Communications Strategy

Office of the Auditor General of Nepal

Auditor General of Nepal

Foreword

Communication is one of the fundamental elements to promote good governance through transparency and accountability. Today, in the world of globalization, communication is a vital part.

Realising the need of communication in an organization, Office of the Auditor General has prepared this communication strategy. This strategy has been prepared to meet the need of OAGN to develop effective communication mechanism.

The strategy focuses both internal and external communication of the OAGN. This strategy also outlines the communication approach in a 'building block' style to allow OAGN sufficient flexibility in how, what and when to develop and implement. Each strategy is aligned with one of the four communication goals and within each goal, there are many tactics and operartional suggestions on implementation.

Utmost care has been done to make this guide error free. However, we will be grateful if the user could inform any suggestion on this guideline to the concerned Directorate of the OAGN.

At last, I would like to appreciate team of OAG Nepal, SOAGP and stakeholders who gave their efforts in the preparation and development of this guide.

(Sukudev Kharty)

Acting Auditor General

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1   Introduction

There is a fundamental dichotomy taking place today in the world of governance and accountability. On the one hand, a global public trend is demanding that governments, public institutions and public officials be more transparent and accountable. To meet this demand, Supreme Audit Institutions (SAIs) such as the Office of the Auditor General of Nepal (OAGN) need to communicate more about what they do in a neutral and factual way without political interference.

On the other hand, the OAGN is an organization within the 'system' that constituted it as an independent organ of the State. This same organ needs to be able to engage in communicative action so as to effectively discharge its responsibilities to the citizens and deepen democracy. The challenge lies between being independent and being engaged.

A third trend is taking place as well. The push effect of increased demand for information has resulted in a parallel worldwide development by institutions and public figures to pull back and limit the dissemination of public information as they resist these information requests.

This strategy provides demographic, media, legal and environmental information on which to better understand the organization and the type of people who work there. Target audiences were then defined and communication objectives were outlined taking into consideration relevant Nepalese and OAGN laws, regulations and guidelines.

The second part of the communications strategy outlines the communications approach in a 'building block' style to allow OAGN sufficient flexibility in how, what and when to develop and implement. Each strategy is aligned with one of the four communication goals and within each goal there are many tactics and operational suggestions on implementation. Other suggestions were provided to support communications capacity as it grows within the organization.

1.1   OAGN Overview

The Office of the Auditor General of Nepal is in the business of conducting audits, the conclusions of which are rolled up into a legislatively-mandated OAGN Annual Report generally published in April each year. The six types of detailed and short procedure audits assess the regularity, economy, efficiency, effectiveness and proprietary of government financial operations and include:

- o **Compliance audits (called financial audits) -** checks whether funds are being spent for the purposes intended by Parliament, promoting efficient resource allocation and utilization.
- o **Performance audits (PA)** are conducted on government programs and public policy in vital sectors of the country to help improve the programs and their performance and contributes towards effective service delivery.
- o **Information Technology (IT)** audits. At least two IT audits conducted each year.

- o **Environmental audits**- reports on the effective use fo resources in the environmental issues.
- o **Gender audits**- reports on the proper utilization of gender related budget.
- o **Concurrent audits** – reports on the effective functioning of internal controls.
- o **Disaster Audits** - Reports on the effective use of disaster related expenditure.

1.2 Legal Frameworks

Communications for the OAGN is guided by many laws, regulations, codes of conduct and norms and standards. Communications is anchored to the OAGN's legal, regulatory and policy frameworks and its strategic and operational plans all the while upholding national laws and policies related to communications and broadcasting in the Government of Nepal. OAGN communications is also guided by international norms and standards supporting communication and engagement activities in Supreme Audit Institutions.

The legal framework below sustains the development, implementation and dissemination of OAGN communication, engagement and outreach activities nationally, for the OAGN and internationally.

1.2.1 National

The list below in Table 1includes legislation that resides with the GoN's Ministry of Information and Communication as well as industry codes of conduct. Nepal does not appear to have a government communications policy which would ensure that communications across the GoN are well-coordinated, effectively managed and responsive to the diverse information needs of the public.

Table 1: Legislation/Acts/Codes related to Communications

Legislation/Acts/Codes Related to Communications	
1.	Radio Act, 2014 (1957)
2.	Postal Act, 2019 (1963)
3.	National News Agency Act, 2019 (1962)
4.	Gorkhapatra Corporation Act, 2019 (1963)
5.	Nepali Language Publication Corporation Act, 2021 (1964)
6.	Motion Picture (Production, Exhibition and Distribution) Act, 2026 (1969)
7.	Communication Corporation Act, 2028 (1972)

8.	Press Council Act, 2048 (1992)
9.	National Broadcasting Act, 2049 (1993)
10.	Working Journalists Act, 2051 (1993)
11.	Telecommunication Act, 2053 (1997)
12.	Right to Information Act, 2064 (2007)
13.	Right to Information Regulation (2009)
14.	Code of Conduct for Online Journalists, Federation of Nepali Journalists

Right to Information Act

Constitution of Nepal guarantee citizens their fundamental right to access information. The 2007 legislation extended the right to allow citizens to not only demand or obtain information on any matters in the public interest but also access information of concern to themselves.

The 2007 Right to Information Act provides for an independent National Information Commission (NIC) to protect, promote and implement the right to information in Nepal.. The Commission can also issue orders to public agencies; make recommendations to government and other public bodies; impose fines and compensation; make necessary orders and prescribe a timeframe to public bodies to supply information.

The Act requires each public agency to appoint a Public Information Officer responsible for upholding the Act and disseminating agency information to concerned citizens. If required, public agencies could create an Information Section for the same purpose.

1.2.2   Office of the Auditor General of Nepal

The OAGN Peer Review Report concluded that OAGN has the appropriate and effective constitutional and statutory legal framework which ensures a sufficiently broad mandate, access to information and right and obligation to report. The legislation and regulations in Table 2guide the OAGN and its communications.

Table 2: Legislation/Acts/Rules that Guide the OAGN

Legislation/Acts/Rulesthat Guide the OAGN
o   Audit Act 2048 (1991)
o   Civil Service Act, 2049 (1993)
o   Financial Procedures Act 2055 B.S/(1998)
o   Financial Procedure Rules (2007)
o   Good Governance Act (2008)

o	Constitution of Nepal Articles 240-241
o	Service Charter
o	Supply of information (under the Right to Information Act);
o	Addressing stakeholder grievances by the nodal officer (as provided in the Good Governance Act 2008);
o	Annual Report distribution post dissemination to Parliament and central government offices.

1.2.3   International

The norms and standards outlined in Table 3 support communication and engagement activities in Supreme Audit Institutions:

Table 3: International Norms and Standards for SAIs

International Norms and Standards for SAIs
o International Standards of Supreme Audit Institutions (ISSAI) (2010)
o No. 1: Lima Declaration
o No. 10: Mexico Declaration of SAI Independence
o No. 20: Principles of transparency and accountability
o No. 21: Principles of transparency and accountability. Principles and best practices
o No. 12: Value and benefits of SAIs – Making a difference to the life of citizens
o UN-INTOSAI Conclusions of the 21st Symposium, "Effective practices of co-operation between Supreme Audit Institutions and citizens to enhance public accountability" (2011)
o UN-INTOSAI, Conclusions of the 22nd Symposium held in Vienna, March 5-7, "Audit and advisory by SAIs: Risks and opportunities, as well as possibilities for engaging citizens" (2013)
o UN-INTOSAI, "Communicating and Promoting the Value and Benefits of SAIs: An INTOSAI Guideline" (2013)
o Regional standards and strategic objectives:
o OLACEFS, Asuncion Declaration about Principles of Accountability
o Pacific Island Forum's 8 Principles of Accountability, and PASAI's strategic goal of strengthening communication and advocating transparency and accountability
o 1st ASOSAI-EUROSAI Joint Conference on "Challenges for Ensuring Transparency and Accountability of the Public Financial Management." (2011)
o ASOSAI Strategic Plan 2011-15, Goal #3
o EUROSAI Strategic Plan 2011-2017, Goal #3

2   TARGET AUDIENCES

The following target groups are proposed for OAGN communications and engagement activities. There is an equal emphasis on internal audiences as there is for external ones.

