

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION PLAN

Covering the period January 2021 through September 2022

Fiscal Accountability and Sustainable Trade (FAST)

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ACRONYMS

ADB	The Asian Development Bank
ADS	Automated Directive System
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DOC	Development Outreach and Communication
DPP	Department of Public Procurement
E3	USAID Bureau of Environment, Education and Economic Growth
FAST	Fiscal Accountability and Sustainable Trade
MAPS	Methodology for Assessing the Public Procurement Systems
MoF	Ministry of Finance
PFM	Public Financial Management
SCP	Strategic Communication Plan
TCB	Trade Capacity Building
TPPR	Transparent Public Procurement Rating
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

1. INTRODUCTION

DevTech Systems is pleased to submit this Strategic Communications Plan (herein called “SCP”) for Task Order Six (6), Effective Public Procurement for Kyrgyzstani Taxpayers, (herein called the “Project”) under United States Agency for International Development (USAID) funded worldwide Fiscal Accountability and Sustainable Trade (FAST) project. The SCP will guide the project staff and consultants in promoting the project’s goals and objectives during the implementation of planned activities through September 2022.

This document first provides a brief background of the project and its overarching goals and objectives. It then briefly explains the principles that form the basis for guiding the execution of the SCP. It then includes a section on the SCP’s overarching objectives and how the project’s team will ensure the effective implementation of the plan towards achievement of the project’s programmatic goals.

This document also outlines communication activities, engagement tools and tactics in details to assist the project team to effectively communicate and disseminate the project’s reports, deliverables, technical assessments and key messages derived from the ongoing and future analytical work.

The SCP will also assist the project’s staff to ensure that USAID’s profile and contributions to making an impact in Kyrgyz Republic are adequately presented to the project’s audiences including the Government of Kyrgyz Republic, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and Kyrgyz Republic’s other development partners.

2. FAST – EFFECTIVE PUBLIC PROCURMENT FOR KYRGYZSTANI TAXAPERS

FAST task order supports rapid, sustainable, and equitable economic growth in USAID assisted countries by enabling USAID to bring a system approach to addressing Public Financial Management (PFM: public revenue, budget, expenditure, and debt), trade capacity building (TCB), macroeconomic planning and policies, and other economic governance issues, such as regulatory reform, and by supporting missions to improve:

- a. host-country capacity to mobilize revenue and provide public services;
- b. policy climate for investment that generates more productive employment and inclusive growth, including issues specific to women and disadvantaged populations.
- c. host-country ability to recover from, prevent, and/or mitigate the impact of conflict, natural disasters, or fiscal crises; and
- d. host-country institutional capacity to identify, design, advocate, and implement better economic policies to enhance inclusive growth and gender equity.

“Effective Public Procurement for Kyrgyzstani Taxpayers” is a task under FAST which seeks to improve self-reliance of Kyrgyz Republic by improving public procurement systems. The project seeks reforms in public procurement systems and processes to increase efficiency and transparency, and reduce corruption, as well as enable civic engagement in the conduct of public procurement operations.

The project has the following two objectives.

1. Increase efficiency and transparency of public procurement
2. Enable civic engagement and oversight over the public procurement

The project began in July 2020 and has been operating remotely using teleworking mechanisms given the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic. Despite the challenges presented by the teleworking set-up, FAST was able to work uninterrupted on the components without travel.

3. THE STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION PLAN

The effectiveness of development interventions depends, for a large part, on how they are communicated to the stakeholders. Therefore, this SCP is developed to ensure all technical interventions, activities, and their results are communicated to the project's stakeholders in a timely manner.

Stakeholders include the Ministry of Finance (MoF) of the Kyrgyz Republic, other government procurement entities, civil society organizations (CSOs), supplier community, and other donor agencies. It is essential that all stakeholders fully understand the dynamics of the status quo, the prevailing challenges, the opportunities and the need for economic change and their willingness and ability to participate and own the process.

This SCP outlines the project's communication goals, implementation strategy and tools to help communicate results, outputs and outcomes to wider audiences, while at the same time ensuring that USAID's profile and contribution in improving efficiency and transparency and enabling citizens engagement in public procurement processes are recognized.

In accordance with the scope of the project, the communication process includes a wide range of activities including sharing information on findings of the assessments, socializing changes and creating a buy-in for project's interventions and a platform for enabling stakeholders' engagement.

3.1 PRINCIPLES OF THE STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS PLAN (SCP)

The project's SCP is based on the following five (5) key principles.

- **Efficiency, Transparency and Accountability:** The SCP will seek ways to unveil the existing barriers to efficiency and transparency in public procurement, improve efficiency in managing public procurements, and increase transparency and increase accountability for taxpayers' money by advocating for a change.
- **Clarity in Understanding:** The SCP will seek to bridge the information gap and improve knowledge and understanding of the key issues of the public procurement system and contribute to consensus building among the project's stakeholders on the need to reform the system and create an enabling environment for civic engagement.
- **Inclusivity:** The SCP will pursue all avenues to disseminate key information on project results and achievements to a wider group of people through various workshops and success stories.
- **Ownership:** The SCP will outline joint efforts based on close collaboration with the counterparts at all levels and will ensure ownership of project results.

- **Consistency:** The SCP will seek to ensure consistency in its messaging throughout the project’s life.

