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**COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES, LANGUAGE STUDIES,  
JOURNALISM & COMMUNICATION**

**DEPARTMENT OF PR & STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS**

**Strategic Communication of the Ministry of Agriculture:  
Assessment of Public Mobilization in the Green Legacy Initiative  
Campaign**

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**A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of Requirements for the Degree of  
Master of Arts in Public Relations and Strategic Communications**

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**Addis Ababa University**

**Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**

## **Declaration**

I, Marta Kebite, hereby declare that this thesis, entitled “Strategic Communication of the Ministry of Agriculture: Assessment of Public Mobilization in the Green Legacy Initiative Campaign,” is an original work of mine, not submitted for a degree at any other university or institution and that all sources used in this study have been duly acknowledged and properly cited with the appropriate citation style.

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This is to certify that the thesis prepared by Marta Kebite, entitled “Strategic Communication of the Ministry of Agriculture: Assessment of Public Mobilization in the Green Legacy Initiative Campaign” and submitted as a partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Public Relations and Strategic Communications, adheres to the university regulations and notes the accepted standards in terms of originality and quality.

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## **Acronyms**

MoA: Ministry of Agriculture

GLI: Green Legacy Initiative

PR: Public Relations

## **Abstract**

*The Green Legacy Initiative Campaign is a tree-planting campaign initiated by the Prime Minister of Ethiopia in 2019. It aimed to minimize drought, combat climate change, improve agricultural productivity, and ensure food security and environmental sustainability. This research evaluates the strategic communication that the Ministry of Agriculture utilized for public mobilization in the Green Legacy Initiative Campaign. The study used surveys, interview schedules and in-depth interviews to collect data. The survey data was collected from Meta woreda of the Sebeta sub-city. For the questionnaire, 256 respondents were used to find data, whereas responses of 130 participants were collected through interview schedules. The in-depth interview data was collected from the Green Legacy Initiative's technical and steering committees, natural resource and agro-forestry experts, PR officers from the ministry, region, and woreda, agricultural extension workers, and community leaders. Accordingly, 15 interviewees were interviewed to collect data. The quantitative data was analyzed using SPSS employing descriptive. The qualitative data was analyzed thematically. The research findings answered the research questions. Regarding the strengths and weaknesses, the findings show that the ministry's strategic communication has both strengths and weaknesses. Its strengths lie in creating awareness, mobilizing, and engaging the public, utilizing appropriate communication channels like TV, radio, and mobile SMS, as well as crafting clear, relevant, and consistent messages. However, it had weaknesses in providing messages about biophysical relations and collecting feedback from audiences. It also had shortfalls in utilizing social media platforms and websites and disseminating technical messages, specifically on post-management, regularly. In terms of the effectiveness of communication channels and platforms, the ministry effectively utilized traditional media channels like TV, radio, and print to reach wide audiences, including rural communities. However, the ministry's use of social media platforms and dedicated website presence was limited and had inconsistent use of campaign materials over time, which could have been leveraged to engage the youth and the public, especially for post-management activities and the sustainability of the Green Legacy Initiative Campaign. Regarding the ministry's message, the ministry's messages were effective in terms of clarity, relevance, and consistency, as they were crafted in collaboration with regional experts and communicated in local languages. However, the ministry lacked regular dissemination of technical messages on post-management activities. Generally, the ministry's strategic communication had several strengths, including effective collaboration with stakeholders, utilization of various communication channels, and the development of clear, relevant, and consistent messages. However, it also had notable weaknesses, such as a lack of clear messages regarding site matches, limited feedback collection, and irregular dissemination of technical information on post-management activities. While the ministry was successful in mobilizing and engaging the public, creating awareness, and building capacity, it struggled with social media utilization and the consistent use of campaign materials. Based on the findings, it is recommended to develop a comprehensive communication strategy for the Green Legacy Initiative, improve message dissemination in biophysical relations and post-management activities, and increase the utilization of social media and websites to reach a wider audience. Additionally, the ministry should sustain message regularity, strengthen post-management communication, and document the communication materials produced during the campaign. Implementing these recommendations can help the ministry enhance the effectiveness of its strategic communication and ensure the long-term sustainability of the Green Legacy Initiative.*

**Keywords:** Strategic communication, public mobilization, Green Legacy Initiative Campaign

# CHAPTER ONE

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Background of the study

These days, strategic communication has become a significant approach that helps organizations build mutual understanding and benefit-based relations with their public. It helps them promote their goals by crafting and disseminating critical and goal-oriented messages and mobilizing and engaging the public on several social issues in different sectors, involving governmental and non-governmental organizations, corporations, and social actors.

According to Heath & O'Hair (2008), strategic communication is an organizational function that is utilized to induce the opinions, attitudes, and behaviors of the public to attain organizational goals. It is the process by which organizations plan and implement communication to achieve their goals and objectives (Cutlip & Center, 2016). It also focuses on how the organizations promote themselves through the planned activities of their management, workers, and communicators, and

Moreover, strategic communication helps organizations in public mobilization to actively engage them in addressing social issues, mainly health or environmental challenges. It assists in engaging professional, religious, and business groups, community members, policymakers, and district, state, and federal governments (Shaheen & Haneef, 2014). According to Clayton (2012), strategic communication includes the deliberate use of communication strategies and media tools to increase public participation and facilitate the implementation of environmental initiatives.

Strategic communication includes the deliberate use of communication strategies and media tools to increase public participation and facilitate the implementation of environmental initiatives like the Ethiopian Green Legacy Initiative. As environmental communication initiatives prioritize empowering audiences and their active engagement, it is important to emphasize these aspects in such initiatives (Parahita, 2017).

The Ethiopian Green Legacy Initiative is a reforestation campaign launched by the Ethiopian government in 2019 with the commitment to promote environmental sustainability to alleviate deforestation and combat climate change. The goal of the initiative was to plant 500 million trees throughout the nation in a year, beginning in May 2019 (Policy Studies Institute, 2019).

It has been spearheaded by the Ethiopian Prime Minister and assigned to the ministry for implementation. Even though the initiative is headed by the Prime Minister's Office, there is a technical committee chaired by the Environment, Forestry, and Climate Change Commission that includes senior professionals from three ministries, including the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Water, Irrigation, and Energy, and the Ministry of Construction and Urban Development, which meet often to give nationwide guidance on tree planting (Manuel et al., 2021).

Based on the vision of building a green and climate-resilient nation, the Green Legacy Initiative was launched in June 2019. The goal was to plant 20 billion trees within four years. By the fourth year, Ethiopia had succeeded in planting 25 billion seedlings by mobilizing more than 20 million citizens across the country (United Nations, 2023).

According to Eyob (2022), the Green Legacy Initiative is a major environmental campaign that aims to address multiple challenges by restoring degraded lands, increasing forest coverage, and minimizing the effects of climate change. Besides its main goals, the initiative has had a significant impact on creating awareness of environmental sustainability through active public and different stakeholders' engagement in tree planting activities. It has also provided a pivotal opportunity for the government and its stakeholders to employ the media and raise public awareness regarding the significance of planting trees and protecting existing forests.

