host communities Implement AFARD projects	• The face of AFARD to community and peers. • Participate in its implementation
DONORS/FUNDING PARTNERS		
European Union, Danida, Austrian Development Agency, Manos Unidas, HORIZONT3000, AWO - International; Sall Family Foundation, Kindernothilfe (KNH)	Funding projects and Technical Assistance (TA)	• Supervision and ensuring value for money. • Sharing stories from the field

STAKEHOLDER	MANDATE	ROLE IN THE C&V STRATEGY
DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS		
Uganda National NGO Forum, (PELUM, Uganda Water and Sanitation Network (UWASNET), and Uganda National AIDS Services Organization (UNASO)	Funding projects and Technical Assistance (TA)	• Supervision and ensuring value for money. • Sharing impact stories
Other Development Partners	Providing related assistance to AFARD and people/communities of West Nile.	Provide best practices and lessons learnt through other projects.
COLLABORATIVE PARTNERS		
Local Government (Host Districts and Local Councils)	Local governments are mandated to bring government services closer to the people.	Sign MoU, provide locations specific data and information on priorities, participate in planning, quality assurance, monitoring.
Host Communities (CBOs or farmer groups)	Participants in all projects	Cooperate in the implementation and provide information where needed
BUSINESS COMMUNITY		
The Business Community	The business community is interested in developments as part of the beneficiaries of community development initiatives.	Support the implementation of the C&V strategy
THE MEDIA		
Media - Print media, television, radio, online and community media	The media is a key partner in communicating milestones and asking questions on behalf of the public.	To inform, educate and create awareness about AFARD and its projects, telling impact stories.
THE GENERAL PUBLIC		
The Public	The general public is interested in developments as part of the beneficiaries of community development initiatives.	Participate in enforcing AFARD's communication and visibility.

2.2.2 The status of Visibility on various Platforms

The review of content on various platforms revealed that there is lack of visibility on media with much of the organization's presence placed in the Website. A detailed analysis is presented in this section.

Print and broadcast media

A search of print and broadcast media revealed a lack of visibility of the organization. The search did not yield any presence of publications on AFARD and its initiatives in the print media or published Radio and TV content readily available to be referenced. This information was corroborated in all key informant interviews, where respondents admitted that there has not been a deliberate effort to engage with the national media. It was established that AFARD staff may from time to time be called on to participate in radio talk shows. This was found to be problematic given the level of engagement that AFARD has had over the years.

AFARD Online: AFARD Website (https://www.afard.net)
The AFARD website was found to be quite elaborate and modern. Its accessibility smooth and sleek on both the computers and also in smartphone screens. The links run well and link to the right pages. What was majorly outstanding were the friendly colors used, excellent photography and easily readable text nonetheless, the website can be improved using the following recommendations.

Recommendations

- Instead of using the triple lines to access the Menu, it would be better to use the word (MENU) or both word and the triple lines. For convenient for all.

- There is need to establish a clear order of listing the projects (beginning with most current in years of implementation). Also, for ease of access, projects can be displayed through a list that is hyperlinked to the relevant pages to avoid over scrolling in case someone is interested in a particular project (more like the one on the "Publications" page)

- There is need to include a Q&A Page, with a bank of already asked and answered questions, added on the menu to address any queries that might arise. This is a very useful tool for information dissemination and feedback especially for visitors who don't have time to peruse all the pages of the website.

- There is also need to hasten feedback mechanisms to people who ask questions about AFARD.

Websites for AFARD's Host Districts and Sister Organizations
The consultants also reviewed websites of the 8 districts hosting AFARD projects with the aim to establish the presence and visibility of AFARD or/and its projects in the region. Also studied for best practices were the websites for organizations involved in community development work i.e. Save the children, World Vision, Care, Plan, PELUM). It was established that these 8 websites of the local governments that AFARD operates did not show AFARD's project, activities and events. Whereas this exercise did not find out what process is entailed in having information from NGO's linked to the Local Government Websites, it's important that AFARD collaborates more with the relevant District Information Offices to generate content and share information about AFARD as a stakeholder. While AFARD acknowledges that local governments are their critical stakeholders, who in turn see the work of AFARD as complementing their efforts, therefore critical for the fulfilment of their mandate, the absence of AFARD in there indicates a gap in value reference. There is need for AFARD to engage with them.

Social Media:
AFARD has a Facebook account that is a good visibility tool. However, it was noted that public posts are not very active -last post was in April 2020 by the time of search in August 2020, and even then not very consistent. Overall, in addition to having Facebook page, there in need for AFARD to increase its online presence by utilizing the other social media platforms i.e. (YouTube, Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram etc.) to reach a wider audience.

However, it should be noted that while the presence of AFARD on the website and social media is commendable, much of the content is reports that are not easy to consume and may require scaling down to smaller sizes and web-based material so that readers can easily engage with these. Also noted was that the presence on social media was not consistent with some posts that require responses not attended to and generally take long to update. This should be easily addressed.