2.1   Internal Audiences

Communications can be greatly enhanced by concentrating on key internal stakeholders, namely the Government of Nepal (GoN) and the Office of the Auditor General of Nepal (OAGN).

- o   Office of the Auditor General
- o   The civil servants who work at OAGN.
- o   Government of Nepal
- o   Civil servants
- o   Parliamentarians
- o   Public Accounts Committee (PAC)
- o   Primary Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies
- o   Ministry of Finance – lead ministry for economic, revenue and expenditures
- o   Financial Comptroller-General Office (FCGO),
- o   National Planning Commission
- o   Commission for the Investigation of Abuse of Authority (CIAA)
- o   National Vigilance Centre (NVC),
- o   The Judiciary
- o   Secondary Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies
- o   Chief Accounting Officers and Chief Executive officers of State Owned Enterprises (SOEs)
- o   Chief Accounting Officers (Secretaries) of the Ministries in the GoN
- o   Finance head of corporate entities.

2.2   External Audiences

- o   Citizens of Nepal
- o   Civil society organizations; non-governmental organizations
- o   Media
- o   Professional bodies
- o   Local: The Institute of Chartered Accountants ofNepal(ICAN), oriented to private commercial audit rather than public sector auditing
- o   International: ASOSAI, INTOSAI
- o   Academic institutions
- o   Development Partners

3   COMMUNICATION GOALS

Communication goals and objectives are almost always correlated and aligned to the organization's vision, its mission and its strategic and operational plans.

OAGN Vision: We strive to be a Credible Institution in Promoting Accountability, Transparency and Integrity for the benefit of the people

OAGN Mission: Provide Independent and Quality Audit Service to assure our stakeholders that the public funds are efficiently used

The OAGN 2016-2020 Strategic Plan provides several recommendations to improve communications. Taking into consideration relevant strategic and analytical documents of OAGN, the following are the communication objectives for the next five years.

Communication Goal #1:Enhance the OAGN and the Auditor General's credibility, trust and reliability with stakeholders

Communication Goal #2:Strengthen OAGN's relevance with citizens

Communication Goal #3:Strengthen OAGN internal communications

Communication Goal #4:Improve stakeholder understanding of the OAGN and its subject matter.

4   SWOT ANALYSIS

This SWOT analysis (**S**trengths, **W**eaknesses, **O**pportunities and **T**hreats) assesses OAGN's position in the marketplace. It summarizes OAGN's internal strengths and weaknesses and looks at internal value-creating or limiting factors such as itsassets, skills, or resources. It also identifies OAGN's external opportunities and threats.

SWOT Analysis	
Strengths	

OAGN has High Expectations, Trust, Confidence and Support from Stakeholders:
 	
➤ Legislature, government agencies, development partners, media and civil society appreciate the OAG report underscoring transparency and accountability in the use of public resources.
 	
   ○ They have high expectations from OAGN in the promotion of transparency and accountability in the public sector.
 	
   ○ Stakeholders have increased trust, confidence and credibility towards the OAGN. *(OAGN 52th Annual Report, p. 18)*
	Strong, Enthusiastic Leadership with Credibility:
	
	   ○ The Auditor General has a strong management background, knows the Parliamentary system, has a good reputation with stakeholders and has several years left in his mandate so as to effect real change.
	
	   ○ His experience as Secretary for the Ministry of Finance, and Acting Financial Comptroller General affords him credibility with the Government and other stakeholders equally.
	
	   ○ The Auditor General understands and is enthusiastic about improving internal and external communications.

OAGN Upholds Legal, Minimum Communication Requirements:
 	
   ○ The OAGN is in compliance with legal communication requirements e.g.: the appointment of a spokesperson (Good Governance Act) and an Information Officer (Right to Information Act).
 	
   ○ It also follows international SAI guidelines to publish and disseminate the Annual Report in print and electronically on the website.
	OAGN Executive Supports the Role of Communications:
	
	   ○ The Auditor General is committed to and enthusiastic about improving internal and external communications.
	
	   ○ OAGN is enthused about reaching to a wider audience on its value and benefits. (Peer Review Exec Summary #13)
	
	   ○ Senior management also state the need for better communications in all its facts at the OAGN.

Dedicated OAGN Employees:
 	
   ○ The 449 OAGN employees are dedicated, qualified and knowledgeable civil servants who have taken an oath committing them to uphold the highest standards of public service according to the provisions outlined in the Civil Service Act.
 	
   ○ OAGN employees are guided by the OAGN Code of Ethics which is in line with ISSAI 30 and signed by each auditor to observe integrity, maintain independence, objectivity, neutrality, confidentiality and competence. (OAGN 52th Annual Report, p. 68)
 	
   ○ They are motivated to learn and take training to improve their skills
	Strong International Capacity Support:
	
	   ○ OAGN is part of the international Supreme Audit Institution (SAI) community. As such, it has the support of an expert network and access to significant number of best practices and case studies, among them INTOSAI and ASOSAI (Asian Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions).
	
	   ○ OAGN has a bilateral agreement with SAI Norway for capacity building and audit of sustainable development.
	
	   ○ OAGN was recipient of recent long-term World Bank and other donor funding to improve capacity.

Conducts Regular Stakeholder Meetings:	Strong OAGN Foundation Promotes Effectiveness
o The OAGN and the AG have conducted regular interactions with stakeholders. *(OAGN 52th Annual Report, p. 18)*	o Other than not having control of its finances and staffing decisions, the OAGN has required legal and constitutional provisions to be a strong and effective institution. *(OAGN Peer Review, p. 6)*

WEAKNESSES	
Technological & Hardware Limitations: o Severe and frequent electricity outages in the country o Limited internet connectivity within the organization o No intranet to build the information and personal bridges between employees and departments o Auditors have very few communication resources when working in the field. o Lack of training on how to use computers and how to use email.	**Lack of a Communications Framework:** o A communications framework with structure, policies and processes would help develop, guide and inform a strong communications function in the agency. *No Communications Structure* o No formalized communications department at OAGN. o No dedicated communications staff (outside of a Spokesperson with this as one of his many responsibilities, and a Right to Information officer.) o Lack of a communications budget with a guaranteed source of funding. *No Communication Policies* o No GoN communications strategy o No communication sub-policies e.g.: social media, media relations, engagement, outreach *No Processes* o No communication system and standard operating procedures (e.g.: for approval process), other than for the dissemination of the Annual Report. o OAGN uses the GoN logo as well as a separate OAGN logo but lacks branding guidelines which affect the look and feel of communication products for both external communications (brochures) and internal communications (e.g.: standardized email signature).