In addition to promoting reforestation, the Green Legacy Initiative has helped raise awareness of the significance of environmental sustainability. The initiative has highlighted the role that individuals and communities can play in addressing international environmental challenges (Policy Studies Institute, 2019).

Therefore, this study assessed the strengths and weaknesses of the strategic communication that the Ministry of Agriculture employed for public mobilization in the Green Legacy initiative campaign. Precisely, the study evaluated the ministry's messages' clarity, relevance, consistency, channels and platform utilization, and public engagement approaches for the sustainability of the planted trees.

## **1.2. Statement of the Problem**

The Green Legacy Initiative Campaign aimed to promote environmental sustainability by creating sustainable approaches that hold key significance for the agricultural sector and make the country greener. The campaign engaged the public and stakeholders, such as government officials, private workers, students, community members, and volunteers, to plant trees in the country (Policy Studies Institute, 2019). However, there were challenges in effectively creating awareness, engaging different stakeholders, and ensuring their active involvement in the Green Legacy Initiative Campaign.

One of the main gaps was a lack of sufficient and regular awareness-creation, particularly in post-management activities. The literature indicates that there were significant shortcomings regarding continuous awareness creation in post-management activities. Lack of serious awareness-creation and engaging the public and relevant stakeholders after tree planting affects the initiative's capacity to realize its long-lasting sustainability goals. Lambert & Kanbiro (2023) stated that the Green Legacy Initiative is challenged by a lack of awareness creation and engagement in the local community.

Additionally, there was a gap in awareness creation about the crucial need to carefully choose appropriate planting sites. Although the campaign has been raising awareness about the objectives of the initiative, there has been a lack of adequate message distribution on the importance of soil condition, microclimate, and other environmental considerations when determining where to plant the seedlings, specifically in urban areas.

Based on discussions with key respondents, it has been revealed that there were mismatches between the objectives of tree planting and the selection of suitable locations (Abebe & Arega, 2023).

Moreover, the campaign also had a gap in effectively engaging various stakeholders. The lack of an efficient awareness-creation approach limited the initiative's ability to foster widespread ownership and the continued engagement of different stakeholders in tree planting and maintenance activities. Abebe & Arega (2023) argued that weak coordination among relevant stakeholders, primarily federal-level institutions like the Ministry of Agriculture, the Environment, Forestry, and Climate Change Commission, and the Ministry of Water, Irrigation, and Energy, as well as at the regional and district levels, has been observed in the last three practices of the Green Legacy Initiative.

Therefore, the researcher believes that conducting this study on the Ministry of Agriculture's strategic communication, more specifically the ministry's utilization of strategic communication for public mobilization in the Green Legacy Initiative Campaign, will help the ministry fill the gaps.

### **1.3. Research objectives**

#### **1.3.1. General objective of the research**

The overall objective of this research is to assess the Ministry of Agriculture's strategic communication, with a focus on public mobilization for the Green Legacy Initiative Campaign.

#### **1.3.1. Specific objectives of the research**

1. To assess the strengths and weaknesses of the Ministry of Agriculture's strategic communication in effectively mobilizing the public for the Green Legacy Initiative Campaign

2. To examine the effectiveness of communication channels and platforms utilized by the ministry in engaging the public and relevant stakeholders for the Green Legacy Initiative Campaign.
3. To evaluate the relevance, clarity, and consistency of the messages the ministry disseminated for the sustainability of the planted seedlings by the Green Legacy Initiative.

#### **1.4. Research questions**

1. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the strategic communication of the Ministry of Agriculture in effectively mobilizing the public for the Green Legacy Initiative Campaign?
2. How effective are the communication channels and platforms utilized by the ministry in engaging the public and relevant stakeholders for the Green Legacy Initiative Campaign?
3. How relevant, clear, and consistent are the messages the ministry disseminated for the sustainability of the planted seedlings by the Green Legacy Initiative?

#### **1.5. The significance of the study**

This study will serve as an important reference for future studies on strategic communication by filling the gap in the related literature. Researchers will broaden their research on the findings and recommendations of this study to further advance studies in the discipline of strategic communication for public mobilization.

While the primary significance of this study is for future studies, the research may also offer practical value for the Ministry of Agriculture. The evaluation of the ministry's communication channels, message production, and public engagement strategies can provide useful feedback to help refine and improve their approach to the Green Legacy Initiative Campaign and similar environmental programs.

## **1.6. Scope of the study**

This study focused on assessing the strategic communication employed by the Ministry of Agriculture for public mobilization in the Green Legacy Initiative Campaign. The study evaluated the effectiveness of the ministry's communication channels and platforms, the message's clarity, relevance, and consistency, and the public and different stakeholders' engagement strategies.

The study was carried out in the Meta woreda of the Sebeta sub-city of the Sheger City. Data was collected from the Meta woreda of the Sebeta sub-city of Sheger City, where the campaign has been implemented for the past five years. This geographical target gave particular insight into assessing the strategic communication of the ministry and its influence on public mobilization during the Green Legacy Initiative Campaign.

The study employed in-depth interviews and surveys for data collection. A survey was conducted to gather quantitative data regarding public awareness and attitudes related to the Green Legacy Initiative. The local communities and relevant stakeholders who participated in tree-planting activities were selected for the survey. In-depth interviews were carried out with the natural resource and agro-forestry and PR professionals of the ministry and different stakeholders.

## **1.7. Limitations of the study**

This study used primary data sources like questionnaires and interviews and did not integrate secondary data sources or material analysis. This limitation may have an impact on the study's findings, preventing them from providing a broad understanding of the ministry's strategic communication practices in public mobilization for the Green Legacy Initiative Campaign.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

This chapter outlines a review of related literature. It encompasses three main components: the definition of key concepts and theoretical frameworks, empirical frameworks, and conceptual frameworks. The theoretical framework section reviews the background, concepts, and theoretical frames, whereas the empirical theories summarize different research studies and empirical evidence related to the study. The conceptual framework integrates the summaries of the literature review to form a structured framework for the research.

#### **2.1. Key Concepts and Definitions**

##### **2.1.1. Strategic communication**

According to Bonk et al. (1999), strategic communication is the skillful use of various communication channels to move and persuade public policy or to promote an agenda. Strategic communication depends on the information flows of the organizations to plan and conduct a communication campaign that builds the relationship between organizations and their public (Botan, 2018). Additionally, Hallahan et al., (2007) stated that strategic communication is how an organization exchanges information across its endeavors and how it functions as a social actor to progress its mission. This indicates that strategic communication effectiveness is when it helps the organization fulfill its mission in a determined manner.

According to Brindusa (2019), strategic communication has a positive and direct influence on the organization's capacity to successfully realize all its operations, missions, and goals and to build public awareness and comprehension of its objectives and mechanisms. As a result, it also builds support among various audiences for specific initiatives conducted by the organization.

