



Promoting access to off-grid solar energy services for environmental conservation and livelihoods in Uganda



Will companies contribute to clean energy transition?

Sandra Atusinguza

One in every seven people still lack electricity and most of them live in rural areas of the developing world, according to UNDP 2020 report. Investing in solar, wind and thermal power, improving energy productivity as well as ensuring energy for all is vital if we are to achieve SDG 7 on affordable and clean energy by 2030. The delayed announcement of the final investment decision on oil has greatly increased doubts of fast-track oil by 2020/2021. The Government has urged local firms to register on the national supplier data base and talent register. However, there is limited technical capacity and specialised expertise to fully exploit the renewable energy resources potential and this has been a great challenge to fast-track the implementation of the local content policy. Uganda's oil fields have associated natural gas reserves estimated at 290 billion cubic feet and as some oil and gas companies such as CNOC plan to produce gas and use some of it to generate up to 43MW of electricity for their use and for sale to the national grid. This natural gas can be used in several clean energy alternative projects which can help to contribute towards climate change mitigation, national energy security and global energy transition. Oil and gas companies must be adapting to the use of biomass, wind turbines and solar panels for oil field operations and other projects. The energy and transport ministries should come up with a policy on low carbon transportation and ensure

that oil and gas companies adopt it through the use of clean fuel vehicles mainly natural gas (compressed natural gas or liquefied petroleum gas), which is readily available in the Albertine Graben. Climate change can also be mitigated amidst oil and gas activities through carbon capture and storage. This will result in fewer emissions by capturing carbon and storing it into oil reservoirs. According to Uganda's energy and mineral sector, in its midterm sector policy objectives, the oil and gas resources must be used to contribute to early achievement of poverty eradication and create lasting value to society. The oil and gas industry must, therefore, heavily invest in new clean energy business models and technologies to transition to decreasing greenhouse gas emissions and promote energy efficiency in the next phases. **The writer is a field co-ordinator at AFIEGO**



An article by an AFIEGO staff that was published by the New Vision newspaper

A courtesy photo of a technician installing solar panels in one of the markets in Uganda



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List of Acronyms

AFIEGO	Africa Institute for Energy Governance
CBOs	Community Based Organisations
CSOs	Civil society organisations
CS	Communication Strategy
MEMD	Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development
PAU	Petroleum Authority of Uganda
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SE4ALL	Sustainable Energy for All
UEDCL	Uganda Electricity Distribution Company Ltd
UEGCL	Uganda Electricity Generation Company Ltd
USEA	Uganda Solar Energy Association
UETCL	Uganda Electricity Transmission Company Ltd
UK	United Kingdom
UNOC	Uganda National Oil Company

About AFIEGO

AFIEGO is a registered public policy research and advocacy national non-governmental organisation (NGO) dedicated to influencing energy policies to benefit the poor and vulnerable. Based in Kampala, Uganda, the organisation was born out of the need to contribute to efforts to turn Africa's energy potential into reality and to ensure that the common

man and woman benefits from Africa's energy boom. Through advocacy, lobbying, research and community education, AFIEGO works with communities and leaders to ensure that energy resources are utilised in a way that promotes social justice, equitable development, environmental conservation and respect for human rights.

Executive Summary

Africa Institute for Energy Governance (AFIEGO) is currently implementing the project, **Promoting access to solar energy against grid electrification and fossil fuels in Uganda**. The objective of the project is to promote access to off-grid energy services such as solar and other clean renewable energy in Uganda as opposed to grid-based hydropower and fossil fuels electrification. The project is being supported with generous funding from Both ENDS with support from Ellen Dorsey, director at the US-based Wallace Global Fund.

The project was designed to address the problem of lack of access to affordable clean energy for the majority of Ugandans. In the last ten or so years, the Ugandan government has invested about or over 10% of the national budget per year in hydropower generation and grid expansion. The main aim of these huge investments is to increase access to affordable and reliable electricity.

However, to date, access to electricity remains low with only 24% of Ugandans having access to grid power. To make matters worse, most of the people connected to the grid cannot afford the said electricity due to high power tariffs. Consequently, over 90% of the over 42 million Ugandans continue to rely on crude biomass to meet their cooking energy needs. This has led to massive destruction of the environment as Ugandans search for firewood and charcoal to meet their cooking energy needs.

To address the above challenges which were also existent in 2016 and before then, the government of Uganda and that of the United Kingdom (UK) signed the Energy Africa Uganda Compact Agreement in December 2016. The agreement was signed in recognition of the fact that expensive grid power in Uganda could not promote universal access to electricity by 2030 as is aspired to under the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 7 as well as the Energy Africa and Power Africa initiatives.