Lack of Analytics:	Overworked and Discouraged Employees:
o No analytics or market research exists on Nepali citizens', external stakeholders and media viewpoints of OAGN performance, the Annual Report and communication preferences. This would help inform future communication strategies. o No media/content analysis on the reception and media coverage of the Annual Report. (OAGN Peer Review, p. 4)	o OAGN employees are overworked and busy auditing all government entities except municipalities, village development committees and public schools. (OAGN Peer Review, p. 22) o They lack capacity and are seen to lack expertise (OAGN Survey, 2014) o OAGN does not currently employ civil servants who have professional communications training and expertise. o Low staff morale and reduced motivation brought on, in part, by feelings of futility due to weak ineffectuality of OAGN to secure accountability of the Executive. (2007 Report on Capacity Building - IDI, Norway - ASSOSAI Team; Cowater-Strategy for Communicative Action by OAGN, 2014).
OAGN has Limited Impact:	Limited Stakeholder Knowledge of Audits and the Audit Process:
o The OAGN, through its primary output, the Annual Report, has limited impact with citizens and with the media. Low audit impact is also due to OAGN structural reasons however both the former and ineffective communication of audit results have been identified as problematic. (Strategic Plan, p. 18) o The Annual Report is written by and for a specialized, knowledgeable audience familiar with financial concepts and matters. However, to the majority of the general population and the media, the report is convoluted and contains too much jargon and unfamiliar, specialized financial terms to be comprehensible. As such, there has been limited media coverage. This could be exasperated by elements that strip away OAGN credibility such as a lack of independence, allegations of corruption and the inability to get action on determinations found. (OAGN Peer Review, p.78)	o This applies across the board from government employees and Parliamentarians to external stakeholders. o Currently, the OAGN has a policy limiting communications with the legislative arm to only interactions during meetings of the Public Accounts Committee. o Meetings with senior Ministry officials are fairly regular but are not very productive with regard to actions taken on irregularities reported by OAGN. o Media is not very strong in Nepal and is not equipped to research subjects and topics brought up in the Auditor General's Annual Report. o Media capacity is even more limited in the regions outside of Kathmandu, the head-office base for most national media.

Lack of Internal Communications	
o Other than occasional divisional and department meetings, circulars sent by senior management, and a bulletin board there is no formal method by which OAGN communicates with its close to 449 employees. o Inter-department communications (department to department) is limited. o According to senior management, messages are not reaching the grassroots, emails are not being opened, circulars are not being read, and it appears that requests by senior management are not be taken seriously.	

Opportunities	
Investing in Communications Generates the Potential to Create Big Impact: o Since the OAGN has engaged in only the minimum legal communications there is a tremendous opportunity to make a bigger communications impact with even just a few small incremental improvements. o Care must be taken that OAGN communications capacity and infrastructure exists to accommodate increased communications deliverables, organization scrutiny, inquiries and requests.	**Strong OAGN Leadership Willing to Make Changes:** o The Auditor General is known as being a forward-thinker willing to make the decisions that will require changes. o There is an opportunity for him to not only fill the leadership vacuum at the agency but strengthen the organization after seven years without an official AG during a time of political uncertainty and a lack of legislative oversight.
Thirst for Fair, Unbiased Information: o Stakeholders hunger for fair, unbiased information on the workings of their government. o The OAGN has a responsibility to reach out to a wide variety of stakeholders including the judiciary, prosecuting and investigative agencies, civil society organizations, citizen groups and the media.	**Citizens Need and Want to Believe in Good and to Have Hope for a Better Life**: o Citizens intrinsically want to improve their lives and that of their families in their villages and districts. Despite high rates of corruption in the country and in the public service, stakeholders are interested and can be engaged to work together. OAGN, through the delivery of unbiased and fair audits, is one of the real mechanisms in government to provide hope and goodness to citizens and hold people and organizations into account.

Engage Stakeholders:	**Lead by Example:**
o Revolutionize the OAGN by sanctioning the use of engagement within the organization as a two-way dialogue of providing information to stakeholders and receiving feedback and opinions. This would include: o Changing the OAGN planning and implementation process to include citizen engagement mechanisms to help improve the quality of OAGN audits; o Developing official public feedback mechanisms as well as o Implementing a communications engagement strategy to make the organization more relevant to the real issues and concerns of citizens in the country.	o Become a model organization dedicated to improving the lives of citizens by becoming more responsive to matters of public interest. o This could include more responsive media relations; showing leadership in identifying audits that are close to the heart of Nepalis; and improving OAGN engagement mechanisms to strengthen dialogue with citizens to understand and identify where the OAGN could best utilize its limited audit resources to make the most impact for citizens and the government. o Implement key policies and processes, and through communications and engagement, show the results of these policies/processes to lead by example in reforming the public sector in Nepal e.g.: the Code of Conduct.
Embrace New Ways of Communicating:	**Maximize the Potential of Performance Audits:**
o Use social media because these social media tools attract the very target audience OAGN wants to influence. o Build an intranet to allow better information sharing across directorates.	o While all audits are important to the good running of government financial operations, Performance Audits (PA) can be the audit 'superstars'. Since the sectors and services audited usually affect citizens daily lives, performance audits can be the best quick fix way to generate bigger impact. o The OAGN could meet stakeholder demand for more performance audits by: o Enhancing PA visibility and impact (in the short term) in the Annual Report by incorporating a PA section in the AR and including PA observations in the Executive Summary. o Creating a new Audit Highlights document (in the short term) designed to specifically bring attention to Performance Audit findings in a media and citizen-friendly way. o (in the long term) Creating a second separate audit cycle for the development and publication of a Performance Report (outside the communications responsibility and requires appropriate statutory powers). (OAGN Pee*r Review, p. 33)*

Choose to audit a certain number of high profile programs/services per audit cycle: o Be strategic in the choice of performance audits to conduct as well as which ones to publicize. The higher the profile, the more potential for citizen impact. The OAGN will accordingly be faced with higher risks for scrutiny and criticism.	

Threats	
Any practice that undermines or diminishes the OAGN and the AG's credibility, trust, reputation and impartiality. ➢ **Criticisms that the OAGN/AG is not effective because:** o it doesn't have teeth to secure Executive accountability and enforce implementation of recommendations, o has a lackadaisical attitude in settling audit observations, and o it doesn't have the mechanisms in place to follow-up. ➢ Since there is no exclusive follow up division/ directorate in the OAGN, nor an institutional mechanism to systematically track follow up action on audit recommendations and observations, the follow-up process focuses on disposing irregular items rather than ensuring that corrective action is taken by entities to minimize the recurrence of such irregularities in the future. *(OAGN Peer Review Report, p.3, 10, 40, 42)* o Disrespecting stakeholders in order to uphold the audit process when official replies from the executive authorities of audited entities and Ministries are sometimes not included in the Annual Report. One reason for this is the limited time allotted in the audit process to receive replies before the Annual Report is published. This could affect the trust and confidence of the audited entities and ministries. (OAGN Peer Review Report, p.32) o Allegations that the OAGN is subject to political interference because it is not completely independent with regards to its budget and staffing	**Disruption or Dissolution of Parliament** o It could also affect the stability or dissolve the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) and/or create a delay in PAC hearings. o The Constitution of intends to make Nepal a federal republic and add provincial legislatures. It lays out organizational changes to the OAGN such as the creation of OAGN branch offices in the regions/provinces

No Organizational Buy-In for Communications:	Reluctance to Participate and/or Fear of Speaking Out, Jail or Death
o Lack of buy-in is one of the real risks. The process of transforming OAGN's communication strategies, enhancing its co-operation with other stakeholders, and implementing new mechanisms can be difficult and slow because of both political (e.g.: denying legitimacy to the communications and engagement agenda) and bureaucratic resistance, and the use of defensive strategies by staff to minimize what some might perceive as the negative effects and consequences of engagement mechanisms.	o Some stakeholders may not be willing to engage with the OAGN because of suspicions of undue influence (due to its limited de facto autonomy); or their fear that by speaking to or publishing information from the OAGN, their lives could be in danger
Speaking Out of Turn:	**Reluctance to Share Information Internally:**
o Responding to matters raised by executives and the general public that are beyond audit jurisdiction. *(OAGN Annual Report, p. 18)*	o OAGN information sharing is currently fragmented and in some cases impedes the ability of the organization to provide quality audits. There is an unwillingness of audit directorates to supply information required by the Performance Audit division for risk-based planning for performance audits. This resistance to share information is a threat to the organization as it impedes the organization from properly carrying out its mandate with credibility and integrity.
Perception that OAGN is a Fault-Finding Entity:	**Low Audit Quality:**
o OAGN is perceived as a fault-finding body.	o The decision taken to audit all entities under its statutory powers has led to an exponential number of audits undertaken which created risks to audit quality and integrity. *(OAGN Peer Review Report, pp.2,3,2,4,7)*

5   COMMUNICATIONS APPROACH

The communication needs and opportunities for the OAGN are wide and varied. The SWOT analysis showed that action to be taken even a few small incremental improvements in OAGN communications could be an opportunity to achieve improved results.