2.2.3 Best practices in Communication

Although AFARD's strategic focus on its communication and visibility is not explicitly mentioned, some fairly good practices found in use include the following:

Meetings
AFARD maintains some good internal and external communication and visibility practices. For instance, the weekly staff meetings, done regularly on a fixed time day (first thing every Monday mornings) to discuss updates on the progress is laudable. Their participation in multi-stakeholder meetings at local, regional and national levels remains key in promoting the organizational visibility. The management and intent of these meetings can however be improved and used for team building.

Medium of communication

It was found out that AFARD utilizes several mechanisms for internal and external communication. They use reports, emails, website, social media (Facebook), meetings and other Information Education Communication (IEC) materials for communication and visibility. Members of staff appeared to know the levels of communication and their responsibilities in the same. These should be encouraged to enhance team work.

Reporting Mechanisms

Periodic reports remain an essential component of AFARD's communication. Many of these are readily available on the organization's website. Local government partners acknowledged receiving reports in a timely manner and being engaged in their dissemination. However, lack of Standard format of publication especially naming of publication for consistency and easy accessibility (online) and un-customized packaging of content for intended audience were noted. It would be very strategic for performance reports to be analyzed, packaged and possibly translated to relevant languages into simple and popular versions. There is need to identify and categorize the different stakeholder and know what publication to share online.

2.2.4 Gaps in Communication and Visibility

Despite best practices noted, there were gaps identified in C&V that the strategy will have to address. These are briefly described below:

Communication and Visibility materials

Besides the project specific branded materials, it was noted that AFARD was not producing sufficient organizational branding and marketing materials. In instances where the organization made branded T-shirts and corporate wear, they are made on the demand and cost of staff. The public, as organizational brand ambassadors, has limited access to such materials thus a big setback to promoting its visibility. The real issue for the strategy is how to resolve the issue of strong donor/partner brands and a weak organizational one.

Organizational Website

From the website, it was noted that reports and publications do not follow a standard naming format and hence not chronological. Publishing testimonies of what AFARD has done is a very crucial communication strategy to show performance of AFARD programs to different stakeholders. There was also the need to achieve the website accessibility standards by making sure that access keys are standard.

Strategic focus on communication and visibility

AFARD has many activities that are aimed at promoting C&V. For instance, weekly meetings with staff, participation in events, dissemination of periodic reports to key stakeholders, online presence through a functional website, and branding of organizational assets. These are commendable good practices. However, while AFARDS's strategic plans for 2015-19 and 2020-25 both recognize that multi-stakeholder engagements are critical and inevitable, both did not have C&V as an intentional strategic focus. In addition, interviews with all management, board members and staff also revealed that this in practice has not been on their radar. There has been dependence on volunteers (who are not consistent) to support the communication and visibility function.

Brand and Identity

AFARD has a recognizable brand with a logo that is well thought out. It can easily be identified if its logo is displayed. There was a view that AFARD has grown in leaps and bounds. It may be time within this strategic plan to review its logo and reinforce its identity either as a regional organization doing what it has been doing or recognize its growth and rethink its direction. These are key issues for discussion with the Board. Despite this growth, much of it remains known by the communities and donors, given the limited visibility.

Organizational branding versus projects / donor brands

From the field observations and interviews with beneficiaries, it was clear that the project and donor names are more visible than AFARD as an organization. Many staff and communities also identify more with their projects. Project specific branding materials make the projects more prominent in the communities than AFARD as an organization. Since not all projects being implemented by AFARD are AFARD funded, but rather some are in collaboration with other funders who produce their projects produce project specific promotional and branding materials, this instead promotes project funders rather than AFARD. This has made AFARD projects more prominent in the communities than AFARD as an organization. It's important that all branding should prioritize "horning out" AFARD as an organization.

There was interesting observation on its visibility in terms of people and place. AFARD is appreciated by the communities it serves. Interaction with the community indicated that real impact is visible and stakeholders in local government appreciates the complimentary role AFARD plays in their work, almost more than what government and the private sector are able to do in these communities. The challenge is that because AFARD operates in difficult to reach areas, rural communities and among refugees, its visibility remains there.

Within AFARD offices, there is no designated space for visibility materials like reports, fliers, policy briefs. The wall photos too need redesigning. This should enable its work to be displayed.

Financing communication and visibility activities

AFARD has no dedicated budget towards C&V. All current C&V related activities are funded through the project-specific budget lines. All managers interviewed indicated they have never even included it in their proposals, and think no donor would accept to fund it. Yet clearly, the organization spends on communication. For instance, having a website is part of the communication function. There are several promotional materials that were seen like pull-up banners, Signposts and T-shirts. Having a consolidated C&V budget allocation will be essential in implementing a C&V strategy. For instance, one good practice to learn from is how AFARD can ensure that all donors allocate a certain proportion of the funds given to AFARD for the C&V costs (e.g., 1%).

