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Update on REDD+ Readiness Programs in The Gambia

This is an update on the ongoing REDD+ Readiness program in The Gambia covering the period from 2024 until the present:

REDD+ Communications Strategy Summary Report – The Gambia

Introduction

The Gambia, while accounting for only 0.01% of global CO₂ emissions, is highly vulnerable to the adverse impacts of climate change. In response to these vulnerabilities, The Gambia is currently in the REDD+ Readiness Phase under the United Nations REDD (UN-REDD) Programme. The primary objective of the REDD+ Readiness Phase is to establish comprehensive national frameworks to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation. As part of this readiness effort, The Gambia has developed a REDD+ Communications Strategy aimed at supporting the effective implementation of REDD+ initiatives.

The REDD+ Communications Strategy is considered a foundational tool for enhancing stakeholder engagement, building public trust, and promoting widespread awareness of forest conservation and climate change. The strategy was developed through a combination of literature review and participatory workshops, ensuring a participatory and inclusive approach. Emphasis is placed on culturally relevant, inclusive, and transparent communication practices tailored to the national context.

The strategy outlines several strategic objectives:

- To raise national awareness on REDD+, forest policies, and the broader implications of climate change.
- To engage a wide array of stakeholders, including government agencies, local communities, media organizations, private sector actors, and non-governmental organizations.
- To build collaborative communication networks and strengthen institutional communication capacities.

Target Audiences and key messages

Target audiences are categorized into internal stakeholders (such as government institutions and REDD+ program staff) and external stakeholders (including community members, media professionals, development partners, and donors). The core messages emphasize that REDD+ is a national priority linked to forest protection, climate resilience, and alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Communication Channels & implementation Strategies

A diverse array of communication channels will be employed, including training sessions, community meetings, newsletters, social media platforms (YouTube), traditional communication methods (such as radio broadcasts and griot storytelling), and WhatsApp outreach. The implementation of the strategy will be coordinated by a designated communications officer and overseen by both the REDD+ Steering Committee and the Technical Committee.

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Framework and Risk Management

A monitoring and evaluation framework will be incorporated into the strategy to assess its effectiveness, with specific targets including a 30% increase in public awareness and a 15% reduction in deforestation rates by the year 2030. Risk management is an integral part of the strategy, with key risks identified including misinformation, financial constraints, and policy implementation delays. These risks are addressed through the dissemination of fact-based messaging, securing international support, and advocating for relevant legislative reforms. A dynamic risk matrix is maintained to guide the mitigation of emerging and ongoing challenges.

Conclusion and key recommendations

In conclusion, the REDD+ Communications Strategy will contribute significantly to the successful implementation of REDD+ in The Gambia by enhancing visibility, fostering trust, and aligning efforts with the country's climate change goals. Key recommendations to strengthen the strategy include: 1) Operationalizing the Stakeholder Engagement Plan; 2) Simplifying technical messages for broader public comprehension; 3) Ensuring transparency in all communication activities; and 4) Establishing a dedicated team for monitoring and evaluation (M&E) to support strategic feedback and adaptive learning.