

# ELECTRICITY MARKET REFORM COMMUNICATION PLAN

2020-2022 YEARS

**USAID ENERGY PROGRAM** 

13 March 2020

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**USAID ENERGY PROGRAM** 

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## **DATA**

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# **ACRONYMS**

AA	Association Agreement	
CSO	Civil Society Organization	
EU	European Union	
GEL	Georgian Lari	
GNERC	Georgian National Energy and Water Supply Regulatory Commission	
HPP	Hydro Power Plant	
MoESD	Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia	
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization	
PPA	Power Purchase Agreement	
SG	Strategic Goals	
USAID	United States Agency for International Development	
WG	Working Group	

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#### 1. INTRODUCTION

The present document is the Electricity Market Reform Communication Plan (the Plan) for the 2020-2022, prepared by Consulting Company GEPRA at the request of USAID Energy Program (the Program), through collaboration with the Program and the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia (MoESD).

Electricity Market Reform (the Reform) Communication Plan, aligned with the 2020-2030 Electricity Strategy and Action Plan, outlines the concept of Electricity Market Reform and basic recommendations. This Plan is a comprehensive document that sets out the communication basis and actions based on the situation analysis.

Electricity Market Reform, implying the harmonization with the Association Agreement terms, signals the promotion of a free competitive electricity market to boost the investment environment, energy security and reliable energy system. Successful implementation of the Reform, enhanced competition and liquidity will offer consumers uninterrupted high-quality electricity at a fair price. It will also foster the cross-border trade with the neighboring countries and the European Union (EU), cement the position of a regional hub and enhance energy efficiency and renewable energy sourcing.

The primary responsibility for the implementation of the Electricity Market Reform Communication Plan rests on the MoESD whereas the Georgian Parliament, Georgian National Energy and Water Supply Regulatory Commission (GNERC) and the state administration represent engaged parties. Legal Entities of Public Law within the MoESD, local authorities and other entities involved in the energy sector advancement and management should also be tuned in this process.

The following tools were applied in designing the long-term Electricity Market Communication Plan:

- In-depth interviews with interested parties;
- Focus group meeting with population;
- Revision of related documents;
- Open resources analysis;
- Working Group (WG) meetings;
- Seminars.

#### 2. SITUATION ANALYSIS

The situation analysis was intended to capture the public perception and expectations with respect to Electricity Market Reform initiated by the MoESD. A comprehensive assessment process required sharper focus on successful practices that have gained ground within the EU countries.

The components listed below contributed to measuring the awareness level of the existing electricity market conditions:

- System and the Reform awareness;
- Attitude towards the Reform:
- Perceived barriers to the Reform implementation;
- Reform related awareness campaign;
- Effective sources of spreading information;
- The Reform speakers.

#### THE REFORM AWARENESS

The research process demonstrated scarce awareness of electricity generation and consumption among the general population, which is often distorted leading to a misconception about the electricity market.

Only government sectors and large consumers have a profound understanding of the planned reforms in the energy market. All other groups - including journalists, population, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) - are either poorly conscious or totally ignorant of electricity marker functioning and planned changes in the energy sector.

#### THE REFORM RELATED ATTITUDE/MINDSET

All target audiences acknowledged the importance of the Reform, mainly rooted into two core values:

**Energy Independence And Energy Security** 



Competitive Environment And Qualitative Service

Overall, the population and in some rare cases even large consumers, fail to fully embrace the rationale of the Reform and associated changes. For the majority of the population and NGOs, as well as for the local authorities, the content of the Reform remains vague that creates poor awareness of anticipated changes.

The various groups interpret open market as a competitive marketplace, empowering consumers with choice and voice. Energy experts and engaged parties consider the establishment of new generation units as pre-requisite for creating an efficient market. Moreover, this particular target group decoded the Electricity Market Reform as a mechanism for achieving the energy independence and transparent business environment in the long run.