Human Resource

Since its inception, AFARD has never employed anyone to carry out specific communication functions of the organization. All external communication to donors and other collaborative stakeholders are channeled through the Executive Director. While this is an important quality assurance mechanism, it may also curtail institutional memory. A volunteer had been engaged to handle aspects of social media communication, who is no longer with the organization. Aspects of branding have been done through outsourcing. The management of the Website is also outsourced. Given the observation of management on cost limitation to recruit a communications person, an outsourcing option remains a cheaper and feasible alternative in the short term even though staff members will continue to contribute to C&V through writing reports and participating in different events that are organized by AFARD and partners. Staff capacity can be built to write better reports.

ICT policy and use

It was established that AFARD does not have an ICT policy in place. While it is true that AFARD has some good communication practices, a policy that defines the role of staff and other stakeholders in its communication is key. This strategy only provides avenues for communication. A clear but simple ICT policy is needed although some guidelines have been proposed in this C&V strategy.

2.3   STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS (SWOT) ANALYSIS

Whereas AFARD has made tremendous achievements in positively impacting the communities in West Nile, in the areas of sustainable agriculture, enterprise development, youth skilling, preventive community health, and community-led advocacy; and strategically positioning itself as a critical player it is in the socio-economic development of West Nile region, discussions with various stakeholders and performance reports indicate a number of issues that require attention as presented in the SWOT analysis matrix below:

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
1. Reputable Board members 2. Highly committed management and staff. 3. Commitment to strengthen online monitoring and evaluation system. 4. Strong collaboration with International partners and funders. 5. The existence of a supportive policy such as the 5-year Strategic Plan. 6. High reputation of the AFARD projects within the host communities. 7. Online presence through the website and Facebook	1. Lack of strategic focus on C&V 2. No dedicated staff for communication and visibility initiatives 3. No dedicated budget for C&V activities 4. Unscheduled and unharmonized production and dissemination of information/publications 5. Producing branding materials like T-shirts on staff demand and cost
OPPORTUNUTY	**THREATS**
1. Support by Local Governments in the region for AFARD's projects 2. Willingness of several development partners and donors to provide technical and financial support to the AFARD projects 3. Strong collaboration with national and district NGO networks as well as other international bodies that are players in socio-economic development. 4. There is possibility to Include AFARD logo on promotional material of projects like field jackets 5. Availability of national Print media and TV and local Radio channels of information dissemination	1. Lack of plan and inclusion of the C&V in project proposals 2. Weak sectoral-ministerial collaboration 3. Promotion of specific projects with branding material being project based and not organization based 4. The global Covid-19 pandemic and its potential to reduce donor funding for global south

2.4   RECOMMENDATIONS

The situation analysis of AFARD's current practices, the gaps and opportunities was an entry point into developing an evidenced based C&V strategy for the organization. It was evident that AFARD has many activities that are aimed at promoting communication and visibility to different stakeholders. Notable were the reports, online presence, events and different forms of meetings. But without a strategic alignment and focus, inadequate resourcing (funds/personnel) and improvements in the current practices, the benefits that comes with a strong organizational communications and visibility will not be tapped. The specific broader recommendations for the C&V strategy are summarized in table 2 below.

ISSUE	RECOMMENDATION
Limited strategic focus on C&V	Development of a C&V Strategy that aligns with the Strategic Plan 2020-2025
Strong project brands in the face of a weak organizational brand	Be intentional in promoting the organizational brand
Local and community visibility in the absence of wider visibility	Engage national media on their work, produce materials and impact stories for the website and social media
Financing C&V	Each yearly budget of the Strategic plan should be accompanied by a detailed C&V Budget
Human Resource	Outsource critical elements of communication since many of the proposals are periodic
Logo	Ensure that AFARD logo is part of their branding and visibility plan, appearing on all assets of the organization. There is also need to discuss the logo and the extent to which it represents its vision.
ICT	Make ICT part of the C&V strategy, with guidelines embedded therein but develop a clear and simple policy on use and access by staff.

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3.1   OBJECTIVES

3.1.1   Overall Objective

To strengthen and raise AFARD's Corporate Image during the implementation of the Strategic Plan 2020 - 2025 and thereafter.

3.1.2   Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of this C&V strategy are:

1.   To Increase the visibility of AFARD and its projects among key stakeholders.
2.   To build capacity of AFARD staff to effectively communicate, monitor and report on the C&V strategy.
3.   To support the implementation of AFARD's strategic plan 2020-2025.

Key Result Areas (Outcomes) and strategic interventions.

Each specific objective will be guided by Key Result Areas that are crucial in obtaining them.

KRA 1: Informed and knowledgeable stakeholders about AFARD projects.
This is aimed at increasing awareness of AFARD and its initiatives to all stakeholders, both in the local communities and the international ones. To achieve this, strategies will include taking advantage of the media, online and social media platforms.

KRA 2: Knowledgeable and skilled AFARD Staff participating in communication.
This KRA is envisaged to unleash the communication power of AFARD field and technical staff by having the voice directly from the front line which will add to the organization's credibility and effectively communicate that AFARD is on the ground impacting lives.

KRA 3: Effective and efficient implementation of AFARD C&V Strategy
This KRA aims at strengthening the C&V strategy implementation through monitoring and evaluation by putting in place standard procedures and tools in order to measure and analyse projects impact and make informed decisions that drive results. This will be achieved through operationalizing the implementation plan in this C&V strategy.