Subsequently, the communications approach is simplified and consists of only two parts;

the first is building a communications foundation; the second is identifying tactics to be used to fulfill following communication objectives:

- Enhance the OAGN and the Auditor General's credibility, trust and reliability with stakeholders;

- Strengthen OAGN's relevance with citizens;

- Strengthen OAGN internal communications; and

- Improve stakeholder understanding of the OAGN and its subject matter.

SWOT analysis strength, current communication functions for the OAGN meet the legal requirements for the office as outlined in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Current OAGN Communication Functions,

Current Communication Functions by Type of Communications
Transparency-oriented

o The appointment of an official Spokesperson who responds to media requests and reports directly to the AG.
   o The Spokesperson attends monthly GoN (Press Information Office) press briefings to answer any audit-related media questions.
   o The appointment of an Information Officer responsible for sporadic requests under the Right to Information legislation.
   o Publication of an Audit Journal once every half a years with 500-600 copies distributed to Director-level officers, the Library and the Archives.
   o A website that is infrequently updated, and a redesigned.

o The organization of a press conference at the OAGN offices the day after the OAGN Annual Report submission to President. The Report launch also includes writing a news release and uploading the report on the OAGN website.
Participatory-oriented
o Several executive level meetings with government stakeholders and at about four meetings with civil society organizations and media as a two-way information-sharing exercise.   o Divisional and departmental meetings with staff.

5.1 Build the Foundation

Lack of a communications framework has been identified as a weakness in the SWOT analysis. Building the OAGN communications and engagement foundation should include a clear identification of the structure by which it functions; the policies and guidelines by which it is directed; and the processes or systems by which to efficiently communicate internally and externally.

5.1.1 Architect the Structure

Building the foundation includes creating a communications structure; ensuring that staffing and budgeting resources are aligned; creating job descriptions; and hiring competent, professional communicators that have clearly identified roles and responsibilities. The addition of a communications function in the organization may also require reviewing and reconfiguring roles and responsibilities as it relates to communications for other units in the organization. The foundation would also include defining clear accountability, reporting and governance lines of responsibility.

Stand up a Communications Unit

For optimum results, the communications function in the OAGN to be institutionalized with the creation of a communications division or department that reports directly to the Auditor General's office, not through one of the other Executive officers. The unit would carry out full communication responsibilities on behalf of the whole organization, as well as work directly with the AG on areas such as raising the AG's profile.

Hire Communications Staff

Dedicated internal capacity is needed to fulfill OAGN information, promotion and awareness goals in the areas of external relations, media relations, engagement, internal communications, events management and process information. To best promote the institution and retain credibility with the media, the composition of this dedicated Communications Division include a minimum of two communications professionals who have backgrounds as politically neutral and well-respected journalists and/or a background and an educational degree/certificate in public relations, communications and marketing.

The team can be rounded out with a specialized communications technologist whose skills bridge traditional communications with technology. This person would manage website redevelopment and content creation, social media platforms and content creation and work with the Information Technology department on areas where communications overlap with IT processes e.g.: intranet development and adoption, an online complaints mechanism, email signatures etc.

5.1.2 Create Policies & Strategies

Another important building block in a communications foundation is developing the appropriate environment in which communications can thrive. Policies and guidelines support the communications and engagement functions in an organization and are how this communications strategy can be effectively managed within the OAGN. The following communications-related policies are required for the OAGN:

- o **OAGN Communications Policy** – Helps ensure that OAGN communications are effectively managed, well-co-ordinated, and responsive to the diverse information needs of OAGN employees and the public.

- o **Government of NepalCommunications Policy** –OAGN is also subject to GoN communication directives. A GoN communications policy would ensure that communications across the Government of Nepal are well co-ordinated, effectively managed and responsive to the diverse information needs of the public.

- o **Social Media Policy –** Making the decision to use social media is more than just deciding whether OAGN should have a Facebook or a Twitter page. The medium's people-oriented skills of building online relationships using technological tools and applications has caused a paradigm shift in the way business is conducted and the way society functions.

- o **Media Policy –** This document identifies what the media relations function does within the framework of the Communications Policy. It identifies the communications approach to ensure that all interaction with media is timely, transparent and helpful, states who the Spokesperson is and how they are to be supported by the communications team, describes roles and responsibilities and outlines the products, deliverables and services the media relations unit provides for the organization. These could include, for example advice, media lines, news release, media monitoring, dealing with inaccuracies in the media, letters to the editor, editorials, organizing press conferences and other media events. Other

- o **Refining the Communications Strategy** – As OAGN communications becomes more robust, it will benefit from separate and related strategies for media relations, outreach and engagement. Each sub strategy exists separately but is part of and guided by this comprehensive communications strategy. Once OAGN has communications capacity and a foundation upon which communications can thrive, it is recommended that an engagement strategy and process be designed that takes into consideration many of the following engagement concepts and international best practices.

- o **Engagement Strategy** –A nominal rise in the use of engagement mechanisms for SAIs are a result of recent developments such as: the adoption of international norms and standards that provide guidance for engaging with external stakeholders; the impact of the transparency agenda; the widespread strengthening of civil society; and Development Partners interest in transparency and accountability. A selection of engagement mechanisms used is outlined in Table 5.

Table 5: Mechanisms for SAIs' Engagement with Stakeholders

Mechanisms for SAIs' Engagement with Stakeholders
Transparency-oriented
- Public access to information held by SAIs   - Dedicated communications offices   - Active communications policies   - Publication and dissemination of reports   - User-friendly common-language summaries of reports   - Transparency in the use of resources, bidding and contracts   - Publication of personnel including positions, salaries, and contact information   - Publication of sworn declarations of assets/liabilities and professional relationships of officials
Participatory-oriented
- Participation in the appointment of auditors and high-level officials   - Participation in audit planning   - Participation in oversight (e.g.: joint & social audits)   - Participation in follow-up (e.g.: monitoring compliance with recommendations)   - Collaboration with other stakeholders (e.g.: other oversight agencies, clients such as overseen agencies, CSOs)

5.1.3   Develop Guidelines & Processes

Smooth implementation of the communications function is enhanced by having a number of guidelines and processes in place to aid all OAGN employees communicate better and build the OAGN brand.

These include items such as a clearly defined approval process which outlines who drafts, reviews and approves communication products from development to production. It could also include an email and telephone directory, internal editing and writing guidelines, and branding and visual style guides for branding identity. This would comprise of Nepali and English guidelines on the proper use of the organization's name, logo, seal, fonts, colors, graphic elements, social media icons, typography, web typography, web colors and photography.

5.2   Strategies

Each of the strategies outlined in this section responds to one of the four communication objectives. Strategies under each goal reflect the relevant SWOT analysis, and are further broken down into tactics, operations, communication campaigns and products to achieve the goal. There is some overlap of potential outcomes in that tactics and operations used in one communication goal could equally be beneficial to one or several other communication goals.

In general, strategies give more emphasis to communicating and engaging with stakeholders at a horizontal level rather than at the Executive level. For example, OAGN employees, citizens, media and civil society organizations feature prominently in the strategies. Strengthening people's understanding of the work of the OAGN and how it affects them, all the while supporting and being responsive to community accountability actions could very well in the long run support governance and accountability at the Executive level.

5.2.1 Communications Goal #1. Enhance OAGN& AG's credibility, trust and reliability

Strategies contained under this goal reflect the following SWOT analysis findings as listed in Table 6.