Promotion of grid electrification was also a stumbling block to the attainment of goals under the Sustainable Energy for All (SE4ALL), Paris Climate Change Agreement and other initiatives that seek to increase clean energy access, reduce environmental degradation and curb climate change.

The objective of the Energy Africa Uganda Compact Agreement was "to document bottlenecks to off-grid services and recommend strategic areas to be addressed to accelerate the adoption of off-grid solar home and institutional lighting systems to achieve 100% electrification."

It was hoped that increased off-grid solar electrification would enable Uganda to meet its national and international electrification goals, promote affordability and reliability as well as achieve high productivity. Consequently, this would promote conservation and reduce poverty as well as improve the livelihoods of citizens especially vulnerable groups such as women, girls, youth, rural-based communities and others.

Through the agreement, the Ugandan government committed to put in place policies and frameworks such as a Solar Energy Policy, a consumer protection law to fight counterfeit solar products, support and strengthen the Solar Energy Association of Uganda and other initiatives intended to solve the problem of energy poverty. The Ugandan government also committed to coordinate support and other tools to accelerate the development of the household solar market to increase solar energy access.

However, to date, key commitments remain unimplemented. This is undermining access to clean and affordable off-grid solar and other renewable clean energy services for Ugandans. And, if this challenge is not checked, it will fail Uganda from attaining the targets set under Vision 2040, the National Development Plan III (NDP III), SDGs, SE4ALL, Paris Climate Change and other agreements.

To address the above challenge, AFIEGO has designed and is currently implementing a one-year (12 months) project called, **Promoting access to solar energy against grid electrification and fossil fuels in Uganda.**

As was earlier noted, the main aim of the project is to ensure that off-grid solar energy services are promoted by government to increase access to clean and affordable energy for all, especially for groups such as women, girls, youth, poor rural communities and others. Increased access to clean and affordable energy will improve services in health, education, job creation, clean water and promote environmental conservation among others.

Increased off-grid energy access can be attained through mobilising and empowering Ugandan citizens to work with or pressure the Ugandan government to modernise the solar energy sector through:

- Increased investments;

- Putting in place an enabling Solar Energy Policy;
- Enacting a consumer protection law to guard against counterfeit solar equipment;
- Supporting solar energy consumers;
- Coordinating private solar energy investors and implementing other efforts for the benefit of Ugandans including women and other vulnerable groups.

This Communication Strategy has been developed to guide the above-mentioned activities.

The Communication Strategy

Since 2016, AFIEGO has participated in processes to promote implementation of the 2016 Energy Africa Uganda Compact Agreement. Being aware of the pivotal role of effective communication in the mobilisation and empowerment of citizens to work with or pressure government to promote off-grid solar energy access to benefit citizens especially the poor, women, girls, youth, rural communities and others, we decided to put in place this Communication Strategy. Once completed, this Communication Strategy will be presented to government, Uganda Solar Energy Association (USEA), civil society organisations (CSOs) and others as part of our efforts to support solar energy initiatives in Uganda.

The main objective of this Communication Strategy is to mobilise, create public awareness and empower all stakeholders through ensuring timely dissemination of accurate and relevant information necessary for increased access to affordable and reliable off-grid solar energy services in Uganda. The Communication Strategy will also enable effective communication on the dangers of over reliance on grid electrification and fossil fuels.

The specific objectives of the Communication Strategy include:

- (i) To define the major stakeholders and their roles for increased off-grid electrification;

- (ii) To identify relevant messages for the different publics (audiences) for the promotion of off-grid solar electrification;
- (iii) To define suitable communication tools and channels for communicating messages to the above various publics;
- (iv) To define the key principles of communication;
- (v) To outline methods of monitoring and evaluating the impact of the communication channels and relevant messages.

It is expected that the Communication Strategy will help in the mobilisation of local communities, CSOs, women's groups, youth clean energy clubs, cultural and religious leaders, the media, the private sector, government, development partners and other stakeholders to promote increased off-grid solar energy access.

The Communication Strategy is divided in three broad sections including the introduction, contextual analysis and conceptual framework in addition to the implementation framework.

When this Communication Strategy is completed, AFIEGO will engage government through the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development (MEMD), USEA, CSOs and other relevant stakeholders to adopt it as part of the tools necessary for the success of the Compact Agreement.

It is noteworthy that the strategy was developed after an analysis of the communication landscape in Uganda and a study of the various publics that are targeted.

The Communication Strategy was also developed following consultations with various relevant stakeholders including local communities that are the target market for off-grid solar, women's groups, youth clean energy champions, CSOs, the private sector including solar, hydropower and oil companies, government, development partners, the media and others.