The Key Result Areas and Strategic Interventions		
Item	Key result areas	Indicators
Goal	To strengthen and raise AFARD's Corporate Image during the implementation of the Strategic Plan 2020 – 2025 and thereafter.	• Recognition of AFARD as an influential development actor in the region by key stakeholders
KRA 1: Informed and knowledgeable stakeholders about AFARD projects.	**SI 1.1:** Sensitization and advocacy activities of AFARD projects through stakeholders' workshops, Press releases, Radio/TV content, print media, engaging journalists of local radio/TV stations for coverage, and participation in international events. **S1.2:** Development and production of communication and visibility materials such as brochures, fliers and a teardrop, corporate Shirts for AFARD staff and beneficiary communities and billboards of AFARD in every participating community and at entry points to host districts **SI 1.3:** Updating AFARD website to increase its strategic utilization for efficient communication by building the capacity of an officer to periodically upload content to the website, producing a documentary highlighting organizational journey and engaging a consultant to produce an e-Magazine **SI 1.4:** Increasing AFARD online presence by posting content periodically and getting feedback from the existing Facebook Account as well as creating Twitter, Instagram and YouTube accounts.	• No of stakeholders who are engaged in the implementation of the strategic plan. • No of new development partners. • References made to AFARD by external websites. • Number of visits and feedback given through media.
KRA 2: Knowledgeable and skilled AFARD Staff participating in communication.	**SI 2.1:** Equipping AFARD's technical staff with knowledge and skills to participate in communication through training on social media use, online security and safety, content creation for the different platforms, communication skills and M&E implementation and results based reporting. **SI 2.2:** Motivation of staff to become effective link between the organization and community by providing free branding materials to staff.	• Level of competence in communication, M&E and reporting. • No of Trainings given to staff
KRA 3: Effective and efficient implementation of AFARD Strategic plan 2020-2025	**SI 3.1:** Enabling the Board and Management to support the implementation of AFARD's strategic plan by mobilizing resources for the C&V strategy, producing C&V materials for fundraising and promoting AFARD.	• Funds raised during the period of the strategic plan. • Level of interest of sparked by AFARD among stakeholders. • Expansion of the operational area of AFARD

3.2   PLATFORMS FOR COMMUNICATION

This is a detailed guide that elaborates the different communication opportunities and platforms/tools for communication and visibility. The C&V strategy will make use of available tools outlined selecting what is appropriate at different times. The proposals are shown in the table below.

COMMUNICATION OPPORTUNITIES AND TOOLS		
Area	**Platform/Tools**	**Relevant actions**
Project-related events/activities	• Workshops • Seminars • Roundtables • Launch ceremonies on community radios/TVs, etc.	• AFARD logo displayed on all material (handouts, banners, etc.) at project-related events • Reference made to the organization in all correspondence • Photos taken during the event displayed (online and other events) • AFARD publications (or those of initiatives which have stemmed from organization) displayed and distributed to participants/relevant parties • Establish a roster by which field officers submit news worthy items on project-related activities • Maintain/enhance transparency of organization by ensuring all reporting/ evaluations, etc. made easily available online • Ensure that information on projects and project-related activities is easily retrievable and presented in an attractive form on the websites and database • Involve locally based journalists in AFARD activities
Other events	• Statutory meetings (annual and biennial), • Visits of the AFARD Chair • Events attended by management	Relevant actions and tools: • Logo displayed on all relevant material (handouts, presentations, banners) • Reference made to the organization in all correspondence • Publications displayed and distributed to participants/relevant parties • Photos to be displayed online and/or at subsequent AFARD events • Creation of event-specific websites • Save the Date issued in lead-up to events and displayed at head office
Online Resources	Websites	• AFARD websites and those of partners / beneficiary organizations
	Databases	• Project database for projects approved since the beginning of AFARD • Contains full text and bibliographic records of docs. and publications • Contacts of key stakeholders • Facts about various groups AFARD has worked with since inception
Online Resources	Social Media/User-generated content	• Facebook, Twitter , YouTube (develop documentaries and short videos for publishing on YouTube)
	Other online resources	• Photo bank - online repository of photos ,multimedia content, including training support materials, Google Books and publications online
Corporate image	Logo	• Introduce standard guidelines and requirements for use of logo and promotional material, particularly relating to implementation of projects. • Logo on all vehicles and motorcycles.
	Brochure	• Availed at Programme's activities and online version
	Media Services	• Save the dates, Media advisories, Press releases, Opinion editorials (Op-Eds), Video news releases (VNR) and Background footage (B-rolls)
	Media Partnerships	• Explore partnership agreements and Memoranda of understanding which have been signed with several newspaper companies and TV networks to provide coverage on programme related activities.

IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK

STRATEGIC INTERVENTION:	ACTIVITIES	2020				2021				2022				2023				2024			
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Strategic Objective 1: To increase the visibility of AFARD and its projects among the key stakeholders																					
I. Sensitization and advocacy activities of AFARD projects.	Hold stakeholders' workshops				X		X		X				X								
	Hold Press releases						X				X				X				X		
	Create Radio/TV content					X				X				X				X			
	Create content for print media				X				X				X				X				
	Participate in radio/TV talk shows.					X		X				X				X				X	
	Engage with media houses for coverage				X				X				X				X				X
	Participate in international events							X				X				X				X	
II. Production of C&V materials	Produce brochures, fliers and teardrop.				X			X				X				X					
	Print corporate shirts					X				X				X				X			
	Produce billboards						X				X										
III. Updating AFARD website	Contract a person to update AFARD website						X														
	Build capacity of an officer to manage the website					X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
	Develop a documentary (organisational journey)					X								X							
	Produce e-Magazines bi annually					X		X			X			X		X				X	

Activity																						
iv. Increasing AFARD online presence																						
Post content and collect feedback on Facebook regularly.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Create; Twitter, Instagram and YouTube accounts.	X																					
Designate a staff member responsible	X																					
Strategic Objective 2: To build capacity of AFARD staff to communicate, monitor and report on the C&V strategy.																						
I. Equipping AFARD's staff to communicate, monitor and report on the C&V.																						
Train staff on social media and online security	X	X											X									
Train Staff on content creation for online use	X	X	X						X						X							
Train staff on communication, M&E and reporting	X		X						X	X				X								
Produce reports	X	X							X				X									
Strategic Objective 3: To strengthen the implementation of AFARD's strategic plan 2020-2025																						
I. Equipping AFARD Team to harness the opportunities in the C&V strategy.																						
Launch of the C&V for AFARD staff & Board	X																					
Produce C&V materials for fundraising drives			X			X					X							X				
Reviews of the C&V strategy	X	X		X				X				X					X				X	X
Evaluate the C&V strategy		X		X																		X

05

RESOURCES FOR THE C&V STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

As already noted, AFARD does not have a budget for C&V in its current arrangement. Going forward, this should be addressed. For a start, given its critical C&V needs, a modest budget is proposed for purposes of igniting a move towards improved awareness and knowledge of AFARD. This is in the table below based on proposed activities in the implementation matrix. The budget covers the period of the strategic plan, 2020-2025. The budget can be adjusted

5.1   HUMAN RESOURCES

STRATEGIC INTERVENTIONS	ANNUAL BUDGET IN UGX ('000)					TOTAL ('000)
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	
1 Sensitization and advocacy activities	60,000	60,000	60,000	60,000	60,000	300,000
2 Production of communication and visibility materials	17,000	17,000	17,000	17,000	17,000	85,000
3 Updating AFARD Website & Increasing AFARD online presence	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	50,000
4 Equipping AFARD's staff to communicate, monitor and report on the C&V.	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	25,000
5 Equipping AFARD Team to harness the opportunities in the C&V strategy.	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	25,000
Total	**97,000**		**97,000**	**97,000**	**97,000**	**485,000**

5.2 BUDGET ESTIMATES FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE C&V

It is apparent that, in order to improve the visibility of the organization, different actors have a role and responsibility to play. The table below give an overview of who can play what role.

RESOURCE		ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES	COMMENT
AFARD	Board Members	• To promote AFARD within respective institutions/networks • To be present at all statutory meetings of the organization • To ensure that projects selected are of a sufficiently high standard and conform to AFARDS guidelines	The board should be engaged to promote AFARD
	Head Office	• To organize events taking place at AFARD head office • To ensure website and online resources kept up-to-date • To liaise with staff members from other head office -based sections/depts. as well as field network • To keep stakeholders abreast of developments; provide information to current/potential contributors	Staff at the Head Office need to be trained equipped to play their roles more efficiently and effectively
	Executive Director	• To act as a leading figure in promoting the aims and priorities of the organization • To conduct statutory meetings in a professional manner • To communicate with stakeholders –especially donors and development partners on a regular basis and update staff • To promote the AFARD among current and potential donors and development partners, and engage the local leadership when necessary.	The ED is the chief promoter of AFARD and brand ambassador
	Management Staff	• To promote the AFARD's aims and priorities among key audiences, at the highest level • To raise awareness of support already carried out in a particular region, as well as of future activities (e.g. during country visits) • To ensure smooth coordination of AFARD activities and projects • To promote AFARD at national/regional level, including donors at this level who may be interested to complement specific AFARD grants • To ensure incoming project proposals are of a sufficiently high standard and that projects are implemented in line with AFARD standards	Management need to own the C&V strategy and embed it in their activities. They also need to convince stakeholders of its necessity
	Field Officers	• To ensure visibility of the organization wherever possible (e.g. logo displayed at events, photos and news items published on websites and those displayed at field office, etc.) • To provide reports (implementation/evaluation reports) of a high standard and in a timely manner, thus allowing AFARD to live up to its contention of being transparent	To be trained on communication skills