Table 6: Communication Goal #1 Strategies Aligned with SWOT Analysis Grid

Strength	Weakness	Opportunity	Threat
Dedicated OAGN employees	Overworked and discouraged employees	Citizens need and want to believe in good and to have hope for a better life	
OAGN has high expectations, trust, confidence and support from stakeholders		Strong OAGN leadership willing to make changes	
Strong OAGN foundation promotes effectiveness		Lead by example	

Tactics & Operations

T&O 1.1   Be more responsive to citizens, stakeholders

OAGN/AG interact more and have a better relationship with PAC due to the public perception that if PAC doesn't respond well to the Annual Report this would then reflect poorly on the AG.   Strengthening people's understanding of the work of the OAGN and how it affects them, all the while supporting and being responsive to community accountability actions could very well in the long run influence public perception and governance and accountability at the Executive level.

- o Enhance AG profile and reputation by building trust and credibility with stakeholders. Conduct more engagement with key stakeholders
- o Employees (see Communication Goal #3)

- PAC, Speaker, Parliamentarians (for information sessions in groups, not individually)
- Give official speeches to professional bodies, to CSO federations
- Media
- Regular media interviews
- Radio shows
- Increase departmental cooperation
- Report corruption cases to CIAA in writing for strengthened accountability and enhanced oversight
- CSOs and media also recommended the OAGN support people in bringing accountability (public grievance).

T&O 1.2 Build pride in the organization

Staff loyalty and commitment is key to building and maintaining a good reputations.So engaging employees and gaining their trust is paramount. Employees are some of the biggest external influencers to an organization's credibility, reputation and integrity.

Campaign #1: Integrity & Objectivity –Dedicated OAGN employees *(SWOT Strength)*

- The AG "has emphasized to promote SAI Nepal's professional integrity."
- Campaign to highlight technical professionalism in auditing, integrity and objectivity.
- Use Code of Ethics to build bridge on how the OAGN helps build transparency and a stronger government. The OAGN Code of Ethics is in line with ISSAI 30 and contains a declaration that needs to be signed by each auditor to observe integrity, objectivity, neutrality, maintain independence, confidentiality and competence.

➢ **Messages:**

- Promote the concepts of auditors and OAGN's fairness, impartiality, and relevance
- Auditors are professionals and proud of what we do. We sign an oath, belong to a professional organization and have the expertise and the experience.
- OAGN Executive Quote - "Be honest, work in integrity, work according to law. We have been given responsibility by the people."

➢ **Products:**

    o Video, web campaign, posters, brochures - show faces of professional auditors, what they do and why they do what they do. Show what they do makes a difference.

    o Branded OAGN email signature mandatory for all OAGN employees who have a computer. Create a web-based signature for those who use personal email systems.

    o Create a tag line (slogan specific to this campaign) and include it at the end of all email signatures and public documentation e.g.: *Bringing objectivity and integrity into every audit.*

    o Have a contest in the organization to come up with the tagline. The suggested prize – OAGN's commitment to use the line for one year.

    o The Code of Ethics is available on the OAGN website.

T&O 1.3 Strengthen organizational integrity and professionalism

    o Instigate the drivers to ensure that audit mechanisms maintain objectivity

    o Ensure Annual Report is balanced and easy to understand which makes the information available to many more people.This will result in increased credibility and trust among stakeholders.

T&O 1.4 Increase OAGN and AG visibility to citizens and increase organization profile

Citizens are not as familiar with the role and responsibilities of an Auditor General and the OAGN, as opposed to that, for example, of the Minister of Finance. To counter this, build consistent, sustainable ways by which citizens can see how the OAGN is working for them every day.

Campaign #2: Be a model organization and lead by example*(SWOT Opportunity)*

    o Show AG's leadership in improving the lives of citizens by becoming more responsive to matters of public interest.Implement key policies and processes and through communications and engagement show the results of these policies/processes to lead by example in reforming the public sector in Nepal.

    o This could include better media relations, showing leadership in identifying audits that are close to the heart of Nepalis, building on existing engagement mechanisms with citizens.

    o Campaign builds awareness of the organization and what it does, and acts as a recruiting tool.

- ➢ **Messages:**

    - o Working for you

    - o Making a difference for us

    - o OAGN Executive Quote – "I'm proud to work here; it was difficult to come here, it's very competitive. OAGN is a team organization. (As a woman executive) we are leading by example."

- ➢ **Campaign Products:**

    - o Video, web campaign, posters, brochures, speeches, radio shows, district dissemination - show faces of professional auditors, what they do and why they do what they do. Show what they do makes a difference.

    - o Branded OAGN email signature mandatory for all OAGN employees who have a computer. Create a web-based signature for those who use personal email systems.

- ➢ **Other Products:**

    - o Create an internal online system that provides information on audit clearances and regular communication on the status of irregularities.*(an Information Technology responsibility)*

    - o Create an online database that details audit observations, PAC decisions and ministry responses. (*an Information Technology responsibility)*

    - o Pictures and videos of AR submission and posted on website.

5.2.2   Communication Goal #2:Strengthen OAGN's relevance with Citizens

Strategies contained under this goal reflect the following SWOT analysis findings as listed in Table 7.

Table 7: Communication Goal #2 Strategies Aligned with SWOT Analysis Grid

Strength	Weakness	Opportunity	Threat
Conducts regular stakeholder meetings		Engage stakeholders	
		Embrace new ways of communicating	
		Maximize the potential of performance audits	
		Choose to audit a certain number of high profile programs/services per audit cycle	

Tactics &Operations

T&O 2.1   Action more regional and district media coverage & training of journalists

- o   The regional media and training plan would reflect OAGN's growing number of district-level audits.

T&O 2.2   Be more responsive to media

- o   Response to media inquiries within a day. Media inquiries and responses should be tracked and copies obtained of the print or electronic output. Media reports generated weekly or monthly on coverage received is an evaluative tool.

- o   Write communication materials and public documents that make it easy for journalist to understand and print "as is."

T&O 2.3   Deepen stakeholder engagement through the creation of proactive consultation and feedback mechanisms (also benefits Communication Goals #1, 3, 4)

Officially changing the OAGN planning and implementation process to include citizen participation by:

- o   Obtaining citizen participation in rural areas in the social sector according to one manager interviewed.

- o   Institutionalizing two-way learning between audit teams and relevant stakeholder organizations. Organize seminars for audit teams to acquire domain knowledge about the offices the Directorate would be auditing in the coming year.

- o   Developing official public feedback mechanisms.

- o   Implementing a communications engagement strategy to make the organization more relevant to the real issues and concerns of citizens in the country.

Campaign #3 – We're Open For Business - Citizen participation in the Audit Process
                (SWOT Opportunity)

- ➢   **Message:**
  - o   OAGN is adopting and implementing transparency and participation mechanisms because we know it's worth the investment.

  - o   Engaging with citizens is a genuine attempt to improve our effectiveness and show our relevance to Nepalis. (It is not an add-on that serves

the interests of SAI authorities, donors, or other actors (Executive, Parliament)).

➢ **Products:**

  o Institute an official complaints/feedback mechanism. A text-message based feedback mechanism takes into account citizen's high use of mobile phones.

  o Create a unique "Citizen's Rights Promise" that would be integral to OAGN's engagement policy

  o Subscribe to social media applications e.g.: Facebook, Twitter

T&O 2.4   Develop full-cycle Annual Report communications campaign

OAGN communications can be seen as a cycle with the apex being the publication of the Annual Report. The cycle could be supplemented by continuous capacity-building communication activities during the year and with each cycle; the stakeholders (recipients) become more knowledgeable.

Campaign #4 – Develop a full cycle communications campaign for the Annual Report

  o It would encompass a) the lead up to, b) the submission and dissemination of and c) the follow up to the OAGN Annual Report.

  o The cycle would also support media campaigns around select PA findings.

  o The campaign takes into consideration ISSAI 20 Principles for Transparency and Accountability for a more timely publication of the Annual Report using media websites and other means.