#### PERCEIVED BENEFITS OF THE REFORM

Evaluating the energy experts' opinion, as well as the views of the population, local authorities and NGOs shaped the perceived benefits of the Electricity Market Reform which are as follows:

- Meeting the commitment of the Association Agreement (AA);
- Right of choosing the supplier;
- Increased competition;
- Open market;
- Influx of new companies and consequent job opportunities;
- Possible economic advancement;
- Common belief for electricity price reduction.

#### PERCEIVED CHALLENGES OF THE REFORM

The target audience recognizes several challenges with respect to Reform implementation:

- Unfair (carter) deals among the companies;
- Insufficient number of companies;
- The Reform implementation timeframe;
- Need for additional human resources.

The general population, civil society and journalists, unlike energy experts are convinced that the market opening will prompt price decline due to the principles of competition. Whereas, other segments see the price surge inevitable in all cases and name the Reform as a tool for price regulation.

A certain part of the population and civil society are environmentally conscious particularly in the context of creating new generation facilities that are deemed to have a knock-on effect on the ecosystem.

#### BARRIERS TO THE REFORM IMPLEMENTATION

The interviewed audience defined a few impediments to the effective implementation of the Reform.

- Insufficient financial resources, anticipated to be bolstered on account of investment attraction:
- Political instability hindering the long-term planning perspective among potential investors;
- Support mechanism / Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) essential for investors;
- Inherited resistance towards large Hydro Power Plant (HPP) construction.

# NEED FOR CREATING AWARENESS OF THE REFORM IMPLEMENTATION

While the content and complexity of messages fit the technical level of the intended groups and are catered to specific audiences, there are certain topics imperative for all groups such as:

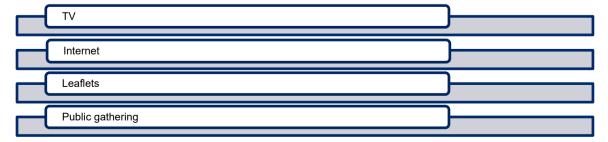
- The role of the Government under a competitive energy market?
- The mechanism by which the Government will ensure free trade and fair functioning of market.

The Awareness Campaign targets diverse audiences ranging from large consumers to households aimed at fostering awareness on anticipated changes and outcomes. However, it is important to maintain focus on individual priorities and benefits in order to resonate more with public. Prior to launching the communication campaign, a comprehensive preemptive plan must be in place, providing answers to common public inquiries such as:

- The impact of the Reform on electricity prices and the timeframe for anticipated changes;
- A reason for the Reform adoption and anticipated changes? What prompted a need for new Reform?
- What are the requirements for the Reform implementation/ Procedures related to the Reform implementation? How the population can contribute to effective execution of the Reform;
- The impact of the new undertaking on the environment, particularly in terms of HPP construction?
- The anticipated benefit to the country. The long-term perspective of the Reform.

#### EFFECTIVE SOURCES TO DISSEMINATE INFORMATION

All target groups acknowledge the value of integrated communication channels with a main focus on the following tools:



All interviewees reckon TV as the most trusted source of information that can reach a broad audience and advocate the Reform. This is inclusive of both business programs and TV debates that enhance the production and sharing of high-quality information for more rational decision-making process. While the Internet and social media serve as major sources of spreading news, these channels are suggested to be entirely exploited by various governmental and non-governmental units for the proliferation of news.

Leaflets are also advocated as an effective mean for creating awareness at an early stage, that will strengthen the uptake on TV. This tool is considered as an architect of interest among the audience, stimulating self-motivation to further inquire more detailed information.

Public gatherings are the best method of communicating in villages and regions where the word of mouth often has a greater effect and serves as a most trusted way of disseminating information to build support and acceptance.

#### THE REFORM SPEAKERS

The State, as an initiator of the Reform, should be the key actor, in charge of news proliferation. Although the reference here is made to the MoESD and the minister, the Key Leader of the country shall also advocate similar projects. Energy experts, environmentalists and investors are also suggested to be the active participants in the shaping and implementing the Reform.