Moreover, communication is employed as a valuable tool to obtain consent from diverse stakeholders, establish accountability, foster cooperation and relationships, and improve participation and collaboration. It is crucial for effective policymaking and public participation in different stages, including vision formulation, decision-making, negotiation, plan development and implementation, and impact monitoring (Adamkolo et al., 2022).

Furthermore, strategic communication plays a vital role in environmental campaigns. This is because, communication plays a significant role at all phases when it comes to environmental-related concepts, skills, and techniques, emphasizing the need to be conveyed to opinion leaders, policymakers, strategic groups, or the general public (Adamkolo et al., 2022). Besides, strategic communication plays a vital role in promoting the sustainable development of the environment by integrating significant practices and lessons from environmental communication initiatives (Adamkolo et al., 2022).

Archetti (2018) demonstrated that strategic communication is a process rooted in the organization's strategic plan and enables the achievement of those plans through communication channels. Allen, (2016) emphasized the significance of strategically communicating with stakeholders to function effectively and build social legitimacy. This obliges both formal and informal communication channels, known as engagement platforms, to foster the exchange of diverse resources among stakeholders (Ramaswamy & Ozcan, 2014).

As stated by Lederqcq et al. (2016), to support stakeholders' engagement, these communication channels or engagement platforms, whether online or offline, should promote transparency and give unlimited access to information. Allen, (2016) argued that communication plays vital roles in various stages of sustainability-related issues, from conception and definition to discussion, planning, initiation, modification, and potentially termination. Both strategic communication and sustainability are interconnected strategies aimed at achieving organizational missions (Archetti, 2018).

Strategic communication content should consistently and accurately convey messages and stories to effectively inform the target audience, influencing their thoughts, feelings, and actions. Actions often have a stronger influence than words, so it is important to support the messages with credible and tangible actions (Musa, 2016).

### **2.1.1.1. Strategic communication for sustainable development**

In sustainable development, according to Gesellschaft & Zusammenarbeit (2006), strategic communication is not just about sharing information, but actively engaging stakeholders and seeking their perspectives. It involves creating a two-way flow of communication that considers human factors such as sociology, psychology, culture, behavior, and politics. It also plays a significant role in building mutual understanding and relationships to address development issues.

Moreover, strategic communication for sustainable development aims to persuade decision-makers to adopt new policies while gathering support and constituency. It strengthens the capacity of municipal leaders, NGO representatives, and community-based organizations to manage economic, environmental, and social resources sustainably. By motivating people, including the private sector, to adopt cleaner production technologies, strategic communication can promote positive change. It also raises awareness and assembles support for sustainable development issues (Gesellschaft & Zusammenarbeit, 2006).

Effectively communicating sustainable development involves recognizing specific elements of public interest and highlighting the connections between the issues that matter to people, the economy, and the environment. It involves presenting positive aspects and emphasizing opportunities, ideas, and innovations that contribute to a sustainable future. This includes promoting a clean environment, which encompasses aspects such as health, organic agriculture, non-polluting homes, and sustainable transportation, by utilizing good communication strategies (Bucur & Petra, 2011).

Therefore, as noted by Bucur & Petra (2011), strategic communication for sustainable development needs to be systematic and well-planned. Their purpose is to increase knowledge and transform the attitudes and practices of the target audience, to protect the environment while sustainably pursuing development.

### **2.1.2. Messages**

According to Paul (2011), message is one of the significant elements of strategic communication. Steinberg (2007) also stated that a message is a content that conveys information, thoughts, ideas, or feelings. When messages produce target responses, they can capture more attention, generate greater interest, facilitate cognitive feedback, improve message recognition, and promote better topic recall (Muehling & McCann, 1993).

In the context of public education on certain challenges, the most significant strategy that can be utilized is the technique of informing and persuading (Paul, 2011). Consequently, creating awareness through messages helps draw public attention to vital social and behavioral issues (Chan & Chang, 2013).

According to Maibach et al. (2010), strategic messages are important in environmental issues and tree-planting campaigns. They highlight different considerations and dimensions of climate change, such as the environmental and public health implications of rising temperatures or the economic costs and benefits associated with adaptation and mitigation technologies.

### **2.1.3. Public mobilization**

A public mobilization is an act of engaging the public in social, health, or environmental issues to create awareness, inspire practices, and organize collective efforts for change. It involves creating awareness and building a sense of collective support to influence individuals to actively participate in campaigns or social initiatives related to sustainability and self-reliance (McKee, 1992).

It also focuses on promoting long-term and collective interests over self-serving, short-term interests, and it addresses influential factors that shape individual decision-making (Peattie & Peattie, 2009). As stated by North (2011), the objective of mobilization is to align the goals of the movement with the personal and private interests of its potential supporters, necessitating the use of incentives that influence public participation in the movement, marking the balance of private interests, costs, and risks to encourage action.

In the context of environmental issues, Medallon & Gallardo (2014) stated that mobilizing the public is a critical action that includes raising awareness, engaging the public and relevant stakeholders, and encouraging support for environmental sustainability. An environmentally aware population is better informed to make decisions on complex environmental issues, contributing to ecologically sustainable development that considers economic, social, and environmental welfare for present and future generations.

According to Amodu et al. (2017), initiatives such as tree planting and community-led conservation are examples of mobilizing the public for environmental issues. The positive attitude towards the environment, coupled with a strong awareness of climate change, translates into robust support for policy programs aimed at achieving environmental goals.

Mobilizing the public for environmental change has a crucial impact on sustainability, promoting initiatives such as waste and pollution reduction, improving opportunities for disadvantaged groups, conserving natural resources, fostering connections among different groups, promoting cooperation and efficiency, and revitalizing local economies (Flint, 2004).

Brindusa (2019) stated that strategic communication plays an important role in mobilizing the public for environmental change and its sustainability. It contributes positively to the success of the operations, missions, and initiatives by building public awareness and understanding of the organization's objectives and mechanisms, thereby gaining support from diverse audiences for specific activities. These efforts encourage active participation in tree-planting activities, volunteerism, and the dissemination of environmental awareness within communities (Polonsky et al., 2016).

#### **2.1.4. Green Legacy Initiative campaign**

The Ethiopian Green Legacy Initiative Campaign is a tree-planting campaign launched by the Prime Minister of Ethiopia in 2019 (Abebe & Arega, 2023). According to Fikreyesus et al. (2022), the government has set an ambitious objective of attaining a carbon-neutral and middle-income economy by 2030 and launched the initiative.

Kassa et al. (2022) noted that to achieve this objective, three key initiatives have been engaged: participatory forest management, area enclosures, and sustainable land management programs, besides the Green Legacy Initiative, which focuses on soil and water conservation, the planting of seedlings to increase forest cover, and combating the impact of climate change.

The Green Legacy Initiative Campaign plays a vital role in promoting a healthy environment through its extensive tree-planting efforts, aiming to address environmental degradation, combat climate change with large-scale reforestation, and restore the health of ecosystems (Ethiopian Monitor, 2023).