While AFIEGO is responsible for implementing the project under which this Communication Strategy has been developed, relevant stakeholders including government, USEA, CSOs and others will be the ones to use this Communication Strategy to promote off-grid solar energy services.

It will be the task of AFIEGO and partners to mobilise citizens to engage government and the other aforementioned stakeholders to adopt this Communication Strategy.

It is our hope that with the support of our allies, this Communication Strategy will be successfully implemented to increase accessible, affordable and reliable off-grid energy services in Uganda.



Government, private power companies and CSOs should use this communication strategy to promote off-grid solar energy services

1. Introduction and background

This Communication Strategy has been developed as part of AFIEGO's project, **Promoting solar energy access against grid electrification and fossil fuels in Uganda.**

Despite the 2016 Energy Africa Uganda Compact Agreement committing the Uganda government to among other things put in place a solar energy policy, create public awareness on solar energy access and other efforts to promote clean renewable energy based on off-grid electrification, to date, Uganda remains without a solar energy policy, consumer protection law and others needed to promote off-grid solar energy. As a result, solar and other renewable energy electrification efforts in the country remain uncoordinated. This explains why government's efforts to expand electricity access and affordability especially for the poor and vulnerable continue to fail.

As earlier noted, electricity access in the country stands at 24% and of the population with access, over 90% cannot afford to use electricity for cooking or to meet other key energy needs due to unaffordable high power tariffs. They remain stuck on using biomass to meet most of their key energy needs such as cooking, boiling water and others.

Further, due to lack of public awareness and timely, accurate information, the majority of Ugandan citizens remain ignorant on how to promote and make use of solar energy access to improve their lives and income as well as reduce on deforestation. Consequently, environmental degradation continues to worsen. This is a big problem.

The project, **Promoting solar energy access against grid electrification and fossil fuels in Uganda,** under which this Communication Strategy has been developed, seeks to address the above problem.

To implement this Communication Strategy, traditional and new media communication tools or channels and others will be required. A number of targeted messages will also need to be developed to mobilise, empower or influence the various publics or stakeholders that this Communication Strategy is targeting.

This Communication Strategy therefore outlines the stakeholders that this strategy seeks to reach, objectives for reaching those stakeholders, the messages that will be relayed and tools or channels that will be used to reach the various stakeholders.

The principles that will guide communication with the identified stakeholders and the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) methods that will be employed for this Communication Strategy are also discussed. It is hoped that the identification of key audiences, sources, messages and channels of communication will enable MEMD, USEA, CSOs and other relevant stakeholders to effectively implement this Communication Strategy after its adoption by the above stakeholders.

A situation analysis that informed the choice of stakeholders to engage, the type of messaging to be used, the sources that will disseminate information and the channels of communication that will be employed was undertaken and is outlined below.



Low investment in off-grid energy services has undermined access to clean energy by the majority of Ugandans

2. Situation analysis

In collaboration with our stakeholders that are necessary for the success of this strategy, AFIEGO conducted a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis that will enable effective implementation of this Communication Strategy.

The analysis showed that a number of strengths and opportunities that will enable effective communication exist. However, weaknesses and threats also exist.

The strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats are highlighted below so that the strengths and opportunities can be consolidated while weaknesses and threats should be mitigated.

2.1. Strengths

A number of strengths that will enable implementation of this Communication Strategy exist.

These strengths include the following:

Credibility: The stakeholders who will implement this Communication Strategy are credible, well-respected and trusted by the various stakeholders that are being targeted. This will ease implementation of this Communication Strategy to mobilise and empower stakeholders for the promotion of off-grid solar energy services.

Leadership: Further, the stakeholders who will implement this Communication Strategy have strong governance structures that will provide strategic guidance for implementation of this Communication Strategy.

Convening power: In addition, the stakeholders who will implement this Communication Strategy have well established local community, CSO, women's groups, religious and cultural leaders, private

sector, government, development partners and media connections that are necessary for implementation of the Communication Strategy.

Skills and tools: Furthermore, the stakeholders who will implement this Communication Strategy have skilled, innovative and creative staff that will enable implementation of this Communication Strategy. Moreover, the stakeholders own a wide range of traditional and digital communication tools which will be used for implementation of the Communication Strategy.

2.2. Weaknesses

Despite the above strengths, various weakness exist. These include:

Lack of enabling legal framework: Uganda lacks the legal framework needed for the promotion of off-grid solar energy. Without a legal framework to support the proliferation of off-grid solar energy, efforts to increase off-grid solar energy access are curtailed. Using this Communication Strategy, stakeholders should engage government and/or campaign for the enactment and enforcement of the policies and laws that are necessary for the promotion of off-grid solar energy.