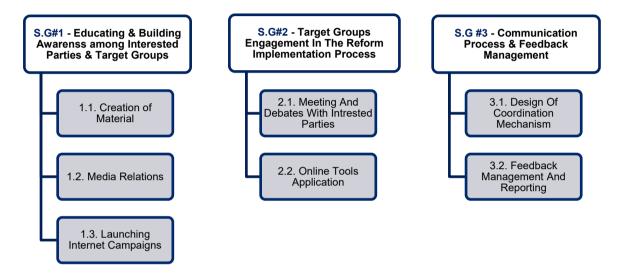
The role of self-governance is indispensable in the regional areas, where personal acquaintances directly contribute to building trust and rapport. Therefore, the engagement of this unit in the public outreach campaign is a critical determinant of success.

#### 3. STRATEGIC CONCEPT OF COMMUNICATION

The present document is designed to bolster the Electricity Market Reform implementation and alleviate anticipated crisis. Thus, the correct positioning of the Reform and awareness effort are the determinants for meeting intended goals.

- Creating awareness of the Reform among the key target audience and educating interested parties;
- 2. Target group engagement in the Reform implementation process;
- 3. Communication process and feedback management.

The attainment of each goal is conditional on the performance of specific tasks and activities providing the foundation for the Action Plan. The following tasks are incorporated under the Strategic Goals (SG), forming a strategic frame for the open market communication.



#### **TARGET AUDIENCE**

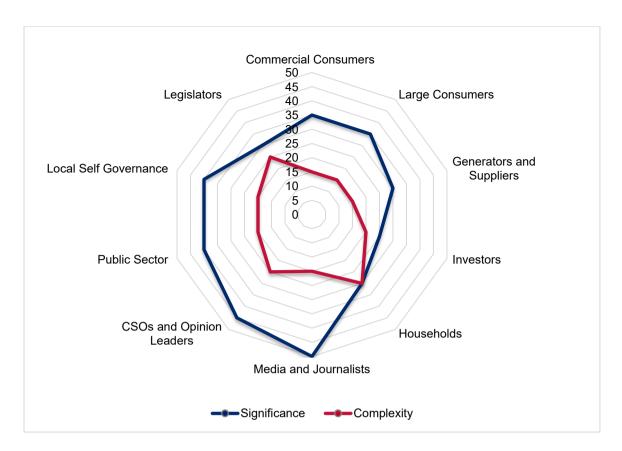
Electricity Market Reform is a complex subject dealing with broad groups, with diverse views and beliefs. Therefore, the target audience should be divided into the following groups:

Target Groups	Interested Parties		
<ul> <li>Market Participants<sup>1</sup> Commercial Consumers</li> <li>Large Consumers</li> <li>Generators and Suppliers</li> <li>Investors</li> <li>Households</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Media and Journalists</li> <li>Civil Societies</li> <li>Public Sector</li> <li>Local Self- Governance</li> <li>Legislators</li> </ul>		

It is critical to understand the distinctive interests of various target groups. Therefore, the communication activities should be clustered around two focal points - the implication and the complexity of the message for each target group as seen below.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Production, transmission, distribution, supply, consumption (both retail and wholesale), energy stock.



#### STRATEGIC APPROACH AND COMMUNICATION CONTENT

In view of Electricity Market Reform significance, the complexity of the issue and the level of public awareness, it is highly recommended to commence the communication process with all target groups at an early stage of the reform. Awareness campaign efforts will establish strong coordination among the engaged parties to ensure credibility and support and will likely foster crisis management, anticipated at various levels of the reform implementation.