Fikreyesus et al. (2022) highlighted that the Green Legacy Initiative Campaign is presented as a locally designed, implemented, and owned campaign with anticipated long-term benefits including job creation and increased opportunities for youth and women, improved agricultural productivity, food security, water resources, and biodiversity conservation.

According to Rawat, et al. (2022), community engagement and participation in the Green Legacy initiative campaign have a positive impact on fostering a healthy environment, mainly in response to the drought in Ethiopia. This principle underscores the significance of actively mobilizing and engaging stakeholders, vulnerable groups, and the public in decision-making processes related to forest landscape restoration (FLR), such as land-use change, setting economic and ecological objectives, agreeing on implementation strategies, establishing benefit-sharing mechanisms, and planning and evaluating interventions (Kassa, et al., 2022).

#### **2.1.5. Stakeholder engagement**

Stakeholders are any individuals or groups impacted by the success of an organization's goals (Freeman, 1984). Enell (2005) stated that stakeholders can be both internal and external. Internal shareholders involve managers, employees, and board members, while external stakeholders involve vendors, customers, local communities, and the general public.

Armstrong & Kotler (2020) noted that stakeholder engagement is a process of communicating and engaging with individuals or groups who are interested in the specific organization, project, or decision-making process. This may encompass employees, customers, investors, suppliers, government agencies, community groups, and others. It is an integral part of the public's development (Cohen et al., 2015).

Stakeholder engagement is critical for the success of any initiative or organization. It helps with emphasizing the needs and concerns of all stakeholders, which can guide decision-making, enhance communication, and increase trust (Hall, 2018).

Furthermore, Kotler (2013) added that stakeholder engagement helps in identifying potential risks and opportunities for a project or organization and providing valuable feedback and information that inform the strategic direction moving forward. Stakeholders need to participate in various phases, from initial preparation and planning to implementation and evaluation of the project's outcomes (Cohen et al., 2014).

Stakeholder engagement can help identify and manage potential risks and opportunities and promote the long-term sustainability of initiatives. This involves identifying and recognizing key stakeholders, developing stakeholder involvement techniques, and establishing monitoring and evaluation strategies to evaluate the effectiveness of engagement efforts (Waddock, 2007).

Stakeholders play an important role in addressing environmental issues. Conservation and environmental management interest people both due to their interests and for the environment itself. Currently, environmental decision-making also takes into account impacts on human well-being through the 'do not harm' goal of the Biological Diversity Convention (Smith, et al., 2010).

In keeping with the dual recognition of the significance of the environment to human well-being and human well-being in environmental management, engaging stakeholders in management initiatives has been recognized as a crucial step in ensuring their success (Enters et al., 2000). Bernaciak et al. (2018) noted that building relations between local authorities and community members should involve both one-way forms, such as providing updates on decisions and getting feedback on potential solutions, as well as reciprocal approaches that facilitate co-decision-making, which enable inhabitants to independently identify problems and propose solutions

### **2.1.6. Communication channels**

Communication is significant for development work, whether through dissemination, guidelines, recommendations, advocacy, promotion, persuasion, conversation, roundtables, consultations, dialogue, or entertainment (Hovland, 2005). The role of media in environmental communication is to distribute information about individual or group participation in environmental development and shape the social discussion surrounding environmental issues, as Godemann & Michelsen (2011) pointed out.

According to several theorists, the capability to convey information depends significantly on selecting the communication channel, making it one of the most complex and debated factors in the communication process (Windahl et al., 1992). An efficient information flow process between senders and receivers can enhance support for policy-making and public engagement in environmental sustainability (Pleasant et al., 2002). Although message dissemination is important, the impact of the message on the recipient is what matters, considering key aspects like channel analysis (Samuel & Doreen, 2018).

Communication channels refer to methods like telephone calls, letters, reports, meetings, or the Internet that are employed to deliver messages (Zizak, 2014). Communication channels can be oral or written, targeting individuals or groups (Berger, 2011).

As stated by Wrench et al. (2008), people select between communication channels for several reasons, like heuristics, ease of use, experience, or preference, while the channel may influence message success. Zizak (2014) also asserted that communication channel selection significantly impacts sender-receiver relations now and in the future, so it could prove costly without due consideration. Consequently, each information exchange warrants evaluation before selecting the best channel for conveying the message.

Communication channels play a crucial role in promoting environmental campaigns like the Green Legacy Initiative Campaign. They are employed to engage relevant stakeholders, encourage public participation, and promote environmental awareness. There are a wide variety of communication channels, including basic face-to-face conversations, telecommunication

channels like phones and email, and technology channels. The following are some of the channels that can be utilized to disseminate messages (Knowledge for Health, 2017).

**Traditional media:** Traditional media encompasses radio, TV, outdoor advertising, and Print media like Newspapers, Magazines, Brochures, etc. Television and Radio advertisements can convey messages to a wide audience in a successful manner (Dutta-Bergman, 2005). According to Werner et al. (2011), outdoor advertising methods such as posters and billboards can be used to create awareness in high-traffic areas. Cox J. (2014) also stated that print media like newspapers and magazines provide coverage, enabling targeted outreach to specific audiences through in-depth material.

**Mobile Applications:** Mobile applications can also convey real-time updates, interactive maps of tree planting locations, and educational content empowering individuals to take action (Gupta., 2020).

**Social media:** Social platforms also allow environmental campaigns to facilitate discussions, spread educational material, and initiate behavior change through interactive campaigns (Lamberton & Stephen, 2016). According to Kaplan & Haenlein (2010), social media like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram have become prominent tools for such campaigns due to their power to involve large audiences.

**Online Platforms:** Online platforms such as Websites and Blogs serve as significant communication channels to promote environmental initiatives. Jackson et al. (2016) noted that the campaign's Websites offer comprehensive resources with educational materials, progress updates, and audience engagement opportunities. Blogs and Online articles allow the sharing of personal stories, success stories, and expert opinions to foster a sense of community and inspire action.

**Community Outreach:** Community outreach is a substantial communication technique that includes direct local community engagement to elevate awareness and participation in environmental initiatives. Cairns & Slade (2017) stated that collaborating with schools, universities, and community groups can help expand reach to diverse audiences. Building partnerships with local influencers, environmental groups, and government agencies can improve the campaign's trustworthiness and success (Hart & Nisbet, 2012).

### **2.1.7. Environmental communication**

Environmental communication is social and symbolic understandings of the environment, public engagement in environmental decisions, advocacy campaigning, environmental journalism, social media usage, conflict resolution, science communication, as well as environmental and climate justice movements, risk communication, green marketing, and corporate campaigning (Cox, 2013).

Environmental communication, according to Meisner (2015), is all forms of interpersonal, group, public, organizational, and mediated communication that make up social discussions regarding environmental issues and problems, and humans' bond with the natural world.

