

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ



Ministry of Finance
Male', Maldives

Terms of Reference

Economic Reform Communications Strategist - International

“To Develop and Implement a Strategic Communications Plan on Economic Reforms”

Invitation Number: (IUL)13-PMU /13/2024/75

Project: Maldives Competitiveness and Growth Project (P179286)

Loan No./Credit No./ Grant No.: IDA-73050, IDA-E1690

Assignment Title: To Develop and Implement a Strategic Communications Plan on Economic Reforms

Reference No: MV-MOF-MV-411144-CS-INDV

A. Background

The Maldives Competitiveness and Growth Project (MCGP, “the project”) is a new 5-year investment project financed by the World Bank for the Government of Maldives (GoM) through Investment Project Financing (IPF) with Performance-Based Conditions (PBCs), declared effective on 23 June 2023 and to be implemented by the Ministry of Finance (MoF). The overall Project Development Objective (PDO) is to strengthen private participation in and financial sustainability of State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs), and the support mechanisms for the competitiveness of small and medium enterprises (SMEs). The project comprises of three components which are as follows:

Component 1: Accelerating SOE Reforms

- i. Sub-component 1.1: Increasing Private Participation in Ownership of Select SOEs
- ii. Sub-component 1.2: Improving Governance of SOEs at the Program and Corporate level
- iii. Sub-component 1.3: Reforming SOE Public Service Obligations

Component 2: Fostering SME Competitiveness

- iv. Sub-component 2.1: Digital Financial Infrastructure
- v. Sub-component 2.2: SME Growth Acceleration Program

Component 3: Project Management

SOEs form a significant part of the Maldivian economy and are among the largest commercial entities in the country, engaged in infrastructure, financial services, tourism, fishing, petroleum, retail, construction, and property development among other sectors. In addition, SOEs are a significant player in the labor market with over 15,000 employees in the country. The GoM has two main agencies engaged with SOEs: (a) MoF, which has ownership of the GoM’s shares of

SOEs and provides policy direction on SOEs, and (b) the Privatization and Corporatization Board (PCB), which is tasked with carrying out privatization, corporatization, monitoring, evaluation, and selling of public shares from SOEs and monitoring the overall corporate governance of SOEs. At present, MoF has two departments related to SOE monitoring: (a) the State Shareholding Management Department (SSMD) which monitors and manages the GoM's share of SOEs, including the allocation of Government capital, evaluation of fiscal status, procedures related to distribution of dividends, and advising the Minister of Finance on SOE-related matters and (b) the Fiscal Affairs Department (FAD) which monitors the fiscal situation with SOEs and advises on fiscal risk and operating subsidies. Relevant line ministries, the Maldives Monetary Authority (MMA), Capital Market Development Authority (CMDA) and other Government agencies also play a key role in the policy-making, monitoring and regulating of SOEs.

There is considerable potential to strengthen the governance mechanisms of SOEs, enhance the accounting and financial reporting quality, and optimize resource utilization. Addressing these governance, financial management, and efficiency challenges would contribute significantly to strengthening the financial positions of SOEs and easing the fiscal constraints of the country. Despite sporadic attempts at reform, progress in the SOE sector has been limited. Previous initiatives focused on private participation and governance improvements, but systemic challenges persisted. Through MCGP, the GoM seeks to address the issues highlighted above by implementing strategic interventions focused on fostering and implementing private participation opportunities, supporting the GoM's subsidy reform initiatives including through a white paper research process, and enhancing corporate governance of SOEs.

Successfully enhancing the performance of SOEs necessitates addressing key challenges within the broader economic landscape. Given their substantial role in providing vital goods and services, SOEs significantly impact the daily lives of every Maldivian, and hence there is a strong public interest in their operations and any reforms. This underscores the need for careful consideration and transparent communication to address public concerns about SOE reforms effectively. The success of these economic reforms hinges on actively engaging stakeholders, and incorporating valuable feedback to further refine the reform process.

Hence, one of the key prerequisites for the success of the project would be to develop and implement a comprehensive Communications Strategy on the proposed economic reforms, to alleviate and address the concerns raised by stakeholders proactively, and achieve project objectives in a timely manner. The project is thus seeking to utilize the services of an International Economic Reform Communications Strategist to work together with the MCGP Communications Team (including the local Communications Specialist and other communications-related positions to be filled locally), the rest of the Project Management Unit (PMU), and relevant Government agencies including MoF, PCB, National Social Protection Agency (NSPA) and the President's Office to fill in the communications capacity required for the project activities.