RESOURCE		ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES	COMMENT
AFARD	Marketing Unit	• To provide tools to promote the organization through media services i.e. online, TV/Radio and Print • To spearhead the creation of content to be published on the different media platforms. • To advise management on suitability of communication tools/ resources in order to maximize visibility	This function to be outsourced for creation of content that the ICT and marketing units can utilise Create a position for communication intern
	ICT	• To assist the head office in ensuring websites and other social media platforms are kept up-to-date and are of a professional standard • To give technical assistance in IT hitches such internet in order to maximize the potential of this resource	This should be outsourced
Implementing Partners		• To ensure reference is made to the AFARD wherever projects are implemented in partnership with AFARD. • Include AFARD's logo in their banding material to give acknowledgement and contribute to its visibility • To include links to the AFARD on websites	AFARD to coordinate
Beneficiary Communities		• To ensure reference is made to the AFARD wherever project support has been provided • To participate in awareness creation for AFARD projects and initiatives in their communities by sharing testimonies or/and displaying of AFARD brand e.g. branded T-Shirts.	Empowered to tell their story

ICT USE AND ACCESS as a resource too

Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) are a critical tool for implementation of projects. Community development that is participatory are important elements. ICTs are used to empower communities and engage with partners. Much of what is contained in this strategy is already part of the ICTs, particularly the use of various computer based programs and communication using various platforms. However, if not harnessed well through policy guidelines, can also be damaging to the reputation of an organisation. There is need for AFARD to develop more comprehensive guide or policy for the organisation and to use ICT for brand and reputation management. The following specific recommendations will enhance the organization's ability to leverage on its ICTs potential:

Across key messages, the following guidelines will be applied

• A contract for management of the website that spells out clear Terms of Reference
• Identification of key staff to engage with Website in terms of what is posted on behalf of AFARD with clear roles as part of their job description
• Outsourcing of communication deliverables that should be put on the website
• Training of staff on online security and safety as well as social media use
• Training of field staff on effective communication skills with communities
• Development of features and documentaries for sharing with communities
• Use trusted sources of information and acknowledgement of sources
• Establish what information should be on the website and those that should be directly shared with specific partners via direct mail.

06

MONITORING AND MEASURING RESULTS OF THE C&V STRATEGY

6.1 THE C&V IMPLEMENTATION PLAN;

The communication strategy intends to balance awareness creation with public relations. On the one hand, while awareness creation offers greater content control, it is expensive and lacks credibility compared to editorial. On the other hand, public relations allow for deeper analysis and greater reach to the audiences. In the end, the C&V strategy should have a distinctive identity that is recognizable among the various publics. The C&V strategy will be executed according to the implementation plan below

THE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

AUDIENCE	CHANNEL/TOOL	KEY MESSAGE	TIME FRAME	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	MONITORING INDICATORS
AFARD Board	Annual Meetings and E-Magazine	Contribution to the AFARD and support for the process.	TBD	AFARD	• Number of meetings recorded • attendance
AFARD Staff	Weekly meetings Emails and phone calls	Their roles and responsibilities, commitment to the organizational vision	TBD	AFARD	• Number of meetings recorded • attendance
Donors/ Funding Partners	Engagement on key issues of funding through working groups, direct mail and meetings	Dialogue on progress	TBD	AFARD	• No of Direct Mail, Meetings (online or physical) • attendance
Development Partners	Engagement on key issues through working groups, direct mail and meetings	Dialogue on progress	TBD	AFARD	• No of Direct Mail, Meetings (online or physical) • attendance
Collaborative Partners (Local Government and host Communities	Stakeholder Consultation through working meetings, direct mail and social media	Galvanizing support for C&V strategy through sharing initial findings	TBD	AFARD	• Number of meetings organized, • No. of emails exchanged No of social media posts
Regional Organizations	Stakeholder Consultation through working meetings and information sharing via the media	Seeking cooperation with the audience and getting relevant information	TBD	AFARD	• Number of regional organisations met • minutes of the meetings
Community based Organizations (CBOs)	Engagement of stakeholders through the media and invitation to workshops	Sharing information	TBD	AFARD	• Number of workshops attended

Business Community	Consultation, validation and updates through meetings, direct mail and media	Gathering data	As needed	AFARD	• Number of direct mails sent, • consultations and responses to queries
Media	Provide information for use relevant for informing the public	Press conference, media pack, E-Magazine, advertorials, social media posts, YouTube videos, and announcements	TBD	AFARD	• Number of press conferences, materials developed, Program sponsorships, announcements and advertorials
General Public/Local Community	Provide information to the public, gather information and validate information	Public dialogue, Press, Radio, television, and social media	Monthly	Understanding, opinions, attitudes and behavior	• Ensure each month there is a communication activity

6.2 TRACKING PROGRESS

This is a detailed guide for communication that elaborates the different activities to be undertaken within specified timelines with regards to the overall purpose of the C&V strategy. It illustrates how different communication tools apply to different audiences, the end goals of such correspondence and the frequency of engagement. The net effect is to ensure all groups are communicated with on the purpose, process and progress of the AFARD projects. The communication strategy will be implemented based on an implementation matrix but its progress monitored by the implementation plan below.