➢ **Products:**

  o Expand communications follow-up on AR by stretching the discussion of AR results beyond government ministries and PAC e.g.: organize workshops with think tanks and relevant audit directorates to discuss specific audit results and underlying issues as well as to get feedback on new audits and those in the calendar.

  o Audio recordings of discussions on audit findings for select DDCs to be broadcast by local and regional FM radio stations.

  o In addition to creatingAR-specific communications, ensure that information products are available that explain OAGN value and benefits to citizens using a variety of mediums:Electronic: Need intranet, add content and update the website daily andSocial media: Facebook/Twitter accounts/ YouTube or Vimeo, Slideshare, blogs

T&O 2.5   Completely redevelop the Annual Report to focus attention on key audit findings (big changes)

OAGN needs to <u>simplify</u> the AG's Report findings for journalists and the public. OAGN needs to mix and match, splice and dice; broaden and target all at the same time.

- o <u>The Process -</u> Include communications staff in all stages of the auditing cycle process. An OAGN communications professional could work with auditors and senior management to determine potential communication opportunities and risks as well as identify the audits/findings that could make the best stories. They would then write and create the communication products so that the audit results receive maximum coverage.

- o <u>The Report</u> - Rewrite the Report to only include significant audit observations which require senior management attention. It is much better to have fewer but meaningful audit findings than many related but lower level recommendations. Communication activities could then support the identification of these findings.

- o Amalgamate similar findings and report it as a group.

- o If there are no anomalies, for compliance audits consider grouping like-minded items by just listing compliant organizations rather than including details of the full audit. Consider putting full audits online only.

- o <u>The Suite</u> - To magnify the Report's impact and reach more people, transform the Annual Report into a suite of products to target various audiences. The suite of bilingual reports/documents available both in print and electronically could include an Executive Summary, Highlights, Performance Audits, Summary of PAs, District/Regional Reports, the top 10 best audit findings for the country, the top five findings in *each* district, the top 5-10 Ministerial findings.

- o Create a separate Highlights document no more than 10 pages in both Nepali and English that translates the most significant findings of the financial and performance audits into plain language easily understood by citizens and media alike.

- o Consider creating provincial reports which would include key audit findings from DDCs in the area. OAGN communications could then prepare media-friendly executive summaries and other information products for each region.

- o Limit the bilingual Executive Summary to three pages to only include the most pertinent of findings.

T&O 2.6   Redesign the audit process to respond to public concerns which threaten OAGN's credibility and trust. (Outside the scope of communications responsibility HOWEVER results of these changes will positively affect Communication Goals #1, #2 and #3.)

- Reduce the number of compliance (financial) audits performed annually to give auditors more time to follow proper rules and procedures to produce quality products. Create a rotating cycle or a priority-based compliance audit system to avoid having auditing resources at full capacity. *(OAGN Peer Review)*
- Transfer some resources to create a new Compliance/Follow up Department.
- Adapt the audit process and reporting cycle to create and publish a separate OAGN Performance Audit Report six months after the publication of the OAGN Annual Report (legislative changes needed).
- Choose to audit a certain number of high profile professional programs/ services per audit cycle *(SWOT Opportunity)*
- Add a highlights section to the top of each audit report. Upon completion of the report, auditors would include three to four bullets to identify the audit's significant findings translated into a *citizen-centric* point of view (e.g.: how does it affect the average person). The bullets would support communications staff in transforming these findings into newsworthy stories, if warranted.

5.2.3   Communication Goal #3:Strengthen OAGN internal communications

Strategies contained under this goal reflect the following SWOT analysis findings as listed in Table 8.

Table 8: Communication Goal #3 Strategies Aligned with SWOT Analysis Grid

Strength	Weakness	Opportunity	Threat
Dedicated OAGN employees	Overworked and discouraged employees	Embrace new ways of communicating	Reluctance to share information internally
Strong, enthusiastic leadership with credibility	Technological and hardware limitations		
OAGN Executive supports the role of communications	Lack of internal communications		
	OAGN has limited impact		

Definition of internal communications: To assist people in an organization to work together and learn together in pursuit of shared goals and/or mutual creation of value.

Definition of staff engagement: A workplace approach designed to ensure that employees are committed to their organization's goals and values, motivated to contribute to organizational success and able at the same time to enhance their own sense of well-being.

Good internal communications is as much about listening to people as it is disseminating information. The following principles guide internal communications within any organization:

- o Internal communications is a shared responsibility for both employees and managers.
- o It should be regular, sustained, multi-directional and cross-functional.
- o It should make use of face-to-face communication.
- o Internal communications must be accurate, timely, consistent and accessible.
- o It uses a variety of vehicles and tools tailored to the audience and situation.
- o It must be continuously measured, evaluated and improved.
- o And it's a two-way process with channels for employees to provide feedback.

Effective internal communications is a shared management responsibility. The Auditor General champions the OAGN's commitment to open and collaborative internal communications with the support of the entire management team.

Table 9: Top Communication Challenges for OAGN Senior Management
• **Employees -** Unqualified employees with low capacity and inability to absorb information
• **Technology** – Don't know how to use computers; we communicate mostly by telephone.   Verbal communications is more important than written communications.
• Email is not consistent. There is no guidance on how to use email. (3x)
• Internet access is poor; many don't have access. Router is limited. No capacity for a hard connection; we need a cable system.
• Non-existence of automated communication system.
• Communications Foundation (system, policy) –
• No system of communications support within organization
• Lack of established communication policy and directives
• **Content -** Messages don't reach the grassroots; emails are not opened, circulars are not read. (2x) People are not taking their requests seriously.
• **Annual Report –** needs to be simplified and communicated with stakeholders.There is a lot of jargon and it's too technical. Needs to be in understandable language for citizens. Make AR a resource for stakeholders.
• **Media –** is focused only in Kathmandu-based papers and FM radio.
• **Feedback** - is not given
• **Accountability -** Their direct line is only directors but their accountability is for the whole branch.
• There is resistance to change.
• **Outreach –** Parliamentarians don't have understanding or knowledge about what OAGN does.
• **Engagement –** The credibility of the OAGN will be enhanced through addressing the concerns of citizens in its audit reports. Establish proper mechanisms to collaborate and interact with citizens to enhance the quality of audits.

Tactics &Operations

T&O 3.1   Better information dissemination

- o **Swap Jobs for the Day**– This fun and informative exercise supports professional development, information-sharing, builds relationships, and develops community and organizational pride.

- o By swapping jobs for the day or shadowing someone from another division it encourages employees to learn about the OAGN audit process.

- o Create a fun visual audit roadmap or diagram that outlines all the audit processes and the corresponding OAGN division. Each time an employee has shadowed or swapped jobs in a division, a stamp or a sticker (for example) is appended by the division chief. Once all the audit processes have been completed in a consecutive order, the employee wins a reward that is valued e.g.: a certificate or 10 minute conversation with an AAG or AG etc.

➢ **Strategy for AG**

- o Quarterly message to staff – "The View From Here"

- o Quarterly all-staff meetings

➢ **Products:**

- o Develop intranet (an Information Technology (IT) division lead with communications and human resources responsible for content)

- o Provide training on how to use a computer and the email *(an IT division lead)*

- o Provide computers and consistent internet for all (*an IT divisionlead)*

- o Create an integrated, comprehensive email and telephone directory by division and by employee. Include telephone numbers for the office, home and mobile; and office and personal email addresses.Include a separate section for Media Spokespeople and Information Officers and their deputies. Add more bulletin boards at Headquarters in central locations with lots of people traffic.

T&O 3.2   Better information-sharing between departments (SWOT Threat)

Information sharing is currently fragmented and in some cases impedes the ability of the organization to provide quality audits.