4. COMMUNICATIONS OBJECTIVES

FAST recognizes the significance of effective communications throughout the project’s implementation. Effective communication is essential to market the project’s results, outcomes, and impact to the project’s stakeholders. Accordingly, the core objectives of the SCP are:

- Increase the profile of the project’s technical interventions;
- Design communication tools aimed at communicating the “behavior change interventions” to improve awareness among the project’s stakeholders, increase efficiency and transparency and enable civic engagement in the public procurement system;
- Improve coordination and collaboration between USAID/Bishkek, Government of Kyrgyz Republic, and civil society organizations; and
- Delivering key messages and updates to the project’s stakeholders on the implementation progress in coherent and consistent way.

The project will adhere to USAID Marking and Branding Strategy and the Branding and Implementation Plan as detailed in the Automated Directive System (ADS) Chapter 320 and Marking Plan in the implementation of the project’s activities.

5. TARGET AUDIENCES

5.1 PRIMARY AUDIENCES

Through regular working relationships, the project team will establish communication channels with the primary audiences to promote the project’s goals and deliver timely updates on achievements and highlights from the scoping report, several technical assessments including the transparent public procurement rating (TPPR), UNCITRAL Model LAW and methodology for assessing the public procurement systems (MAPS), the project’s technical interventions and capacity building efforts. The primary audiences of this SCP include:

- USAID/Bishkek including the Development Outreach and Communication (DOC) team,
- Kyrgyz Republic MoF including the department of public procurement (DPP) and other procurement entities at national and subnational levels,
- Supplier community and private sector institutions,
- Kyrgyz Republic’s Chamber of Commerce,
- The Training Center, and
- Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and targeted focused organized groups of women and youth.

5.2 SECONDARY AUDIENCES

- USAID Asia Bureau/Washington, USAID Bureau of Environment, Education and Economic Growth (E3), other USG agencies with interest in financing self-reliance (FSR)
- Donors providing technical assistance to DPP including the World Bank and Asian Development Bank (ADB)
- Others as suggested by the project’s Activity Manager at USAID Bishkek

6. KEY MESSAGES

USAID logo and other branding and marking requirements will be implemented in the design of all communication materials including brochures, success stories, banners for trainings and workshops and others. All communication messages will acknowledge that the underlying technical assistance and capacity building assistance is “from the American people.” Key communication messages will include answers to WHAT, HOW, and WHY as described below:

- **WHAT:** Key messages will describe an explanation of the subject matter technical assistance intervention concisely. A successful “what” statement will deliver a clear, comprehensive, and easily understandable narrative of what change is being sought.
- **HOW:** Communication messages will clearly demonstrate the way technical assistance and capacity building efforts are implemented and will demonstrate value additions because of an activity’s implementation.
- **WHY:** The “why” message will help stakeholders better understand why they should care about the project’s interventions

The SCP’s objectives stated in section 4 will be achieved through a range of “general” and “audience-specific” messages.

6.1 GENERAL MESSAGING

General messages will play a key role in increasing the project’s profile and how it assists the Government of Kyrgyz Republic in: (i) improving efficiency and transparency in its public procurement system, and (ii) enabling civic engagement in the monitoring of public procurement with a goal of ensuring value for Kyrgyzstani taxpayers’ money.

6.2 SPECIFIC MESSAGING

The SCP will design and develop specific “messages” for specific stakeholders and will emphasize the “General Messages” through a more tailored approach that outlines the interests of specific groups. For example, specific messages to the DPP staff and government counterparts will be outlining the economic and social benefits of efficient and transparent public procurement systems. For other groups such as CSOs, it will be more aligned with the performing the social responsibility in increasing accountability to citizens and taxpayers.

7 COMMUNICATIONS ACTIVITIES AND TOOLS

7.1 COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES

The project will develop communication materials which we will use to disseminate and publicize the project's results and achievements. This will ensure visibility of the project's technical and capacity building interventions.

Communications activities will include, but are not limited to, launching the Activity¹, online campaigns on social media (where applicable), conducting workshops and focus group discussions, producing success stories, developing short excerpts and publishing them on DevTech's website and other social media forums, producing briefing papers/reports, email marketing to other procurement entities and donors, spotlighting trends in the public procurement, and media visits to the project's sites including training completion ceremonies and launch of other major events.

7.2 COMMUNICATION TOOLS

The project will produce communication tools and outreach and communication materials to publicize the project's contribution to improving public procurement systems in Kyrgyz Republic. Below are some of the communication tools that will be developed and used through a carefully thought out and targeted approach.

- Facebook page,
- Twitter and LinkedIn posts,
- Press releases and other materials for media engagement,
- Press conferences (when applicable),
- Brochure,
- Media interviews,
- Success stories,
- Beneficiary testimonials,
- Photography, and
- Video messages.

We will integrate key communication messages as part of the executive summaries and other relevant sections aimed of project reports to highlight key trends, results achieved, and progress made.

7 MONITORING THE SCP ACTIVITIES AND REPORTING

The project's quarterly and annual progress reports will include a dedicated section on the SCP implementation. This section will include updates on media coverage/press clips, website and social media outreach, success stories, press releases, brochures, and highlights from training and capacity building.

¹ We had planned the launch to take place in April 2020 but evolving pandemic situation forces us to postpone until after the situation improves.

The project team will revisit this document as needed to ensure its continued validity and will update it to keep it relevant throughout the project's life.