Due to complex character of the topic from the communications perspectives, the initiator of the Reform is liable for creating knowledge on the energy issues among target groups in line with their interest and influence level. The obtained information will aid in setting an appropriate tone:

More Informed Group	Less Informed Group		
<ul><li>Commercial Consumers</li><li>Large Consumers</li><li>Generators &amp; Suppliers</li><li>Developers/Investors</li></ul>	<ul><li>Households</li><li>Media &amp; Journalists</li><li>Civil Society Organizations</li></ul>		
Communication Tone			
<ul><li>Based on Rational Messages</li><li>Information Oriented</li><li>Formal</li></ul>	<ul><li>Based on Rational/Emotional Messages</li><li>Visual Oriented</li><li>Informal Or Less Formal</li></ul>		

#### **MESSAGE BOX**

Electricity Market Reform advocacy and public outreach will revolve around the tailored platforms to launch complex communication process. This is reflected in the target matrix below, aimed at engaging various stakeholders to address common information gaps and misperceptions that may act as obstacles and pitch into behavioral change among the audiences.

Target group	Desired Behavior	Message /Argument			
Commercial Consumers		The Reform will enrich the market with the opportunities			
Large Consumers	- Reform Support - Engagement in the	The Reform will foster energy sector			
Generators and Suppliers	process	development and enhance economic growth - Engagement will make your interests be			
Investors		considered			

Target group	Desired Behavior	Message /Argument		
Households	- Reform support and recognition of its importance	<ul> <li>The Reform will have a positive impact on the households and the quality of the service</li> <li>The reform will prevent turmoil in the energy sector</li> <li>The Reform will foster energy security and independence</li> </ul>		
Media and Journalists	<ul> <li>Accurate and a detailed clarification of the issue</li> <li>Engagement in the process</li> </ul>	The market Reform is inevitable The Reform will be beneficial for consumers, market actors and overall for the advancement		
Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) & Opinion Leader	- Constructive engagement in the process	of the country  - The accurate management of the Reform is essential for all target groups		
Public Sector & Local Authorities		- Reform is a cornerstone for the Country's economic growth		
Legislatives	Reform support and positive communication	<ul> <li>Reform implementation demands accurate communication</li> <li>Your support and familiarization of the public is crucial</li> </ul>		

#### **COMMUNICATION PHASES**

The comprehensive nature of the issues, the specification of target groups and the Reform design compels the division of the Electricity Market Reform Communication Strategy into two phases. These phases should be aligned with the transition periods, defined under the Market Concept, and guide the frequency of communication for each target group:

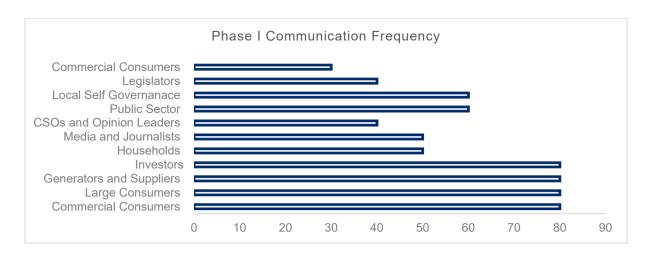


#### **AWARENESS CAMPAIGN PHASE**

Awareness campaign is double fold. It has to create environment in which less informed audiences understand the purpose of the Reform and also effectively communicate with more knowledgeable audiences to ensure their long-term commitment in the decision-making process.

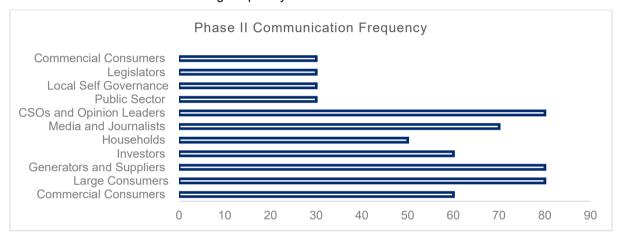
Support of Opinion Leaders is essential at this point, in order to ensure accurate message proliferation at all levels.