Environmental communication is a practical function that educates, persuades, and assists us in solving ecological issues (Cox, 2013). It is a strategic utilization of communication processes and media products to support efficient policy-making, public engagement, and sustainably focused project execution (Working Party on Development Cooperation and Environment (WPDCE), 1999).

Developing impactful environmental messages requires outlining communication objectives, identifying stakeholders, defining key messages, and selecting suitable communication methods to distribute information (Paige, Zeynep, & Reynolds, 2016). Environmental communication is therefore strategic communication and advocacy (Schmid-Petri, 2017). According to Tadesse (2015), environmental communication is viewed as a strategic form of advocacy work, as it helps in developing meaningful messages and materials well-suited to informing the general public and fostering support for sustainability. Communication capacity is profoundly crucial in raising environmental awareness and understanding of existing problems.

Additionally, Bocher W. (2005) noted that awareness encompasses obtaining knowledge about current issues, and local and global environmental concerns, determining which personal behaviors can positively influence one's direct surroundings, and self-awareness concerning individual philosophies regarding the environment.

Environmental communicators craft strategies for connecting with particular target groups, develop messages, and select relevant distribution media to reach their audiences. The goal is to imbue audiences with environmental knowledge, positive outlooks, the ability to take civic action, and feelings of empowerment (Day & Monroe, 2000).

According to Flor (2004), specific aspects needed deliberate consideration of environmental communication applications, like effective utilization of communication channels for regulated social agendas. Strategic utilization of social media platforms proved crucial in accurately delivering public environmental messages. Effective use of each medium must address diverse audience needs for conveying environmental ideas and concepts (Agustina et al., 2020).

### **2.1.8. Communication Campaign**

Communication campaigns employ a deliberate promotional strategy to influence the knowledge, attitudes, behaviors, or policies of a targeted audience, using marketing and advertising techniques (Communication Campaign, 2023). Communication campaigns can be described as (1) deliberate efforts (2) aimed at informing, persuading, or motivating behavioral changes (3) within a clearly defined and sizeable target audience, (4) typically for non-commercial benefits to individuals and/or society, (5) occurring within a specified timeframe, (6) through the use of organized communication activities involving mass media, and (7) often supplemented by interpersonal support mechanisms (Rogers & Storey, 1987). Campaigns are well-planned communication efforts that are directed toward achieving behavioral change in a target audience within a defined timeframe. The methodical nature of campaign planning is integral to their very conceptualization, distinguishing them from more spontaneous communication efforts (Kaur-Gill, 2021). The design of communication campaigns is fundamentally tied to the strategic use of communication activities (Rice & Atkins, 2014).

Specifically, communication activities within campaigns are organized and targeted towards a well-defined population within a structured timeframe, with the intentional purpose of accomplishing a specific and measurable goal (Snyder, 2007). At the core, the process of developing communication campaigns typically involves making deliberate decisions to influence behavioral outcomes through the formulation of communication activities that are strategic, targeted, and purposeful in nature (Rogers & Storey, 1987; Sood et al., 2014).

### **2.1.9. Behavioral change**

Behavioral change is the adjustment of individuals' conduct, routines, and decisions to achieve beneficial environmental results (Stern, 2000). According to Samuel & Doreen (2018), when changing behavior, the individual, public, or organization passes through a series of steps. He added that the information provision should be viewed as an initial step in the behavior change process aimed at exerting influence rather than as the sole objective.

An individual's belief in their ability to achieve a goal ultimately influences how much effort they are willing to spend attempting to change their behavior, rather than necessarily their actual ability level. By cultivating a sense of belief in positive impact, campaigns can promote higher motivation (COI, 2018).

Additionally, Nisbet & Kotcher (2009) stated that communication strategies like storytelling, sharing personal narratives, and leveraging emotional appeals help to create a sense of human connection and concern for environmental issues. Schultz et al. (2007) added that the campaign also employs social norms and peer influence to inspire behavior change, highlighting good actions and positive impacts on others.

Moreover, promoting widespread adoption of sustainable practices like tree planting and environmental conservation are undoubtedly crucial actions for addressing threats like climate change, and other environmental changes (Lorek & Spangenberg, 2014). According to Frantz & Mayer (2014), environmental awareness creation is a strategy for positively influencing various environmental behaviors, motivations, and attitudes both at the individual and community level, enhancing skills, knowledge, and awareness, as well as providing the experience of changing community beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors.

Sutton et al. (1995) also noted that behavior change is a gradual process that must begin with people's current situations and circumstances. The behaviors promoted through programs should be practical and meaningful to people's everyday lives, not just theoretical concepts or research alone. Thus, even when the end goal is a certain outcome, effectively helping individuals make changes may involve designing interventions focused on influencing smaller, step-wise behaviors over time that can eventually build up to the desired behavioral shift.

#### **2.1.10. Strategic Communication Audit**

Effective communication is crucial for success and should be an integral part of the strategic planning process for all organizations. When organizational communication is poor, the outcomes tend to be reduced production, greater absenteeism, lower staff commitment, increased industrial unrest, and higher turnover (Hargie, Dickson & Tourish, 1999). Therefore, communication strategies and practices must be carefully designed, implemented, and evaluated (Barker & Camarata, 1998). The first step in developing a coherent communication strategy is to ascertain the state of an organization's communicative health. It is necessary to discover fundamental themes in current practice and then develop, articulate, and achieve strategic goals for the future (Clampitt, DeKoch & Cashman, 2000). Above all, managers must have a clear understanding of how effectively their organization's communication systems are functioning. Accountability is necessary for the flow of communication within the organization. Practically, this means that if critical information is not reaching the intended audiences, the barriers or blockages in the communication channels must be identified and resolved (Tourish & Hargie, 1996).

Strategies must be implemented to map the organization's communication processes. Communication audits have been the primary method for accomplishing this (Odiorne, 1954), and business, public relations, and human resources professionals have frequently been advised to utilize communication audits (Campbell, 1982; Kopec, 1982; Stanton, 1981; Strenski, 1984).

A strategic communication audit is a process for systematically gathering data about an organization's communication practices and activities, in which data acquisition allows for in-depth analysis (Downs, 1988). It examines what is effective, what is ineffective, and what could be improved through changes. The audit does not cover every communication activity in depth but rather focuses on evaluating the strategic role and positioning of communication within the organization and assessing its ability to support improved productivity and efficiency (Hargie & Dennis Tourish, 2002). The audit can be particularly valuable for managers, as it provides insights into the actual communication dynamics within the organization rather than just assumptions or anecdotal information about what is happening at the communication level (Hurst, 1991).

## **2.2. Theoretical frameworks**

### **2.2.1. Media Relation**

Media relations is the specialized PR function that aims to generate media coverage and raise the public profile of the organization through targeted outreach, information sharing, and media engagement initiatives. It is distinct from other aspects of the public relations process but plays a critical role in building recognition and awareness for the organization (Tilley, 2005). Media theorists suggest that the media possess significant social influence, with the power to impact a wide range of domains. This influence can range from discrediting political leaders to even going so far as to topple governments and influence the course of wars (Griffin, 2003).