- o **Provide training sessions** to OAGN employees to help improve auditing

and communication skills. Many OAGN employees do not have the English level skills to benefit from literature provided by standards-setting professional bodies. These sessions could supplement their education and other training opportunities. Topics could include:

- o On communications: The benefits of communications and citizen participation in the auditing process; how to be a more effective communicator; how to be persuasive; how to be a better writer in five easy steps.

- o For new employees – the role of the OAGN and how it works (by Human Resources)

- o How to use email (by IT)

- o On professional development e.g.: How to become certified as an auditor

➢ **Products:**

- o Develop training products in conjunction with the Human Resources division

- o Powerpoint, handouts, exercises, case studies, class sessions, online test, certificate of completion

- o Create a weekly bulletin of professional and personal news at the OAGN. Information could be audit-related, have a personal section, a funny audit related picture or cartoon, upcoming events. It would be printed then appended on the bulletin board.

- o Organize 'Lunch & Learn' sessions for peer and knowledge exchange where people bring their lunch to a common area and listen to a topic of interest. The talk is followed by a question and answer session and enhanced before and after by networking between colleagues. This type of event supports diagonal and horizontal communications, builds relationships and promotes divisional information-sharing. 'Lunch and Learn' topics could range from:

➢ **Themes based on OAGN Information Campaigns**

- o **Campaign #1** – Integrity and Objectivity, Dedicated OAGN employees

- o **Campaign #2** – Be a model organization and lead by example

- o **Campaign #3** – 'We're Open For Business' -Citizen participation in the Audit Process

- o Case Studies/Best Practices/Lessons Learned

- Auditors could describe some of their difficult audits, the process used, how they solved the problems and what the result was.

- Talks by internal divisions on the work they are doing

- Subject matter talks by professional organizations or CSOs e.g.: latest advances in auditing

- Particular subject matters familiar to CSOs that could be useful background knowledge for auditors doing specific Performance Audits

- Strategy for AG

- Have an informal conversation and tea with around 10 different people every month to obtain feedback and input on issues of concern to the AG at the moment and to directly hear feedback from employees on issues of concern to them. Refrain from including executives since the AG meets regularly with them already, but do include a mix of genders and divisions, paying particular attention to rank since too high a rank would cause many participants to stop talking and defeat the purpose of having an open and frank conversation.

T&O 3.3 *Develop a strong sense of community, of organizational pride*

In times of government and political turmoil it is important for public servants to maintain a clear identity and purpose of serving the public interest as outlined in the Civil Service Act.

- The implementation of Campaigns #1 and #2 described in *Communication Goal #1 – Strengthen OAGN & AG's credibility, trust and reliability* could help address the above concerns. The first campaign is on employee integrity and objectivity; the second is on OAGN as a model organization leading by example.

- Create a Women's Mentoring Group. There is strong women leadership at the OAGN. This is both a strength and an opportunity to encourage, teach and guide women employees. It would also build relationships within the organization.

- Institute New Recruit Buddies where new employees are 'buddied' with a long-time employee from whom to learn.

- Create a "social and doing good" committee who would survey staff and:

- Organize regular, fun office events such as:

- Casual Fridays where everyone dresses casually;

- Pot-luck lunch where everyone, including men, brings food to share with the group. This can be done by department, divisions or directorates.

29

- o   Organize corporate events to build community and organizational spirit. To lead by example, participation in these events would be mandatory by senior management. This could include:

- o   picnics on holidays

- o   annual health check-up camps

- o   improving physical amenities like properly sanitized toilets

- o   Environment Day – cleaning up the work environment and grounds

- o   Organize and celebrate important organization milestones such as:

- o   Annual Day on June 30 – invite the President, Speaker, Finance Minister and Chief Justice.

➢ **Products:**

- o   Develop an OAGN branded email signature and make it mandatory for all employees to use when sending official OAGN emails (whether on the OAGN or a personal email account).

- o   Develop and conduct a survey for all OAGN employees to better understand how they communicate, what their communication challenges are as well as their work concerns. Results of the survey will inform management, communications and staff on how to improve the work environment.

5.2.4   Communication Goal #4. Improve stakeholder understanding of OAGN and subject matter

Strategies contained under this goal reflect the following SWOT analysis findings as listed in Table 10.

Table 9: Communication Goal #4 Strategies Aligned with SWOT Analysis Grid

Strength	Weakness	Opportunity	Threat
Dedicated OAGN employees	Overworked and discouraged employees	Embrace new ways of communicating	Reluctance to share information internally
Strong, enthusiastic leadership with credibility	Technological and hardware limitations		
OAGN Executive supports the role of communications	Lack of internal communications		
	OAGN has limited impact		

Tactics &Operations

T&O 4.1   *Create outreach campaigns to key stakeholders*

OAGN is enthused about reaching a wider audience on its value and benefits in making a difference to the lives of citizens. (SWOT Strength). The organization has a responsibility to reach out to a wide variety of stakeholders including the judiciary, prosecuting and investigative agencies, civil society organizations, citizen groups and the media. (SWOT Opportunity). Outreach sessions are also an opportunity for the OAGN to engage in a two way dialogue with stakeholders.

Fact-based information sessions could take place with:

- o   Parliamentary stakeholders (PAC, the Speaker, Parliamentarians in groups, not individually)
- o   **Civil society organizations** - they can be an important ally if OAGN is discerning about their integrity and autonomy with regard to for example, anti-corruption and performance audits. One such advocate could be the Citizens' Campaign for Right to Information (CCRI), a non-profiteering, non-partisan and non-political organization based in Kathmandu, Nepal dedicated to the promotion, protection and implementation of Right to Information laws, nationally. CCRI used to be a loose network of different NGOs and INGOs concerned with Right to Information before it was legally registered as an NGO. Products:
- o   Create bilingual information products on OAGN value and benefit to citizens using a variety of mediums:
- o   **Print**: brochure, backgrounder, news releases, fact sheet, Powerpoint, citizen newsletter, infographics
- o   **Radio**:   Radio interviews, call-in shows, public service announcements, podcasts
- o   **Electronic**:   intranet,   add   content   and   update   the   website   more regularly,storyboards
- o   **Social media**: Facebook/Twitter accounts/YouTube or Vimeo, Slideshare, blogs
- o   **Training modules on budget process**; Audits 101; understanding the OAGN (roles and two-way responsibilities for OAGN and citizens); how to read balance sheets; how to master the Audit report; implications of AR findings and how they affect people; and circumstances that create opportunities for corruption.
- o   **Training modules on citizen engagement could include**: Introduction to Citizen Participatory Audits, Social Accountability: Approach to Good Governance; and Planning the Audit Process which shows performance audit engagement from audit planning to audit execution followed by audit reporting, monitoring and follow up.

31

T&O 4.2   *Identify and engage influencers and the multipliers*

Identify the supporters, the multipliers, the strongly engaged citizen representatives and the media who are influential, supportive, and knowledgeable about OAGN and who can act as a bridge between OAGN and citizens and facilitate effective discussions with the citizens they represent.

- o Identify and cultivate a diverse group of national and regional journalists or bloggers who do investigative reporting, are interested in Public Financial Management and are recognized at writing investigative reports.

- o Their participation needs to be approved with media owners

- o Provide incentives to them. Create conducive environment for journalists so that they are not so isolated and they have an opportunity for career improvement.

➢ **Products:**

- o hold focus groups and consultation meetings

T&O 4.3   *Build capacity & conduct training for national and regional media*

Nepal does not have cross-industry or cross-sector training councils for journalism education and training. Focus group discussions with media in Nepal revealed that while media is enthusiastic and has a huge demand for information, as a group they lack capacity in subject knowledge and analytical skills.