Lack of sufficient funding: Further, some of the government and other stakeholders who will implement this Communication Strategy suffer the challenge of lack of sufficient funding. Without sufficient funding, the stakeholders may not be able to adequately implement this Communication Strategy to promote off-grid solar energy services.

It is hoped that government, development partners and other stakeholders can provide funding for implementation of this Communication Strategy.

Lack of willpower to promote off-grid solar energy services:

In addition, while some of the stakeholders who are supposed to implement this Communication Strategy have goodwill towards promoting off-grid solar energy, there is lack of willpower by the wider general government to promote off-grid solar as evidenced by the continued investment in grid-based power initiatives such as the free electricity connections for the poor as opposed to off-grid energy investments that are the energy of choice for the most poor. It is therefore imperative for the stakeholders implementing this Communication Strategy to remind government about its commitment made under the 2018-2027 Electricity Connections Policy to ensure that the 33% households targeted under the ECP to access off-grid energy by 2027 are enabled to access it.

Unsafe CSO operational space: The operational space in which CSOs in Uganda work keeps shrinking. Repressive laws and administration regimes, state intimidation, arrests and others are used to limit CSOs' operational space. However, since this Communication Strategy has been developed with the aim of supporting government to increase off-grid clean energy access, a goal that government is keen on too, government will be receptive of it.

2.3. Opportunities

The following are the opportunities that will enable successful implementation of this Communication Strategy.

Stakeholders keen on promoting clean energy access: The government of Uganda signed the Compact Agreement in line with Power Africa and Energy Africa under which the country committed to promote and expand investments in off-grid solar energy services. Development partners and private solar companies are also keen on promoting off-grid solar energy. As such, the above stakeholders will be receptive towards efforts to promote off-grid solar energy.

Available resources: Further, Uganda is endowed with favourable solar irradiation of 1,825 kWh/m² to 2,500 kWh/m² per year. In addition, solar energy technologies such as Solar Home Systems are available on the Ugandan market to enable Ugandans to tap into the off-grid solar energy system.

Pay-as-you-go innovations: While the Pay-as-you-go system in which poor communities pay for solar energy products in installments has its disadvantages, this payment method presents an opportunity to enable poor communities to buy off-grid solar energy technologies and they pay in installments.

Climate change: In addition, with the devastating effects of climate change already being experienced across the world, the Ugandan government and public is appreciative of interventions such as use of clean and renewable energy particularly solar to reduce environmental degradation and consequently global warming. This presents an opportunity to promote off-grid solar energy.

2.4. Threats

The following are the threats to the success of this Communication Strategy:

Strong interest in grid power: The government of Uganda, private companies and development partners are more determined to implement big grid energy projects.

Less attention is paid to off-grid services. This could slow the increase in off-grid solar energy access in Uganda. Moreover, strong lobbying by big grid electricity companies could negatively affect implementation of this Communication Strategy.