At the initial stage, the following frequency of communication is proposed with diverse groups:



#### **SUPPORT PHASE**

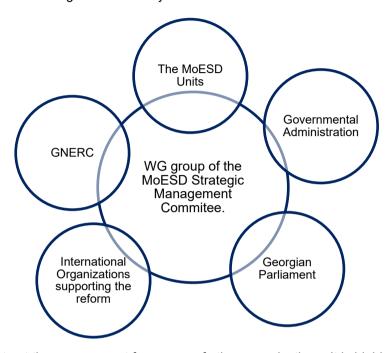
The support phase is designed to advocate the Reform among the less informed audiences and gain support of more cognizant groups by engaging them into a comprehensive communication process with a wider audience. The following frequency of communication is recommended:



#### 4. COMMUNICATION PLAN

#### **COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT**

Efficient management of the communication process and coherent coordination among the involved parties serve as a backbone for the achievement of strategic communication goal. On that account, the strategic communication department of the MoESD should initiate a special WG, comprising of all engaged parties for the management of the system.



The WG should set out the engagement frequency of other organizations. It is highly recommended to ensure that WG, accountable for the strategy implementation, is directly reporting to the Department of the Reforms and International Relations at the MoESD - unit overseeing the implementation process.

#### **EVALUATION AND REPORTING**

The efficient functioning of the Strategic Communication Department at the MoESD is fundamental for the implementation of Electricity Market Reform Communication Strategy and Action Plan. The progress in achieving objectives in compliance with the planned schedule should be evaluated by the PR practitioner through monthly monitoring. The report is recommended to comprise of the following data and components:

Media Monitoring	The quantity of the Reform related media materials
wedia wormornig	Qualitative indicators of media material and topics
Social Net Evaluation	Statistical data of Social Net
Social Net Evaluation	Social media audience feedback
Website Statistics	The number of visitors and their preferences
Website Statistics	Leading news and topics
The Event Report	The number of attendees and their feedback
The Event Report	Photo and video archive
The Key Findings	Final review of the existing condition and achieved results
Future Recommendations	Future anticipated changes and advancements

The report should be drafted in line with pre-determined format, including WG monthly meetings and joint assessment of results.

## **PHASE I: SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES**

Activity	Timeframe	Responsible Party	Performance Indicator	Budget in GEL ₾			
S.G #1 - Creating Awareness an	S.G #1 - Creating Awareness and Knowledge Among the Target and Interested Groups						
1.1. Creation of Information Mat		_		58400			
Visual Concept Design & Brand Book	March 2020		Respective Document Prepared	6500			
Preparing Reform Related Questions/ Answers	March 2020		Respective Document Prepared	0			
Printing Brochure	Apr. 2020		5000 Brochures Printed	2400			
Preparing Informative Web Site	Apr- May 2020		1 Webpage Created	7500			
Preparing Presentation Files	Apr. 2020		Adequate Documents Prepared	0			
Shooting Reform Related Informative Movie	Apr- May 2020		9-10 Minutes Movie Shot	42000			
1.2. Media Relations	_			293200			
Informal Meetings with Media Representatives	Apr. 2020		1 Meeting Held With 20 Participants	2200			
Media Tours	June- July 2020		3 Seminars Organized, With 20 Participants	63000			
Creating Database of Interested Journalists & Forming Online Groups	Aug. 2020		Respective Document Prepared	0			
Radio Ad Placement	Sep - Nov. 2020		20 Seconds Ad Broadcasted On 5 Radio Channels Within 3 Months	12000			
Video Ad Placement on the Regional TV	Sep - Nov 2020		15 Seconds Ad Broadcasted On 10 Radio Channels Within 3 Months	48000			
Video Ad Placement on the National TV	Sep - Nov 2020		15 Seconds Ad Broadcasted On 2 Radio Channels Within 3 Months	120000			
News Proliferation	Sept-Dec. 2020		50 Media Coverage	24000			
Participating in Thematic Programs	Sept- Dec 2020		5 Media Coverage	24000			
1.3. Launching Internet Campaig	gn			14100			
Creating and Visualizing Social Media Platform	Apr.2020		Registered & Launched 3 Sites	0			
Energy System Campaign	May-June. 2020		100 000 Participants Engaged	7200			
Reform Campaign	June-July 2020		50 000 Internet User's Engagement	2400			
Campaign at The Initial Stage of The Reform	Oct- Dec 2020		150 000 Internet Users Engagement	4500			
S.G #2 - Target Group Engagem			tation	F0.5.5			
2.1. Meetings and Discussions		ested Parties	Danie thu Da	5300			
Stakeholders' Mapping	March 2020		Respective Document Prepared	0			
Round Table with The MoESD Experts and Business Media	May 2020		1 Meeting Held With 20 Participants	1800			
Working Meeting with The Civil Sector Representatives	June 2020		2 Meetings Held With 20 Participants	3500			
Meeting with Scholars	Oct- Nov 2020		2 Meetings Held, Each With 30 Participants	0			
Regional Meetings with The Local Groups/Reps	Jul-Aug 2020		4 Meetings Held, Each With 40 Participants	0			
Informative Meetings with Public Servants	May-June 2020		8 Meetings Held, Each With 20 Participants	0			
2.2. Application of Online Tools	T	1	I 40 4 4 11 11 -	2500			
Feedback Loop on The Website	Sept. 2020		1 System Available on The Website	2500			

