

POLICY INNOVATION SYSTEMS FOR CLEAN ENERGY SECURITY (PISCES)

Communications Strategy

The Overall objective of the Communication Strategy is to meet PISCES' policy-influencing objectives by effectively communicating and disseminating the project and its research outputs to target audiences in such a way that will lead to the more sustainable use of bioenergy for energy access and livelihoods improvement.

This strategy assesses the Policy, Communication and Research/Innovation environments within PISCES and identifies mechanisms, processes and materials to reach identified target audiences. The strategy will also build the capacity of both partners within the PISCES consortium and also of the target user groups. The strategy includes a monitoring and evaluation process, including annual reviews and checkpoints, and a risk analysis.

Structure

The lead partner of PISCES, ACTS, will be responsible for implementing the Communications and Public Awareness strategy. This will be coordinated by ACTS' Communications and Public Relations Department, with full-time specialist staff committed to the project.

All partners will contribute to the implementation of the strategy, and a Communications Working Group (CWG) has been established to facilitate this. The CWG comprises of partner staff to help adapt the strategy to the particular country contexts and to the research themes:

- Harrison Maganga (ACTS): Kenya Communications Co-ordinator
- Liz Ng'ang'a (UoE): Mass-Media specialist
- Thomas Molony (UoE): Cross-cutting theme inputs
- Shishusri Pradhan (MSSRF): Climate and Environment Theme inputs and India communications
- Rona Wilkinson (PA): Access and Delivery Theme inputs and PA representative
- Rwaichi Minja (UDSM): Technology Theme inputs and Tanzania communications

Internally, the CWG will facilitate and implement the strategy by setting up a dedicated email discussion forum on the PISCES website, regular Skype conference calls and face-to-face meetings at the annual PISCES partner meetings.

Both internally and externally, the CWG is guided by the belief that communication is a two-way process and that communicators need to be aware of, and adaptive to, communication needs as they evolve. Through the CWG, PISCES partners are encouraged to engage with stakeholders and be imaginative and proactive in how they communicate their findings. The CGW regards communication as a continuous exchange of knowledge and opinions that help inform and sustain debate. When conducted effectively, we aim for this exchange to lead to the establishment of trust,

legitimacy and consensus-building around the PISCES project and its research outputs.

The strategy identifies:

- Who needs to be targeted and informed of the research
- Communication Objectives for consortium partners and target audiences
- Responsibilities and aims of Communication Strategy team and others
- Effective messages and appropriate communication channels for dissemination
- Timely communication and dissemination
- Monitoring and evaluation processes and activities
- The strategy also has individual communication action plans for each organisation according to themes

Strategy

The strategy will target the following stakeholders with a timely and effective agenda:

Policymakers:

- Working with the consortium members, the CWG will develop a database of key contact people in the various policy-making systems within the regions of operation. This will include political and non-political appointees to ensure a balance between influence and continuity. It will comprise influential advisory bodies such as sub-parliamentary working committees on various sectors of the economy.
- The committee will also compile a list of government policies, development visions and other important documents under construction, influential bills, as well as key public events (for instance, important national days), national budgets, and so on.
- Based on these two tasks, the CWG will identify timely entry points and match make the right messages to the right people, thus circumventing often-complicated government bureaucracy.
- In order to ensure that the policymakers understand and embrace the agenda at hand well and are strong enough to push it through, the communications team will formulate our design messages so that they: are responsive to other challenges; fit within national agendas; and, are alert of, and deliberately sensitive to, the political and social events of the day.
- This information will be evidence-based, yet synthesized and packaged in a way that policymakers can access and utilize easily. The CWG could, for instance, provide tips that members of parliament could turn into parliamentary questions. This information can be presented in quick-to-read hand-outs.
- The CWG will also lobby for the inclusion of the issue of bioenergies in speeches by policymakers and key public information/opinion shapers in important public occasions, such as national days.
- Importantly, the CWG will be open to communicating the challenges faced by the policymakers themselves towards addressing the complexities of the

development of bioenergy, and its efforts and initiatives in improving access to energy by the poor members of the community.

Academia:

- The CWG will work with the consortium to bring the issue of bioenergy centre-stage in academic discourses. The objective is to interest universities in bioenergy as a topic of study, as well as to help project into the public domain pre-existing bioenergy studies being undertaken at universities.
- On a wider scale, the CWG will assist the consortium to develop dialogue and lobby curriculum makers at all levels of learning for inclusion of bioenergy and related complexities.

International and non-governmental organisations:

- Maintain regular contact with relevant networks and organisations and arrange for sharing of information. This will include GVEP, REEEP, and CRD. See the **Initiatives Contact database in Annex 2** for further information on relevant initiatives identified and contacted so far. GVEP International for example have shown particular interest so far in linking PISCES research outputs to their developing knowledge management and dissemination systems. The possibility of joint publications for bioenergy practitioner GVEP partners will also be explored further.

Research institutes:

- Research institutes act as a critical control point for research on bioenergy. Based on on-going research, the CWG will form a partnership with communication officers to strengthen the incumbent role of researchers in making information on bioenergies available.

The media

- The impact of the outputs of PISCES will be greatly increased when reported accurately by the news media. Therefore, the CWG sees as a major priority the strengthening of bioenergy reporting capacity within the mainstream and alternative media, including mainstream, online and community-based media.
- Working with consortium members the CWG will compile a database of contacts for existing media, publications and networks of science and environmental journalists. It will then establish links and relations with them.
- For greater influence of PISCES outputs, the categories of media contacts will be widened beyond this group of journalists to include, for example, opinion editorial writers, independent columnists, cartoonists, and letters to the editor.
- In each region, the CWG will scan and map the media in relation to the target groups; for instance by identifying which newspapers and sections that policymakers are likely to read or which television stations/programmes they listen to. It will also compile a variety of options such as news, science pull-outs, talk-shows, call-in programmes, and so on.