B. Objectives

The broad objectives of this assignment are as follows:

1. Develop and implement a strong communications program on private participation, subsidy reform and other SOE reforms supported by the project to;
 - a) Mitigate the risks associated with potential public misperceptions,
 - b) Foster a better understanding of the reform objectives,
 - c) Engage stakeholders,
 - d) Build trust, and
 - e) Ensure transparent communication throughout the implementation process
2. Plan, develop and implement public relations (PR), marketing and outreach strategies, including the project's social media strategy, media relations strategy, etc. as needed in accordance with MoF and World Bank branding guidelines.
3. Coordinate with and support the GoM to align communication efforts from all relevant agencies on SOE reforms, and enhance the communications capabilities and digital footprint of the GoM on SOE reforms supported by the project, through providing capacity building and planning and producing multimedia content.

C. Scope of Work

1. Identify and evaluate the public information, awareness and outreach requirements including mapping of key stakeholders including affected and interest groups of the assignment and plan publicity strategies and campaigns in alignment with the project's Environmental and Social Commitment Plan (ESCP) and Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP).
2. Develop and implement a comprehensive communications plan for SOE private participation and corporate governance improvement, including a communications plan and supporting materials for each select SOE as they are brought to market, and for active consultations with stakeholders.
3. Develop and implement a comprehensive communications plan for the subsidy reform component of the project, including public stakeholder consultations and conducting awareness sessions on ongoing works.
4. Develop collaborative strategies with transparent communications to address and manage stakeholder concerns towards private participation and subsidy reforms, in line with the project's SEP.
5. Provide guidance for the project's Communications Specialist in the development and implementation of the project's overall Communications Strategy, ensuring seamless alignment and integration of the communications plan developed during this assignment with the broader objectives and messaging framework of the project.
6. Design and conduct public opinion surveys and other feedback mechanisms on SOE reforms, and present the results from the survey to the PMU, MoF and other Government agencies using digital images, infographics, and video based content.

7. Assist the MCGP Communications Team in the development of marketing and PR content for digital and print media and produce digital images, infographics, and video based on the content, for the overall project.
8. Develop and deliver educational material on the benefits of increased private participation, subsidy reform and other SOE reforms by adapting culturally appropriate community engagement approaches, based on evidence, needs and the local context.
9. Develop, coordinate and deliver PR and communication materials for awareness campaigns on private participation and the other SOE reform components, including briefing materials, presentations, brochures, posters, and broadcasting materials (news brief/articles for media) as required.
10. Conduct seminars, workshops, information sessions for media and various stakeholders on private participation and the other SOE reform components of MCGP
11. Assist MOF and PCB in conducting consultative workshops with both SOE workers and management, to address concerns about their future employment due to increased private participation in an SOE, and deliver sessions on labor policy to protect essential worker rights.
12. Conduct surveys to obtain feedback from SOE workers in regards to the satisfaction of the reform policies that address stakeholder concerns
13. Conduct group and one-on-one consultations with key stakeholders, at different stages of the project, to get feedback on project progress and identify any issues to be resolved, as required by the project. Develop PR and communication policies for conflict resolution, crisis management, and reputation management of the Government during the development and implementation of SOE reforms and other components of MCGP.
14. Assist in planning, designing and implementing learning and knowledge sharing aspects of the project to stakeholders.
15. Ensure that the project's Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) is effectively integrated into all communications activities implemented under this assignment.
16. Ensure full coherence and alignment with the World Bank's and MOF's branding guidelines while implementing the communications strategy and awareness programs.
17. Develop & Implement capacity building activities for the MCGP Communications Team.
18. Monitor and evaluate effectiveness of the adapted public relations and social media plan and communication strategies.
19. Train a cadre of local staff to transfer knowledge and continue the work carried out under this assignment to:
 - i) Deliver information sessions on SOE reforms, including private participation and subsidy reforms
 - ii) Develop, coordinate and deliver communication materials for awareness campaigns on private participation and the other SOE reform components, including briefing materials, presentations, brochures, posters, and broadcasting materials (news briefs/articles for media) as required
 - iii) Develop marketing content for digital and print media and produce digital images, infographics, and video based on the content
 - iv) Draft and develop statements, articles, press releases, opinion editorials, speeches, etc. as required

- v) Manage media inquiries, interview requests and organize and conduct press conferences, editor’s briefings, interviews and other media related activities and events and produce scripts as required
20. Work with the PMU and local staff to produce all communications materials in both Dhivehi and English.