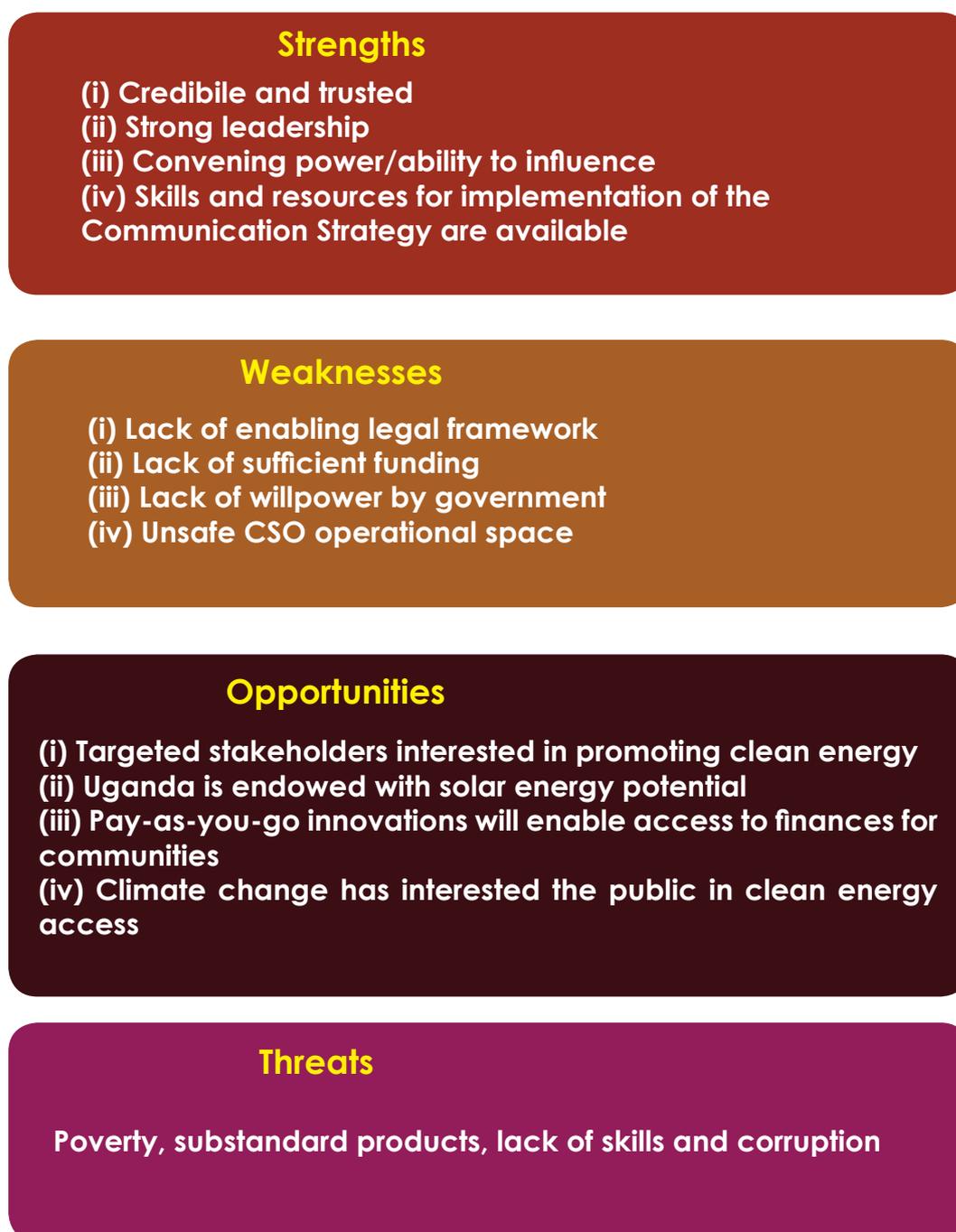
Corruption: Furthermore, the high levels of corruption in the country may also deter full implementation of this Communication Strategy. Companies could be willing to bribe the Ugandan government to promote grid as opposed to off-grid electrification.

Inadequate finances and skills: Inadequate access to finances and skills to enable development of solar technologies in Uganda, train technicians to maintain off-grid solar systems and expand outreach of off-grid solar solutions in rural communities in Uganda is also a threat. Furthermore, local communities also lack finances to purchase solar home systems.

Substandard products are also a challenge that undermine the uptake of off-grid solar energy systems.

The above threats will be mitigated through massive mobilisation of citizens that will engage the Ugandan government to promote the power of communities' choice, off-grid solar energy. Through the policies and laws such as the Solar Energy Policy, Consumer protection law and others, the challenges of lack of skills, finances and sub-standard goods will be addressed. Below is a figure of the situation analysis.

Figure 1: Situation analysis



3. Audience segmentation

The immediate target audiences of this Communication Strategy are local communities, women's groups, youth clean energy clubs, religious and cultural leaders, CSOs, policy makers, the private sector (solar companies, oil and gas companies), development partners and the media.

Other audiences not mentioned in this strategy may be targeted. To determine whether an audience should be targeted or not, the following should act as guidelines.

- What stakeholders will benefit from promotion of off-grid solar energy?
- What stakeholders will be negatively affected if there is continued dependence on grid electrification and fossil fuels?
- Which stakeholders will resist the promotion of off-grid as opposed to grid electrification and use of fossil fuels?

- Who can raise the public's raise awareness of the need to promote off-grid as opposed to grid electrification and use of fossil fuels?
- Who can influence changes in policies and practices for the promotion of off-grid as opposed to grid electrification and use of fossil fuels?
- Who funds off-grid solar energy projects vis-à-vis grid electrification and fossil fuels?