Activity	Timeframe	Responsible Party	Performance Indicator	Budget in GEL ₾
Social Net Discussions	Sept - Dec 2020		5 Posts Uploaded; 50 000 Users Engaged	0
Special Webinars	Oct- Nov 2020		2 Webinars Created, Each With 10 000 Reach Out	0
S.G #3 - Communication Proces	s and Feedba	ck Managemen	t	
3.1. Design of Coordination Too	ı			0
Creating Executive Working Group	March 2020		Created Group	0
Creating Online Working Platform	Apr. 2020		Close Group Created in the Social Nets	0
WG Meetings	May - Dec 2020		Monthly Meetings Organized.	0
3.2. Feedback Management and Reporting				
Media Monitoring	May - Dec 2020		Respective Document Prepared	4800
Web Page and Social Net Assessment	May - Dec 2020		Respective Document Prepared	4800
Report on Meetings and Direct Communications	May - Dec 2020		Respective Document Prepared	0
Monthly reports	May - Dec 2020		Respective Document Prepared	0
Total				383100

### **PHASE II: SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES**

Activity	Timeframe	Responsible party	Performance indicator	Budget in GEL ₾
S.G #1 - Creating Awareness and Knowledge Among the Target and Interested Groups				
1.1. Creation of Information Material				
Renewal Of Q/A and Message Box	Jan. 2021 Jan. 2022		Respective Document Prepared	0
Leaflets for Wider Audience	June. 2021		5000 Leaflets Printed	2500
Informative Graphic Videos	July 2021		3 Videos Shot With 2 Minutes Length	21000
Setting Informative Stands at Municipalities	Apr - May 2021		50 Stands Placed	7500
Special Calendars	Oct- Nov 2021		2000 Calendars Printed	3000
1.2. Media Relations				402700
Medial School Concept Design	Aug. 2021		Respective Document Prepared	0
Media School Contest for Applicants	Sep. 2021		3 Ads Published in The Internet	0
Media School Introduction, & Respective Certification	Oct - Nov. 2021		25 Journalists Retrained, 3 Seminars Held	2500
Programs for regional TV	Oct- Nov. 2021 Oct - Nov. 2022		8 Programs with The Length- 25 Minutes Launched On 6 Channels	25000
Radio Ads	Oct- Nov. 2021 Oct - Nov. 2022		20 Minutes Radio Ad Launched On 5 Radio Channels Within 3 Months	22000
Filmed Commercial on the regional TV	Oct- Nov. 2021 Oct- Nov. 2022		15 Seconds Commercial Launched At 10 Channels Within 3 Months	45000
Filmed Commercial on the National TV	Oct- Nov. 2021 Oct- Nov. 2022		15 Seconds Ad Launched On 2 Channels Within 3 Months	220000
Press - conference for reporting results	Mar. 2021 Sept. 2021 Mar. 2022. Sept. 2022		4 Press Conferences Held Each Hosting 10 Journalists. 40 Media Coverages	3200