Quality media relations takes a strategic approach that recognizes that not all publicity is inherently beneficial. Even positive media exposure can be useless if it fails to reach the key audiences connected to the organization, such as policymakers, customers, donors, competitors, or shareholders. The focus of effective media relations is not only the number of stories generated by the media but also the coverage reached by the specific target audiences whose perceptions and decisions are of critical importance. When media coverage does successfully reach these relevant audiences, it can significantly influence their views and decision-making (Tilley, 2005).

### **2.2.1. Agenda setting theory**

The Agenda Setting Theory proposes that the mass media can influence the public agenda by directing awareness and distributing information to audiences on topics significant to the mass media (Jati & Raha, 2019). The theory was first proposed by McComb and Shaw (Denis & Windah, 1996), who suggested that variations in the attention devoted to various issues by mass media could shape how those same issues influence political behaviors, such as those seen during elections (Cohen B., 1963). According to Rogers & Dearing (1988), a theory about mass media stands with interrelationships between three agendas, which are the public agenda, the media agenda, and the policy agenda.

However, this study focused solely on media agenda-setting. This strategic selection stems from how media agenda setting assesses how organizations use the news media to stress targeted issues for mass audiences through different media channels.

This is because agenda-setting theory analyzes how public opinion and views can be altered by the messages in media outlets. This theory serves as an essential consideration in agenda setting due to the significance of developing and disseminating messages to large audiences when attempting to set a new agenda. It can positively influence audiences through motivation, active involvement in new issues, education on unfamiliar issues, and unity-building among the public (Communication Theory, 2019).

The basic aim of agenda-setting is to create public awareness about significant media issues. It outlines how the media tries to influence audiences by creating a hierarchy of newsworthiness that prioritizes certain issues. In agenda-setting, the media filter and craft a few issues that lead the public to perceive those issues as more important than other issues. This concentration then leads the public to view those emphasized issues as more important than others lower on the hierarchy. Finally, the total agenda-setting process influences cognition and actual behaviors demonstrated through actions like purchasing or voting decisions that reflect the prominent issues on the agenda (McAdam et al., 2001).

According to Griffin (2009), the media can influence public perceptions of what issues are most important by emphasizing certain issues through more reports and prominent placement. Particularly, the attention the media agenda directs to select issues, people, etc. translates to those being viewed as worthy of greater focus compared to others receiving less media attention.

Agenda-setting theory presupposes a correspondence between what issues the media prioritizes and what the public believes warrants attention from a political and social systems perspective. It expresses the “theory about the transfer of salience from the mass media pictures to the pictures in our heads.” Agenda-setting is frequent, and prominent coverage of certain issues by mass media leads large segments of the public to view those issues as more significant than others (Coleman et al., 2009).

Moreover, Lasorsa (2008) asserted that agenda setting is one of the most influential theories applied in communication and political science to analyze the interplay between media, public opinion, and governmental policy-making. At its core, it suggests that the relative salience of objects or issues within a given domain, such as news coverage priorities, can impact the importance of that same subject in alternative domains (Lasorsa, 2008).

When new issues are disseminated unequally by media sources, allocating some a greater portion of emphasis than others, it follows that this imbalance of attention will subsequently influence both individual audience knowledge bases surrounding that issue as well as their knowledge or images of a particular issue (Jati & Raha, 2019).

Regarding the core principles of agenda-setting theory, a key component is that rather than focusing solely on the specific manner in which an event or topic is framed within news coverage, more salient is the general degree or volume given to the event or its attributes by the media and the time individuals have been exposed to the coverage of the event (Ardèvol-Abreu, 2015). Further, agenda setting aims to elaborate upon the relational connections between the emphasis by mass media sources and how said issue and the frames packaged around it subsequently mold audience perceptions, values, and interpretations, whether among the general public consuming that reporting (Littlejohn & Foss, 2009).

According to the foundational research of McComb and Shaw on agenda-setting theory, audiences obtain not just information about events from media sources but also learn an issue's importance based on the degree of emphasis given to the issue or repeated coverage over time. Most of the audiences develop their awareness and filtering of salient topics due to the agenda promoted via news dissemination. In mass communication, the major updates remain in the news. In this case, news plays dual agenda-setting roles; it sets the limit for both the public agenda of issues worth discussing and the policy agenda that political leaders focus on addressing (McQuail & Windahl, 1996).

According to Cohen B. (1963), within the agenda-setting theory, mass media is not seen as having the direct power to mandate opinions or attitudes on the part of audiences. However, mass media are acknowledged to play an important role in shaping audiences' perspectives through particular access, like influencing individual priorities, focus areas, and conceptual understandings. With such influence from the mass media, members of the public will gravitate towards issues that are considered valuable for inclusion in their mental agendas (Littlejohn & Foss, 2009).

There are five steps to creating an agenda-setting theory. First, an event must occur. Secondly, it should attract media attention, prioritizing the news for reporting. Thirdly, the news must be disseminated to the public through mass media publishing or broadcasting. Fourthly, audiences gain awareness of the issues to understand what event occurred and why.

Finally, the public creates a framework or mental schema for the issues, and the public and media framing mirror each other strongly. Creating a framework involves choosing several given event attributes to be broadcast or published in mass media and social media. A key function of news involvement in the agenda-setting mechanism is transmitting the salience or prominence of specific event attributes. Through its emphasis on details, the media not only dictates thematic priorities but also influences the public's understanding of presented issues (Griffin, 2012).

Research highlights the mass media's influential role in providing environmental comprehension to the public (Szerszynsi, 1991). As stated by Atmakusumah & Basorie (1996), the mass media serve key environmental agenda-setting functions like developing public awareness about environmental issues, facilitating education to promote responsible management practices, and exercising oversight to manage environmental issues.

As stated by Soroka (2002), environmental issues mostly lack direct observability or impact for the majority of people, they can be considered "unobtrusive" concerns. Therefore, setting a media agenda for environmental issues and mobilizing the public for a tree-planting campaign is mandatory. Tree planting campaigns are utilized as signs of environmentalism by various actors, such as NGOs, governments, and other entities (Duguma, et al., 2020).

According to Zucker (1978), since neither public nor political actors personally experience all environmental issues, both strongly rely on news coverage and accordingly react to the media attention to form stances on the management of such issues.

### **2.2.2. Framing theory**

Framing theory explains how media outlets introduce news items using predefined contextual boundaries as frames to structure understanding. Frames have the potential to either enhance understanding or act as cognitive shortcuts for linking events to broader pictures (Arowolo, 2017). Ardèvol-Abreu (2015) noted that the theory was first proposed by Gregory Bateson in 1972, describing the practice of analyzing news content and stories in familiar contexts.