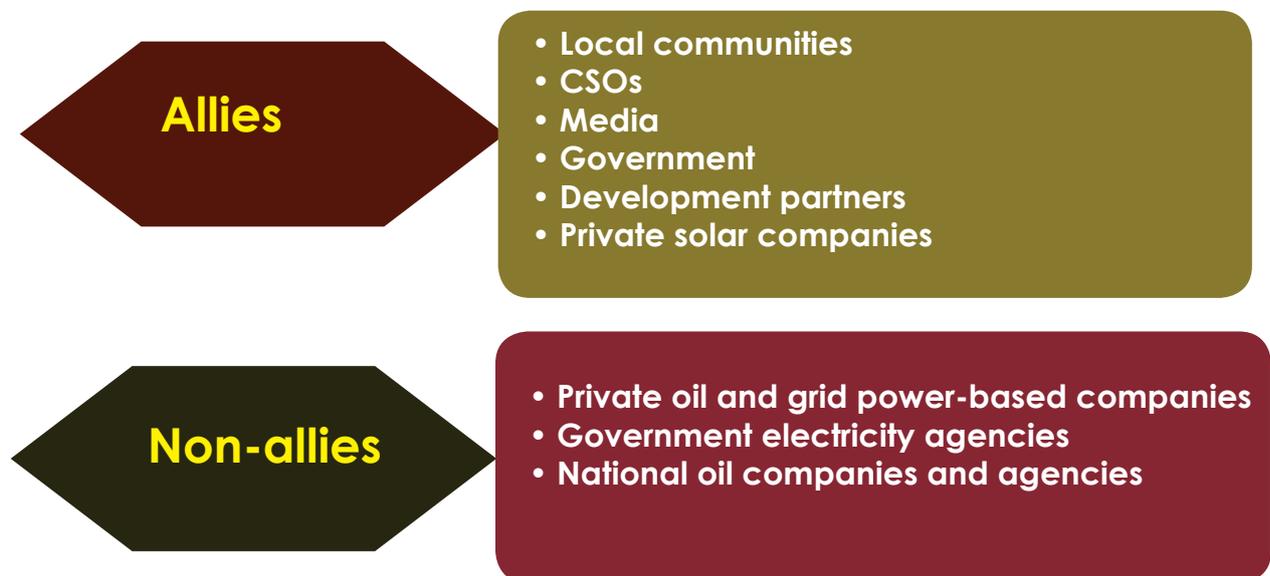
The above stakeholders should be targeted as audience members.

Below is a further breakdown of the targeted audiences who will benefit from, seek to promote or resist the promotion of solar energy projects.

Audience		
Audiences that will promote or benefit from off-grid power		
1.	Community	-Local communities -Community Based Organisations (CBOs) -Women's groups -Youth clean energy champions -Local council leaders -Local governments -Cultural and religious leaders
2.	Private sector	-Solar power companies
3.	Government	-Parliament -Executive (Ministry of Energy, Rural Electrification Agency, Electricity Regulatory Authority etc.)
4.	Development partners	-World Bank -Donors -Embassies

5	Media	National and international media (Owners, editors and journalists)
6	Civil society networks	-CSO renewable energy working group -Albertine Conservation Group (NARC-G) -Kasese Coalition on Climate Change and Biodiversity
Audiences that could resist off-grid electrification		
7	Private sector	-Oil companies -Grid electricity companies
8	Government	-Ministry of Energy -UEGCL -UETCL -UEDCL -Uganda National Oil Company (UNOC) -Petroleum Authority of Uganda (PAU)

Figure 2: Ally and non-ally audience members



4. Message design

The targeted audiences have differing interests, needs and concerns. They should thus be targeted with varying messages. The following should act as a guide when designing messages.

- What do audiences know about off-grid solar services?
- What are their interests as regards off-grid clean renewable energy vis-a-vis grid electrification and fossil fuels?
- What are the roles and responsibilities of various stakeholders in ensuring the promotion of solar energy?
- What are the barriers that are stopping the promotion of off-grid electrification and what solutions can be provided to address these barriers?

- What are the challenges of relying on grid electrification and fossil fuels?
- What do stakeholders stand to lose if solar energy is NOT promoted?
- What do audiences stand to lose if solar energy is promoted?
- What incentives can be provided for the promotion of solar energy?

The responses to the above questions will guide in designing messages that are relevant to the various audiences.

Below are the relevant sample message for the varying audience members.

Targeted audience	Sample messages
Local communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Why is off-grid solar energy good for communities? -What losses are communities suffering due to failure to promote off-grid electrification? -How can off-grid power investments be increased? -What are the roles, rights and responsibilities of local communities in promoting off-grid solar power access? -How can local communities participate in lobby and advocacy for the promotion of off-grid solar energy?
Policy makers and development partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -What is the importance of promoting off-grid solar energy? -What are government or development partners' responsibilities in promoting off-grid solar energy? -How should government agencies that are involved in grid electrification or fossil fuels' promotion be involved in off-grid electrification?