The table below summarizes the indicators for a successful implementation of the C&V strategy. The C&V monitoring and evaluation activities will be integrated into the organization M&E framework to ensure efficiency. Nonetheless, evidence generated on the C&V indicators will ensure that the C&V strategy is relevant, effective, and efficient and impacts on the implementation of AFARD's strategic plan 2020-2025. The evidence derived from the M&E system further will inform adaptation of the strategy during the period of implementation and inform designs of future C&V strategy.

RESULT CHAIN	INDICATORS	FREQUENCY OF REPORTING
Overall Objective	Recognition of AFARD as an influential development actor in the region by key stakeholders	Midterm & End of strategy
KRA 1: Informed and knowledgeable stakeholders about AFARD projects.	• Of stakeholders who are engaged in the implementation of the strategic plan. • Of new development partners. • References made to AFARD by external websites. • Number of visits and feedback given through media.	Annually

KRA 2 Knowledgeable and skilled AFARD Staff participating in communication	• Level of competence in communication, M&E and reporting. • Of staff contributing to the C&V activities. • C&V materials developed by Staff	Annually
KRA 3: Effective and efficient implementation of AFARD Strategic plan 2020-2025	• Funds raised during the period of the strategic plan. • Level of interest of sparked by AFARD among stakeholders. • Expansion of the operational area of AFARD	Annually
KR1.SI: I. Sensitization and advocacy activities of AFARD projects.	• of workshops • of press releases • of events • of talk shows	Quarterly
KR1 SI: II. Production of C&V materials	• of brochures, fliers, teardrops and shirts • bill boards	Quarterly
KR1 SI: III. Updating AFARD website	• of reports uploaded • documentaries • e-magazines	Quarterly
KR1 SI: IV. Increasing AFARD online presence	• of social media accounts created • of uploads • staff hired	Quarterly
KR2.1 Equipping AFARD's staff to communicate, monitor and report on the C&V.	• of staff trained • of contents created and loaded • branded materials distributed to staff	Quarterly
KR3.SI. I. Equipping AFARD Team to harness the opportunities in the C&V strategy.	• Reflection events held • C&V materials for fundraising • Evaluation reports	Quarterly

6.3 DISSEMINATION

The C&V strategy plan will need to be integrated with that of the strategic plan in order to ensure that all parties appreciate their roles in delivering the plan and also the implementation plan of this strategy is adhered to. The C&V strategy is to support the work of AFARD, engage with stakeholders better and accelerate their impact. The strategy will be shared and discussed with staff so that each group can understand their roles. The strategy should also be part of the materials on the website.

ANNEXES

ANNEX 1: CRITICAL COMMUNICATION AND DISSEMINATION TOOLS

Tool	Utilization
Advocacy	• Dissemination and information/awareness raising events
Information and visibility material	• Leaflets or brochures -For distribution to all partners and to potential beneficiaries and other interested stakeholders • Banners: Plastic or textile banners intended to serve as a backdrop for special events such as inaugurations and conferences; • Newsletters - Produced and circulated via email or websites to regularly inform on the project progress to all our audiences. • Photographs - Taken where appropriate to document the progress of respective activities and events • Videos - To provide complementary audio-visual information to the website and other dissemination platforms
Websites:	• Publish information about the project as well as press releases and other relevant dissemination material
Press releases	• To be issued at the start of all activities/initiatives It is more likely to use Facebook and other social media far reaching. In addition, traditional media (newspaper, radio stations and television channels) should be addressed
Social media	• Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube can be used to communicate the same stories as on websites in form of short updates about relevant activities in order to reach a wider audience
Workshop	• This will ensure AFARD's visibility during workshops e.g. by having roll-up banners and logos on facilitators' visual presentations

ANNEX 2: PRIMARY DATA SOURCES

District	Details of interviews	Comment
AFARD Management	• 2 staff from management including the ED • 2 staff from the management department	• In its organogram AFARD has 4 management staff. 100%
Yumbe	• Team Leader (1) • FGD of 6 field officers • Local Government Focal Person (1) • Farmers (2)	• Total number interviewed ;10
Nebbi	• FGD of 3 field officers • Interaction with 1 field supervisor and 1 field officer • FGD of 15 community members in Parombo • FGD of 7 community members in Padel • 1 Local Government Focal Person	• Total number interviewed; 28
Board	• 1 Founding Board member and a current board member	• Total number interviewed; 2