Framing focuses on how the media draws the public's attention to specific issues by first setting the agenda and then creating a frame through which audiences will comprehend those issues. Thus, sources, reporters, journalists, and/or editors commonly select frames for stories (Mass Communication Theory, 2017). According to Arowolo (2017), the framing theory suggests that frames influence audience interpretation through the contextualized presentation of information,

known as “the frame”. Specifically, frames are abstractions that organize meaning for efficiency and comprehensibility, helping structure messages.

In communication, as noted by Chong & Druckman (2004), framing can only be defined in the context of a specific issue, event, or political figure. Frames in communication have been shown to influence audiences’ attitudes and behaviors. Communication professionals in general and journalists in particular must craft a story within certain time and space constraints while aiming to effectively reach a broad public. To achieve this, messages are structured using interpretive frameworks, called frames, to simplify complex realities and maintain public engagement (Valkenburg et al., 1999). Specifically, frames are crafted communication processes to provide meaningful context and facilitate comprehension of issues (Entman, 1993).

Arowolo (2017) stated that the primary application of frames is their use in media and news reporting, where framing refers to both the news or media and the information, they convey. Framing involves selectively emphasizing some aspects of reality to define issues, diagnose causes, suggest moral judgments, and propose solutions or calls to action (Entman, 1993).

Framing has a crucial role in environmental communication. The public mainly depends on mass media as a source of information about environmental issues like climate change (Meisner & Takahashi, 2013). According to O’Neill (2013), news coverage of climate change frames comprehension and engagement through discourses within and across different media outlets and among audiences. This means framing shapes comprehension of environmental issues by providing interpretive models (Goodbody, 2010). How environmental issues are framed, according to Nisbet & Kotcher (2009), can influence both broader public awareness as well as the scope of stakeholder engagement in policy discussions.

This is because frames are interpretive storylines that set a particular thought process in motion by communicating why an issue could be a problem, who or what may be responsible, and potential solutions. Audiences depend on frames to make sense of and discuss an issue. Journalists utilize frames to develop compelling news reports. Policymakers also frame the policies they make (Ferree et al., 2002).

In environmental communication, as noted by Charles et al. (2003), campaigns play a critical role in creating awareness and engaging the public for different initiatives like tree planting and taking care of the planted tree for its sustainability. Thus, framing the campaign is a basic step to reaching the goal. Because framing serves as an essential campaign design element, it is applied from the inception of campaign design to its implementation. To overcome barriers like human nature, partisan biases, and media fragmentation, messages need to be tailored for a given medium and audience using carefully researched metaphors, allusions, and examples that inspire new ways of thinking about issues' relevance, such as climate change (Nisbet M. C., 2010).

Additionally, framing can also be employed in shaping environmental education. Effective environmental education is important to create a public understanding of sustainability-economy interdependence (Parker, 2005). Besides, as stated by Nyaga (2018), framing environmental messages significantly influences environmental education, corporate participation in green initiatives, and the choices of initiatives. This is because framing educates the public about the significance of caring for the environment and its benefits

Moreover, framing makes a significant connection between new information and what audiences already know or believe. Framing can impact perspectives through complex interactions between audience traits, messaging elements, and alignment with prior ideas, as well as other contextual factors. Framing is mainly impactful in bringing attention to, legitimizing, and helping interpret context or difficult topics associated with environmental issues (Doyle, 2007).

According to Hallahan K. (2008), framing plays a significant role in strategic communication. Strategic communicators employ message frames to create salience for certain topic attributes by involving and giving attention to them while omitting other aspects. It also plays a pivotal role in crafting social realities since it aids in shaping perceptions and offering contextual frameworks for interpreting information. Likewise, message framing supplies contextual cues that operate consciously or subconsciously during phases of message reception, like the pre-attention and focal attention stages.

### **2.2.1. Message framing and perception**

Message framing is the presentation of semantically different but objectively synonymous information (Krishnamurthy, Carter, & Blair, 2001). Levin & Gaeth (1988) stated that the message frame is the positive or negative method by which the information is presented.

Message frames represent varying perspectives on events or issues, serving as interpretive storylines that communicate the nature of the problem, its potential causes, and proposed solutions (Nisbet M. C., 2009).

Message framing is an important strategy that helps influence the audience's perception of an organization's messages, values, and practices. A careful selection of words, tone, and context can emphasize the positive aspects of the message while lessening the negatives. There are stages in message framing that involve delivering framed messages with clarity, consistency, and credibility.

These stages are: using clear and concise language that matches the audience's understanding; employing narratives, examples, and metaphors to illustrate the message and make it memorable; and incorporating verifiable facts and data to enhance the message's reliability (How can you use message framing to shape public perception of your organization?, 2023).

In the environmental context, as noted by Maibach et al. (2010), messages are crafted to emphasize certain aspects of climate change, like the impact on the environment and public health due to the warming trend or the economic cost and benefits related to adaptation and mitigation technologies.

On the other hand, climate change has been presented in different ways, such as a matter of national security or as a chance to expand our moral obligation towards future generations and disadvantaged individuals in society (Markowitz & Shariff, 2012).

As stated by Nisbet & Scheufele (2009), in an attempt to raise public awareness of climate change, mainstream media, and opinion leaders have consistently communicated these alternative perspectives through various framing devices, including catchy phrases, metaphors, concise statements, photographs, and different print materials.

These framing devices regularly emphasize different content aspects of the same issue and differ in their degree of abstraction (O'Neill, 2013). When messages frame climate change as a threat to individuals' geographical identity, they can have a significant influence on individuals' value-belief systems and, subsequently, their behaviors (Scannell & Gifford, 2013).

More precisely, people show a higher likelihood of shifting their opinion on climate change when they are exposed to a message that specifically emphasizes the negative consequences of climate change on their local environment, in contrast to a message that emphasizes the global impact (Scannell & Gifford, 2013). The effectiveness of message framing is optimized when it directly resonates with recipients' preexisting attitudes and mental frameworks (Wolsko et al., 2016).

### **2.2.3. Social Marketing Theory**

Tabanico & Schultz (2007) noted that social marketing is considered a community-based theory that utilizes psychology principles and applied research methods to design frameworks aimed at promoting behavioral change across diverse settings. Social marketing includes applying commercially proven marketing strategies to initiatives focused on improving personal and public welfare through modifying target audiences' behaviors (Andreasen, 1994).

Kotler & Zaltman (1971) stated that social marketing was originally proposed in 1971 by Philip Kotler and Gerald Zaltman in an article discussing how to effectively apply commercial marketing strategies to address health, social, and environmental issues.

It has since been employed in domains like public health, safety, environmentalism, and communities (Kotler P., 2013). Andreasen (1994) added that it commonly involves systematic processes conducted by NGOs or the public sector. A social marketing strategy involves a strategic, systematic plan of action designed to positively influence social behaviors in a way that benefits both the intended target audience and the general society.

It emphasizes applying consumer research methods to guide planning; strategically segmenting and selecting target groups; structuring, implementing, and building a community-wide network of collaborative partnerships and relationships; as well as tracking results and evaluating the program's impact (Andreasen, 2015).