Private sector	<p>-Why is it necessary to increase off-grid solar power against grid electrification and fossil fuels in Uganda?</p> <p>-What responsibilities does the private sector have in promoting access to off-grid solar power?</p> <p>-What role can the private sector play in lobbying for the promotion of off-grid solar energy in Uganda?</p> <p>-Why should fossil fuel and grid-based companies promote solar energy and not grid power or fossil fuels?</p>
Media	<p>-Why should government promote off-grid solar energy access against grid electrification and fossil fuels in Uganda?</p> <p>-Why is it important for Uganda, the region, and the world to promote off-grid solar energy services?</p> <p>-What responsibilities does the media have in promoting off-grid solar energy?</p>
Civil society networks	<p>-Why is it important for CSOs to engage government to put in place a solar energy policy?</p> <p>-How can CSOs lobby and advocate for the promotion of off-grid solar energy by government, the private sector and development partners?</p>

5. Communication channels and analysis

Choosing the appropriate channel of communication is critical in enabling effective communication. All efforts should therefore be made to choose the right channel of communication.

In determining what channels to best use, the following questions should be answered:

- Where are the targeted audiences likely to obtain their information?
- What language are they likely to acquire information in?
- What time do they most easily access information?

The following channels possess the following strengths and weaknesses.

Channel clean energy drive through education

EDITOR: The Government has over the past 10 years embarked on investing in the energy sector with the aim of increasing access to electricity to Ugandans.

The 2019/2020 national budget, under the theme, *Industrialisation for job creation and shared prosperity*, largely moored on the long-term goal of elevating the country to a middle-income status through the implementation of the Vision 2040 programme.

Electricity access remains the key engine for economic development, which is critical if the country is to achieve middle-income status by 2040.

The path to becoming a middle-income nation means increased demand for energy in order to achieve Goal 7 (affordable and clean energy) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 13 climate action).

However, according to the Uganda Bureau of Statistics, electricity access still remains low, with only 21.6% of the population having access to electricity and 90% of rural communities relying on biomass for their cooking, lighting and heating.

Therefore, investing in renewable energy will promote the concept of sustainable development.

It is also important that we engage the young people in the pursuit of sustainable development and climate action. The Government should demonstrate its commitment to playing a leading role in the clean energy transition and to adopt a sustainable development model.

It should be made part of the educational system. Working with the education ministry, the Government can inspire youth to support the action agenda and develop a model of collaboration that can be replicated elsewhere.

Youth development should be prioritised because when we invest in our youth, we invest in our future.

Incorporating renewable energy and sustainable development into different sectors, such as health and education, will enable us to harness young minds and prepare them to become environmental stewards.

Therefore, renewable energy is a key solution to climate change and an enabler of universal energy access. It is also a contributor to UN's 2030 SDGs, such as good health and wellbeing, quality education (SDG 4) and sustainable economic growth (SDG 8).

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Channels of communication

Tool	Strengths	Weaknesses	Purpose
Meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Eases planning with local communities and national stakeholders for success of projects -Eases knowledge sharing with local communities and national stakeholders - Allows for feedback -Enables maintenance of goodwill between the organisation and other stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Costly -Time consuming -Requires a lot of human resources to organise -Can be affected by repressive laws that stop meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Information dissemination -Lobby and advocacy -Networking and strengthening of relationships
Newsletters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Important in awareness raising -Enable detailed analysis -Can be stored, retrieved and referred to for further learning -Aid maintenance of goodwill between the organisation and stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Costly due to printing and distribution costs -Requires wide distribution to be effective -Due to use of English, it may be out of reach for local communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Information dissemination -Education/ awareness raising -Lobby and advocacy -Fundraising
Website and social media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Accessible to some local, national and global audiences -Enables dissemination of small, simple-to-understand bites of information -Efficient advocacy tool -Longevity enabling easy retrieval of information for both old and new audiences -Easy to update 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Only available in areas with Internet -Local community members tend to ignore the information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Mobilisation of stakeholders for events -Information dissemination -Education -Lobby and advocacy -Gathering feedback
Newspapers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Trusted source of news -Accessed by a large audience -Enables in-depth analysis -Portable -Enables timely communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Short life span -Costly -Requires skilled staff to write articles -Articles may not be published by editors due to space constraints -Editors may be intimidated by government resulting in fear to publish critical articles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Information sharing -Education -Lobby and advocacy

Lobby materials e.g letters, communiqués, memoranda, policy briefs	-Targeted thereby reaching intended recipients -Enables in-depth analysis	-May not reach mass audiences -Costly to print (policy briefs and memoranda)	-Lobby and advocacy -Education
Radio	-Portable -Enables timely communication -Accessed by local audiences -Accessed by mass audience -Allows for feedback	-Transient in nature so audiences may miss information -Cannot be detailed -Costly -May not be accessed by vulnerable groups such as women	-Adverts/public announcements -Information sharing -Education -Lobby and advocacy

In Annex 1, this strategy will show what channels are best used with what audience. Key messages will also be shown.

6. Source determination

Communication sources are the vehicles that transmit messages. For a message to reach the recipient, the messenger must ensure that it is credible enough and is as clear as possible.