- In all the national regions, the CWG will involve influential media associations and trainers towards demystifying bioenergy, creating interest and training young and upcoming journalists in reporting on it.
- The committee will provide press releases, press conferences, news and human interest feature tips to journalists.
- A team of contact people drawn from within and outside the consortium who can be contacted for comment/opinion/interviews will be made available for the media in the respective regions covered by PISCES.
- In addition, the Committee will seek ways to enhance the communication skills of the above group of people, through training, for instance, on handling the media, fielding press queries, discussing PISCES on television, and so on. It will also assist the consortium members to draft opinion articles etc for publication in the media.
- The CWG will alert the media on its own breaking news, as well as that of other intermediaries, online and international journals and media encompassing scientific, policy, communication, development, environmental issues. This will be executed through an online press centre and/or through the creation of a weekly alert.
- At the same time, especially for the international media, it will be important to sign up with online press services such as Eurekaalert and Alphagalileo.
- The CWG will seek ways of forming a partnership to influence science communication outfits (e.g. scidev.net) for regular coverage on bioenergies, and the creation of a discussion forum for key PISCES events.
- The CWG will consider organising site visits that would give journalists the opportunity to ground-truth findings; these could be the best and the worst examples of bioenergy development.
- Through the various consortium members, the CWG will work out mechanisms of lobbying media owners, senior media managers and editors to make it a policy for their organisations to report on bioenergy.
- In order to motivate journalism coverage, the CWG will consider introducing an award for excellence in reporting on bioenergy. This could be done on a regional basis.

Private and corporate sectors

- The CWG will work with the consortium to communicate the potential of biofuels as an investment opportunity, that can also be linked to corporate social responsibility (CSR). It will also highlight stories of corporate organisations, venture capitalists already involved in bioenergy, and the development of bioenergy in a socio-economically responsible manner.

Community members and organisations

- PISCES considers a top-up communication process vital. The CWG will therefore form a strong partnership with Community-Based Organisations and civil society and religious organisations, to ensure that they have accurate information on bioenergies. For this purpose, the CWG will use those options outlined in the media section.
- Giving ordinary citizens a voice and a place in determining the designing of proper policies for bioenergies will inform an important aspect of the Communication Strategy. The CWG will in particular communicate the potential of bioenergies for critical members of society; women and the youth. To these ends, communication outputs will be created so that their content, language and vocabulary suit their intended audience.
- In addition to providing information, therefore, the CWG will harness the opinion of citizens, and help provide avenues for members of public to articulate their fears, hopes and (mis)understanding relating to bioenergy. This could include televised public forums where policymakers and citizens dialogue on bioenergies. It could also involve the developing of community newsletters distributed through these organisations.

Corporate branding

- The CWG is charged with the responsibility of positioning PISCES as a strong, independent and trusted voice in matters of bioenergy. This will facilitate objective decision-making in the public interest.
- To accomplish this task, the committee will assist PISCES in maintaining a high profile. This has been started with the design of a distinctive logo and creation of an interactive and interlinked website (www.pisc.es.or.ke) that will be kept up-to-date with all PISCES documents, information, news and events. We expect to grow the facilities of this website with time and in response to stakeholder needs and PISCES specific opportunities such as bioenergy information centre and forums.
- The CWG will also help towards the preparation of printed material such as brochures, posters and banners to be used for our self-promotion.
- It will also identify for the consortium members photo opportunities, to be then be placed in respective media.
- The CWG will help towards the creation of a slogan for PISCES that will be translated into regional languages.
- The committee will also establish ways of monitoring coverage and feedback, so as to assess critically how PISCES and its work is perceived by others, and will identify and act upon areas to be improved on.

Publicity achievements so far

Date	Title	Primary target audience	Forum (Media/event)	Region	Impact /Comments
Sep 2007	Inception Workshop	Ministry officials, other donors, NGOs, academia, bioenergy firms etc	Conference day + Research-into-use training day	East Africa	Very well received, participation from all PISCES target sectors in EA.
Nov 2007	Bioenergy and Climate Change: The Case Study of Policy Innovation Systems for Clean Energy Systems	Policymakers	Global Forum 2007	Global	A key note address delivered by RD to over 100 participants
Nov 2007	PISCES website established at www.pisces.or.ke	Mass audience	Website	Global	Established and now must be developed further.
Nov 2007	PISCES brochure	NGOs international organisation	Brochure on PISCES distributed at training in RIU	Kenya (so far) - Tz, In, SL and Int. pending	Has been targeted at Kenya stakeholders. Needs adapted for other audiences.
Nov 2007	"Bio-fuels—A Growing Solution or Decomposing Illusion?"	Seminar at the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation	Channel 4 TV, Sweden (live), Channel 2 TV, Sweden (live), newspapers in Gothenburg and Uppsala.	Europe	-
Nov 2007	Article "A five-year research project to help deliver sustainable and affordable energy to the poor in Africa and Asia" http://africasciencenews.org/asns/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=92&Itemid=2	African science professionals and policymakers	Africa Science News	Africa	-
Nov 2007	Article "Consortium of NGOs, Universities launches program to bring energy, food and water security to the poor in Asia and Africa" http://biopact.com/2007/11/consortium-of-ngos-universities.html	Bioenergy sector professionals	Biopact	Africa, Europe	-
Dec 2007	Article "Bioenergy focus for PISCES Energy Research Programme"	Energy and development professionals	Boiling Point – The Household Energy Journal	Global	Also visible to donors and at grassroots org levels.

The Monitoring and Evaluation process is closely linked to the general PISCES mechanism and will be completed in January.

Action plans for the communication strategy will follow the scoping studies and will be completed in January.