Activity	Timeframe	Responsible party	Performance indicator	Budget in GEL ₾	
News Proliferation	Jan. 2021 – Dec. 2022		200 Media Material Received	0	
Participating in Programs and Rubrics	Jan. 2021 – Dec. 2022		Participated In 20 Programs	60000	
Media Contest Concept Design	Sept. 2022		Respective Document Prepared	0	
Announcing Contest and Material Gathering	Oct- Nov. 2022		3 ads placed in the internet	0	
Nominating and Awarding the Winner	Dec. 2022		1 Event Held with The Participation Of 25 People, Three Winners Nominated	25000	
1.3. Launching Internet Campaign	T	<u> </u>		47400	
Disseminating Special Info Graphs	March - May 2021 March - May 2022		6 Info Graphs Disseminated Seen By 300 People	12000	
Disseminating Graphical Videos	March - May 2021 March - May 2022		3 Videos Disseminated, Seen By 300 People	12000	
Distributing Answers on Frequently Asked Questions	Jan. 2021 - Dec. 2022		10 Responses Distributed Seen By 500 Thousand People	4400	
Posting Banners on Top Sites	March - May 2021 March - Ma. 2022		2 Flesh banners posted on 5 top sites for 3 months	19000	
S.G #2 - Target Group Engagement in The Reform Implementation 2.1 2.2. Direct Contact and Online Engagement					
Round Table with Internet Influencers	Feb. 2021		2 Events Held With 25 Participants	<b>44400</b> 2400	
WG Meetings with Civil Sector Representatives	March 2021 Oct. 2021		4 Events Held, Each With 15 Participants	6000	
Regional Meetings with The Local Groups	March - May 2021 March - May 2022		20 Events Held, Each With 20 Participants	12000	
Informative Meetings with Civil Servants	March-May 2021 March - May 2022		8 Meetings Held, Each With 20 Participants	0	
Students Debate at Local /Regional Levels	March-May 2022		1 Tour Organized With 200 Participants	24000	
S.G #3 – Communication Process a 3.1 3.2. Coordination and Periodi		Management		20000	
	Jan - Dec.			28800	
WG Meetings	2021-2022		1 meeting per month	0	
Media Monitoring	Jan - Dec. 2021-2022		Respective Document Prepared	14400	
Assessing Web Page and Social Net	Jan - Dec. 2021-2022		Respective Document Prepared	14400	
Report on Meetings and Direct Communications	Jan - Dec. 2021-2022		Respective Document Prepared	0	
Monthly report	Jan - Dec. 2021-2022		Respective Document Prepared	0	
Total 5				557300	

#### 5. CONCLUSION

The present Electricity Market Strategic Communication Plan serves as an overall framework for communication with the various target audiences in order to foster awareness and trigger behavioral change. Successful implementation of the Plan is hinged on a committed effort from each engaged group in using the channels and guidelines presented in this Plan. Such a commitment ensures that the initiator of the Reform provides relevant, accurate, and consistent information to its community.

The report was written through a collaborative process with the MoESD and USAID Energy Program. The paper argues that the designed goals and tasks can be accomplished through the implementation of suggested recommendations:

**Technical Support** – the initial stage envisages the creation of WG, responsible for coordinating respective activities and attracting financial resources from the international organization and public funds.

**Enhanced Engagement** – ensure the engagement of the governmental, public and local units as well as target audiences in the decision-making process that will contribute to crisis aversion and the possibility of engaging the third party in the decision-making process.

**Timely implementation** – the launch of integrated communication process should not be delayed and be inclusive of respective actions aligned with the various stages of the Reform in order to avoid the stalling of the process due to poor engagement or public resistance.

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