Journalists are generally not reimbursed by their employers to improve their journalism skills or information knowledge. Training and capacity-building are clearly areas where the more OAGN invests in building a knowledgeable media, the more the OAGN and all Nepali citizens benefit.

➢ **Products:**

Training topics could include:

- o Practical workshops on budget process; Audits 101; understanding the OAGN (roles and two-way responsibilities for OAGN and citizens); how to read balance sheets; how to master the Audit Report; implications of AR findings and how they affect people; and circumstances that create opportunities for corruption.

- o Citizen engagement training could include: Introduction to Citizen Participatory Audits, Social Accountability: Approach to Good Governance; and Planning the Audit Process which shows performance audit engagement from audit planning to audit execution followed by audit reporting, monitoring and follow up.

T&O 4.4   ***Collaborate to build capacity for a "Financial Management Beat" amongst journalists, influencers and social media advocates***

Reporting on financial information is a specialized field.

- o OAGN could collaborate with other government agencies, ministries and NGOs who already have financial training programs in place to create the conditions for journalists to develop a "Financial Management Beat." These reporters could become specialized in reporting on taxes, the budget, performance reviews, mid-term reviews, the AG's Report, investigative reporting on performance audit findings and audit issues in the districts. They can become "an influencer."

- o The OAGN could build media financial capacity through the implementation of an advocacy and training program which could include holding information sessions three to four times a year, half-day training sessions and writing "how-to" website articles.

- o The OAGN can build on the advocacy and training examples of the Civil Society organizations in Nepal:

T&O 4.5   ***Improve aesthetics, usability and readability of the Annual Report***

- o Use the services of a graphic designer to bring added professionalism to the suite of Annual Report documents targeted to media and citizens including Highlights, Performance Audits, Executive Summary etc.

- o Include a summary of key Performance Audit findings in the Executive Summary.

- o Add more charts, graphs, pictures, photos and graphics to make it more reader-friendly.

- o Use alternative mechanisms to release the OAGN Annual Report to raise awareness. Table 11 provides many options.

Table 10: Alternative mechanisms to release SAI's audit reports and disseminate their content in user-friendly formats - *Source: INTOSAI (2013)*

Alternative mechanisms to release SAI's audit reports and disseminate their content in user-friendly formats
- notices posted on SAIs' web sites;   - email sent to distribution lists to alert users to new products;   - videos posted on YouTube, including videos of SAI representatives testifying before legislative bodies;   - podcasts posted on iTunes (and available on RSS feeds), such as taped interviews of SAI executives discussing their recent products;   - updates to SAI Facebook pages or other social media, providing information on new products, open recommendations, and financial or other results of audits;   - messages sent via Twitter feeds to alert legislative and executive officials, citizens, academics, and others to the publication of new SAI products;   - graphics and visual images from reports posted to Flickr or SlideShare;   - the use of QR (quick response) codes, sharing widgets, and mobile phone apps to allow users to quickly access the SAI's website and products;   - online chats and blogs with SAI executives on topics relating to recently issued products, current issues, etc.;   - appearances by SAI executives on television and/or radio shows (including participation in public/academic debates);   - interviews of SAI executives by newspaper and other print reporters;   - simplified presentations of the technical audit reports that are designed to reach a popular audience;   - public dissemination points at the SAIs' official locations, such as interactive touch screens delivering news and items of interest regarding the SAIs at the entrance to the SAIs' establishments.   ➢ **Report Products:**   - Limit the Executive Summary to two to three pages to only include the most pertinent of findings which does not require readers to refer to the AR to understand the meaning.   - Develop a product that highlights key Performance Audit findings.   - Consider creating regional reports.   - Create a separate Highlights document of no more than 10 pages.   - Include products that highlight the top 10 best audit findings for the country, the top five findings in *each* district, and the top 5-10 Ministerial findings.   - Audio clips for radio use.   - Pictures and video of the report being handed over – upload on YouTube, website.   - Video of the AG's statement at the media press conference - upload it on the website.   - Publish all key AR documents in both Nepali and English e.g.: highlight documents/summaries, news release and Executive Summaries.

T&O 4.6 *Issues Management*

Communications can also be used to advocate on issues such as the recommendation in the Peer Review Report for the OAGN to rally support for more statutory powers while the Constituent Assembly deliberates on the new Constitution so as to build a sound base for sustained development and future improvements.

T & O 4.7 *Complete the update, redesign and launch of the new website*

Improve and update, complete and launch the redesigned website and update it daily. The new website needs to be populated with old website content, many sections of which need to be rewritten, and new content added.

6 EVALUATION

Evaluation is integral to the communications strategy cycle. The cycle starts with identifying and designing the instruments that collect the right information to achieve stated communication goals. Aggregated data is then analyzed, reported and fed back into the design for the next iteration of the communications strategy.

Using consistent measurements determines whether communication goals have been achieved. And circularly, only goals that have results and outcomes can be effectively measured.

The INTOSAI-developed Performance Measurement Framework which provides a universal framework for all SAIs. It clearly identifies communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders as one of the main dimensions of SAI performance to the core business model.

6.1 Analytics

Any evaluation of a communication sstrategy requires baseline data and analytics from which to measure future quantitative as well as qualitative impact measurements on communications goals. Being at a nascent communications stage, OAGN has a great need for analytical information to identify the behaviors, needs and expectations of its stakeholders and to help assess the effectiveness of existing communications.

Identified as a weakness in the SWOT analysis, the following areas are where additional analytics could provide substantial value for OAGN management, the human resources and audit departments as well as inform subsequent communication and engagement strategies.

- o Conduct a baseline communications survey in conjunction with key civil society organizations using a combination of online and text-based methods to determine citizen understanding and awareness of OAGN communications, the Annual Report and key behavioural indicators around the audit process. Conduct a follow-up survey with the same questions in three to five years to determine the extent of the changes, if any.

- Develop and conduct a survey for all OAGN employees to better understand how they communicate, what their communication challenges are as well as their work concerns. Results of the survey will inform management, communications and staff on how to improve the work environment.

- Conduct additional surveys to a wide variety of stakeholders to measure OAGN performance and Annual Report penetration. It is suggested that survey respondents include stakeholders outside the government.

- Taking into consideration market limitations on media analysis, work with a CSO to analyze media coverage of a full Annual Report cycle including the lead up, the submission to Parliament and public dissemination, and the post-submission follow-up.

6.2 Quantitative & Qualitative Measurements

There are many measurement points that can be used for each type of communications medium – whether it is print, radio, television, social media or engagement mechanisms. It is recommended that OAGN choose three to five (3-5) quantitative metrics and one to two (1-2) qualitative metrics that can be used consistently, to measure progress.

Quantitative data is usually easily tracked and could includethe amount of column inches earned in print media;the number of minutes of on-air radio and television time for OAGN interviews conducted; along with website analytics on traffic, page views; and for example, the number of Annual Reports downloaded. Some social media measurements include:

- Engagement data (comments, fans, likes, followers, members, clicks, views, shared)
- Conversions or leads (click through rates)
- Customer satisfaction rates (survey satisfaction)
- Share of voice, word of mouth reach or total mentions

Analysis of qualitative information relative to communication goals is more difficult to evaluate. Inputs to this process could include reports from the results of focus groups, media analysis of Annual Report coverage, quotes or overall sentiment from meetings and interviews, or comments obtained from the OAGN website.

Engagement outputs are also challenging to measure. Design is key. OAGN needs to clearly articulate its goals for engagement mechanisms in terms of results and outcomes that can be effectively measured. The tricky part is knowing whether citizen engagement is taking place at the appropriate level, whether the right communication and feedback channels are appropriate to the specific target audiences, and whether outreach activities have been effective.

The difficulty in measuring and showing impact of engagement mechanisms often risks the sustainability of these practices within the organization. They could fall subject to neglect and/or adversity from those who are resistant or threatened by a new way of working that could have the potential for tension or conflict.