D. Key Deliverables

The Strategist will be responsible to provide the following key deliverables within the duration of their contract:

#	Deliverable*	Estimated Duration	Payment Breakdown (%)
1	Present a detailed work plan for all tasks and phases of work, with agreed on-site visiting dates and specific deliverables and deadlines, <u>within 2 weeks of contract effectiveness</u>	2 weeks	5%
2	Conduct an assessment identifying the public information, awareness and outreach requirements of the Assignment, including a comprehensive mapping of key stakeholders including affected and interest groups of the assignment, <u>within 1 month of contract effectiveness</u>	1 month	10%
3	Develop a comprehensive communications plan for SOE reform, covering private participation, corporate governance improvement and subsidy reform, in alignment with the project’s ESCP and SEP, and including the following elements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Target audience, key messages and communications channels ii) Stakeholder engagement strategy, campaigns and feedback mechanism iii) Publicity strategies and campaigns iv) Social media strategy v) Media relations strategy vi) Crisis management strategy vii) Marketing and branding strategy viii) Budget and timeline ix) Governance and responsibilities x) Monitoring and evaluation framework xi) Risk analysis and mitigation measures <p><i>The Strategist can choose to develop separate communications plans for each SOE reform component, if it is deemed to be more appropriate.</i></p>	2 months	15%

4	Provide implementation support to execute the communications plan	Up to successful execution of the communications plan - OR - end of contract duration	15%
5	Design and provide implementation support to conduct public opinion surveys on SOE reforms <u>as required</u> and <u>at least 1</u> survey of SOE workers on satisfaction of reform policies	1 month	10%
6	Design <u>at least 1</u> educational material on SOE reform and benefits of increased private participation, and <u>at least 1</u> educational material on subsidy reform.	1 month	10%
7	Design material and provide implementation support to conduct <u>at least 3</u> seminars/workshops/information sessions for media and various stakeholders on SOE reform.	1 month	10%
8	Design material and provide implementation support to conduct consultative workshops with both SOE workers and management, to address concerns about their future employment due to increased private participation, covering <u>at least 5</u> SOEs	1 month	10%
9	Design material and provide implementation support to conduct <u>at least 1</u> consultation session each with key stakeholders (one-on-one or group) on i) private participation and ii) subsidy reform and provide a report on the key findings, with actionable insights and recommendations	1 month	10%
10	Design material and provide implementation support to conduct <u>at least 1</u> capacity development exercise (workshop or otherwise) for relevant GoM staff on media and public relations	1 month	5%

The provision of “implementation support” entails advising the Government and providing technical input as required to successfully execute the communications strategy and planned stakeholder engagement activities

*Specific deliverables may be subject to change based on the Government policy decisions during the contract duration as agreed by the Government and the Expert.

E. Reporting & Working Arrangements

The Strategist will report to the MCGP Project Director, with a regular update meeting to be held physically or virtually, at a frequency agreed with the Project Director. The Strategist may also be required to present updates and findings to the Project Steering Committee and other senior Government officials. The Strategist is expected to work together with the project's Communications Team, the rest of the Project Management Unit (PMU), local and international consultants hired under the project (including an international SOE Reform Expert), and officials from relevant Government agencies including MoF, PCB, National Social Protection Agency (NSPA) and the President's Office.

The Strategist is expected to work both on-site (in the Maldives) and off-site with substantial on-site presence, and is expected to be on-site for a minimum of 25 working days distributed to 2 trips as agreed on the detailed work plan and as required by the specific work in the 9-month assignment.

F. Duration of Services and Payment Terms

The services of the Strategist are required for a maximum of 9 staff months, and renewal is based on needs and performance evaluation. The Strategist is expected to commence their services in March 2024.

Payment for the Assignment will be tied to the key deliverables listed in Section D and paid upon approval from the PMU on completion of the deliverables. The Strategist will be required to submit a monthly timesheet detailing the work undertaken during that time period.

G. Qualifications & Experience Requirement

The Strategist should meet the following requirements:

- Minimum of a Master's degree in Communications, Public Relations, Project Management, Economics or an equivalent field.
- Minimum 10 years of experience in strategic communications planning with a specific focus on economic reforms, and/or public policy, and/or relevant government projects.
- Minimum 5 years of demonstrable experience working on international engagements, particularly with foreign Governments.
- Outstanding strategic thinking and planning abilities, with a demonstrated ability to align communications strategies with economic objectives.
- Strong leadership and project management skills.
- Strong collaborative skills, with the ability to work closely with local teams and utilize local skillsets, and to engage with relevant Government agencies, and other stakeholders.
- Ability and willingness to adapt communications strategies quickly and effectively to the local context, taking cultural nuances into consideration.

- Successful track record in conducting public opinion surveys, developing educational materials, and organizing effective capacity development programs will be an added advantage.
- Experience working on communications for SOE reform including areas such as private participation, corporate governance and subsidy reform will be an added advantage.
- Experience in developing and implementing policies for conflict resolution, and reputation management, particularly in the Governmental context will be an added advantage.
- Experience in handling communications in urgent and emergency situations will be an added advantage
- Experience working in the Maldives, developing countries, middle income economies and/or Small Island Developing States will be an added advantage.