ANNEX 3: REVIEW OF WEBSITES - THE 8 DISTRICTS HOSTING AFARD PROJECTS & THE 5 SAMPLED NGOS

Websites for the 8 districts hosting AFARD activities	
Website	Key Findings / Best Practices
Nebbi District Website	• AFARD is listed among the NGOs/FBOs operating in the district. Looking at the rest of the pages, e.g. projects, AFARD does not feature. • No page on new & events that would otherwise shade some light on activities being implemented in the districts by AFARD. *This says a lot given that Nebbi is not only a host district for AFARD activities but also hosts the AFARD's head offices.*
Yumbe District Website	• Yumbe website is one of the website that gives credit to AFARD as a brand and acknowledges some of the initiatives they have implemented in the district. • In its 5-year Development Plan, AFARD is cited in the table listing the NGOs and CSOs operating in Yumbe and credited for, among others; construction of a classroom, sponsoring youth for vocational training and training farmers. • However, when it came to naming its development partners in the same document, AFARD is not mentioned. I don't know is this was just an oversight.
Adjumani District Website	• The district website of Adjumani is one of the most functional and up-to-date. However, there was no mention of AFARD, not even among the NGOs and partners operating within the district. Here too, one wonders if is it an oversite or the district doesn't host any AFARD projects.
Zombo, Pakwach, Moyo, and Obongi District Websites	For the 4 districts: • Their websites were of basic template, and not updated. • Most of the pages were blank • There was no mention of AFARD not AFARD activities in this host districts. • This reflects on hoe invisible AFARD and its projects are in these districts.
Conclusion	• AFARD is not visible enough on the district websites. Going by this observation, it is notable that the visibility of AFARD's activities and initiatives is lacking and so there is need for deliberate awareness creation through communication. For instance, in all the 8 websites, it is noted that, none of AFARD's projects/activities and/or events are announced, translating to very limited communication and visibility.
Websites for the 5 sampled organizations involved in community development work for bench marking	
Website	Key Findings / Best Practices
Save the children	• A news and stories page that's very informative and insightful with current affairs and also stating what Save the children has done help in the situations. • This is one way of making known their activities and initiatives – thus promoting their awareness & visibility and even attract funding and partnerships. • An advertisement page informing people of upcoming activities/events, career and tender prospects. • This is strategic as it attracts more visits to the website and hence more visibility • A search engine included in the pages for quick navigation to the information. • Shows their presence on media several platforms (YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram) - actively used and updated
World Vision	• Shows their presence on media several platforms (YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram) - actively used and updated

CARE	• The Website details past and ongoing projects
	• They display their social media handles (YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Skype) - Which are actively used and updated with current events and testimonies / life experiences shared from around the world
	• They have a "Latest News" section
	• A blogs page that publish informative content from different people around the world
	• A newsletter (The pepper Crane) where they make their publications
	• An Events Calendar showing activities/events (past, ongoing and planned)
	• Publications page includes reports, fact sheets, announcement of new projects, current affairs
	This can attract more readership and hence increase awareness & visibility.
PLAN	• Shows their presence on media several platforms (YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram) - actively used and updated
	• Highly graphical content which is custom with illustrations befitting the target audience – in this case children
	• a dedicated team of experts dedicated to handling their media content production and publication (specific and custom to plan style)– this shown in the press contacts page
PELUM	• different pages on blogs; events and publication, used to communicate different aspects
	• Shows their presence on media several platforms (YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram) – relatively actively.
	• Heavy pictorial making the loading of pages slower and one has to scroll further down to reach the text.
Recommendations	• In addition to having Facebook page, there in need for AFARD to increase its online presence by utilizing the other social media platforms i.e. (YouTube, Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram etc.) to reach a wider audience. This will make them visible and also attract new ideas and funding opportunities.
	• Seeing that reports and publications on the AFARD website do not follow a standard naming format and hence not chronological, including a search engine on this page will save the visitors time, especially if they know the documents they are looking to for.
	• Publishing testimonies of what AFARD has done is a very crucial communication strategy to show performance of AFARD programs to different stakeholders.
	• Adapting information before sharing it knowing what information to be shared, and to whom. In addition to this, it would also be very strategic for performance reports to be analysed, packaged and possibly translated to relevant languages into simple and popular versions, and possibly translated to relevant languages for easy consumption by different stakeholders.
	• Try as much as possible to achieve the website accessibility standards by making sure that access keys - navigation device enabling getting around the website. The most international recommendations on access keys are:

1	Home Page	5	Advanced Search
2	Skip to content	6	Site navigation tree
3	Site Map	9	Contact information
4	Search field focus	0	Access Key details

ANNEX 4: COMMUNICATIONS AND VISIBILITY DOCUMENTS/MATERIAL REVIEWED

Organization	Title of the Document reviewed
Save the Children	• Communication Toolbox • Practical guidance for program managers to improve communication with participants and community members
UNESCO – The International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC)	Communication and Visibility for IPDC
EU - PacWaste Project (Pacific Hazardous Waste) 2013 - 2017	Communication and Visibility Plan
EU- ERASMUS + – ISPEHE (Innovative Strategic Partnership For European Higher Education) Project	Dissemination, Communication and Project Visibility Plan
EU-AECID funded project "Access to justice and legal empowerment in Jordan	Communication And Visibility Plan
Websites Reviewed	
• *https://www.afard.net* • *https://neebi.go.ug* • *https://pakwach.go.ug* • *https://adjumani.go.ug* • *https://yumbe.go.ug* • *https://arua.go.ug* • *https://zombo.go.ug*	• *https://moyo.go.ug/* • *https://obongi.go.ug* • *https://plan-international.org/uganda* • *https://www.care-international.org/* • *https://www.wvi.org/uganda* • *https://www.pelumuganda.org/* • *https://www.unicef.org/*