The communicator or the sources must also be people who are trusted and will carefully handle the message and use the appropriate communication channels to ensure that the recipient understands the message. The following should act as a guide when determining the source of communication.

- Who are the target audience's opinion leaders?
- Who do they trust as a credible source of information?
- What are the sources' interests regarding solar energy access in Uganda?

In Annex 1, this Communication Strategy will provide relevant sources of communication for the various audiences. In addition, below is a figure of the relevant sources of information.



Photo: Courtesy

A good source is one that is credible

Figure 3: Sources of information or key influencers for key audience members



7. Principles of communication

Communication by the stakeholders who will implement this Communication Strategy will be guided by the following principles:

- i) Information should always be accurate;
- ii) It should also be simple, precise and concise so as to be understood by all; avoid technical terms where possible.
- iii) Pre-test on selected members of your audience to determine if the presentation is relevant and suitable;
- iv) Information should be communicated in languages understood by local audiences;
- v) Channels that will ensure inclusive communication should be used;
- vi) All efforts must be made to ensure that communication is timed so as to reach women and other vulnerable groups;
- vii) Encourage feedback.

8. Implementation

AFIEGO will engage government through the MEMD, USEA, CSOs and other relevant stakeholders to adopt and implement this Communication Strategy as part of the tools necessary for the success of the Compact Agreement.

9. Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) are important as they will enable identification of the strengths and weaknesses of this Communication Strategy so as to consolidate strengths and address weaknesses. Evaluation of the strategy should be ongoing during its implementation. The evaluation should also be undertaken after implementation of the strategy.

The number, age and sex (where possible) of audiences reached will be documented. The effectiveness and impact of the sources, channels and messages used in reaching audiences especially vulnerable groups such as women should also be evaluated. Overall, the impact the Communication Strategy has on increasing access to off-grid solar energy should be examined.

Annexes

Annex 1: Table of key audiences, messaging, source and channel

Audience	Purpose of communication	Key message	Source	Channel
Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Education/awareness raising for the promotion of off-grid solar energy -Strengthen lobby and advocacy skills -Provide feedback on outcomes of lobby and advocacy efforts -Plan for new interventions in case inadequate outcomes are realised from previous lobby and advocacy efforts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Importance of off-grid solar power -Community role in promoting solar energy access -Government role in increasing solar energy access 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Opinion leaders -Women and youth champions -CSOs -Technical experts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Face-to-face meetings -Radio talkshows -Newsletters -Social media

Private sector	-Promote off-grid solar energy as opposed to grid electrification and fossil fuels	-Importance of off-grid solar power -Private sector role in promoting solar energy access -Government role in increasing solar energy access	-Technical experts -Local community appeals -CSOs	-Face-to-face meetings -Radio talkshows -Advocacy letters, communiqués, memoranda, policy briefs etc -Newspaper articles -Newsletters -Website -Social media
Government	-Lobby to enact and enforce policies and laws for the promotion of off-grid solar energy	-Enact and enforce policies that promote off-grid solar energy	-Local community appeals -CSOs -Development partners	-Face-to-face meetings -Radio talkshows -Newspaper articles -Advocacy letters, communiqués, memoranda, policy briefs etc -Newsletters -Website -Social media
Development partners	-Lobby development partners to engage the private sector and government to promote solar energy access particularly off-grid solar services	-Pressure government and the private sector to promote off-grid solar energy	-Local community appeals -CSOs -Pro off-grid solar energy development partners	-Face-to-face meetings -Advocacy letters -Newsletters -Social media

Media	-Create media partnerships to pressure government to promote off-grid solar energy	-Media role in promoting solar power services	-Local community appeals -CSOs -Off-grid solar energy companies -Pro off-grid solar energy development partners	-Visits to media houses -Information sheets -Media briefs -Press releases -Newsletters etc
Civil society networks	-Create civil society partnerships to pressure the private sector and government for off-grid solar energy access	-Importance of promoting solar power -Civil society role in promoting solar power	CSOs	-Meetings -Information sheets -Newsletters

About AFIEGO

Africa Institute for Energy Governance (AFIEGO) is a public policy research and advocacy NGO dedicated to influencing energy policies to benefit the poor and vulnerable. Based in Kampala, Uganda, the organisation was born out of the need to contribute to efforts to turn Africa's energy potential into reality and to ensure that the common man and woman benefits from this energy boom. Through lobbying, research and community education, AFIEGO works with communities and leaders to ensure that energy resources are utilised in a way that promotes equitable development, environmental conservation and respect for human rights.

Our Vision

A society that equitably uses energy resources for socio-economic development

Our Mission

To promote energy policies that benefit poor and vulnerable communities



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