Social marketing is not meant to replace individual behavior change strategies but rather functions to increase the prevalence of specific behaviors among target audiences (Lefebvre, 1990). Farr et al. (2008) noted that employing customer-focused social marketing through the National Social Marketing Centre can help improve the impacts and effectiveness of behavior change interventions in policy-making, strategic planning, and the delivery of initiatives.

Continuing 21st-century challenges encourage stakeholders to explore more efficient and effective strategies that can help communities and nations eliminate the challenges (Andreasen, 2015). As many problems stem from behavioral roots, social marketing - applying marketing strategies to social problem-solving - gains popularity as a technique. Likewise, there is growing support for participatory, bottom-up approaches that empower community management of problems (Berkes, 2004).

Social marketing has a vital role in changing public behavior towards environmental management. Social marketing in practice and theory relates to environmental management, as organizations adopting responsible environmental practices exemplify "corporate social responsibility". Both domains aim at minimizing costs, strengthening the competitive edge, and cultivating stakeholder trust. Several benefits confirm the strategic prudence of following socio-environmental marketing and management principles (Letunovska, et al., 202).

The literature clearly shows that behavior change only occurs when exact actions are targeted, coupled with communications addressing relevant behaviors (Stern & Powell, 2013). Changing individual behavior presents significant challenges. Though considerable efforts have been made to communicate sustainability (mainly environmental) challenges and solutions, a gap lingers that separates environmental attitudes and behaviors and changes willingness accordingly (Kollmuss & Agyeman, 2002).

According to McKenzie-Mohr, (2011), the commonly employed strategy that promotes environmental behaviors is marketing campaigns aimed at creating awareness through media, but a growing body of scientific research shows that the provision of information rarely converts target audiences.

Thus, employing the concepts of social marketing theories in campaigns and creating environmental awareness play crucial roles in environmental sustainability. Well-designed social marketing campaigns promote behaviors that, if widespread, would benefit the campaign recipients and society at large (Dann, 2010). According to Kotler P. (1989), the success of the campaign varies based on audience understanding; message framing, chosen communication channels, and response mechanisms. The messages must resonate memorably when replicated across the communication channels to continuously create awareness in target communities (Social Marketing National Excellence Collaborative, 2002).

This indicates that social marketing theory significantly facilitates promoting environmental sustainability behaviors such as tree planting through increasing public understanding. This is because public awareness campaigns constitute a key social marketing strategy (Kotler P., 2013). According to Fundacja K. S. (2010), public awareness campaigns systematically target knowledge, perspective, and behavior changes regarding specific social issues. Assessing the impact across awareness, engagement, behavior change, social norms, and well-being can determine the effectiveness of the campaign (Donovan & Henely, 2003).

### **2.3.1. Audience Segmentation**

Segmentation is a significant tool for practitioners, as it aids them in developing problem-solving techniques and building relationships with a diverse public. By utilizing segmentation, organizations identify specific sub-groups within a broader category of stakeholders or the general public that are proactive and focused on particular consequences. This helps with targeted and tailored approaches to addressing their needs and concerns (Kim, 2011).

As stated by French (2017), segmentation was popularized by marketing theorists like George Day in the 1970s to help businesses meet customer needs by customizing offers while also maintaining a profit-focused approach through economies of scale. From a functional standpoint, segmentation ensures the efficient allocation of marketing resources, identifies customer needs, and enhances the impact of product and service adoption as well as brand value.

Segmentation can't only enhance marketing performance but also serve as a tangible organization's commitment to understanding customers and citizen-centric planning and delivery. Alongside other strategies like ethnography and social network analysis, adopting a segmentation strategy signifies that those involved in developing and implementing a marketing strategy acknowledge the necessity for targeted programs and interventions based on a deep insight into the needs, beliefs, circumstances, and behaviors of public subgroups and the factors that influence them (French, 2017 ).

Kahneman (2011) stated that segmentation is not only about categorizing subgroups of the public based on shared characteristics and behaviors but also involves identifying the appropriate mix of interventions that are relevant and valued by these subgroups. The purpose of developing segmented interventions is to enhance the responsiveness of identified subgroups within the public, thereby making a positive impact on both profitability in the private sector and social welfare in the not-for-profit sector.

## **2.3. Empirical framework**

### **2.3.1. Public awareness and communication strategies in the implementation of environmental policies**

Macabontoc & Vargas (2021) conducted a study to assess the awareness of residents of Baliwag, Bulacan, Philippines, regarding environmental policies and communication strategies implemented by the Office of the Municipal Environment and Natural Resources. The objective of the study was to investigate the relationship between communication strategies and awareness levels.

The review of related literature in the study covered communication strategies and environmental communication. A total of seventy residents were selected as respondents to assess their attitudes toward the communication strategies employed by the Municipal Environment and Natural Resources Office.

According to Tadesse (2015), the study found that increased effectiveness of communication strategies corresponded to higher levels of awareness among respondents. Communication capability is strongly essential to raising environmental awareness and understanding of existing problems. Effective communication is so important for communicating and raising awareness about environmental protection. Climate change and environmental degradation are pressing issues, so it is important to communicate the significance of conservation, and encourage sustainable practices effectively (The Role of Communication in Large-Scale Environmental Conservation Projects, 2023). The study also found that the socio-demographic profile of the participants, like age, gender, and monthly income, has no critical impact on the level of awareness.

However, the study only used quantitative methods and did not employ a mixed-methods approach, which could have provided more comprehensive and insightful findings. According to Maxwell (2016), using a mixed-methods approach provides a logical foundation, methodological flexibility, and an in-depth insight into smaller cases.

The utilization of a mixed-methods approach allows researchers to explore research questions with sufficient depth and breadth (Enosh, Tzafrir, & Stolovy, 2014). By combining closed-ended quantitative data and open-ended qualitative data, mixed-methods research allows a more comprehensive understanding of a phenomenon or concept, thus supporting the generalization of findings to a population and providing a detailed perspective on its meaning for individuals (Creswell, 2015).

### **2.3.2. Perception and participation of local communities in tree planting initiatives**

Obiri et al., (2011) conducted a study in northern Ghana to assess the perception of local communities and factors influencing their participation in tree planting programs, focusing on Ghana government initiatives implemented between 1980 and 1995. Data for the study was collected through structured questionnaires from 1000 respondents in selected communities across the northern, upper east, and upper west regions of the country. The study's results indicated that communities perceived tree planting as a relatively important social initiative, with 74% of respondents advocating for it. The results also indicated that the provision of free seedlings, food aid, and input supply were the dominant motivating factors influencing participation in the tree planting program.

One significant finding was that lack of awareness and strong and efficient community-level organizations were the primary reasons for not planting trees. The attitude of the public is very crucial in environmental programs. If the public has a positive attitude about the environment coupled with a strong awareness of climate change, it translates to strong support for achieving environmental programs (Amodu et al., 2017). The study also found the need for effective extension services and institutional capacity building in tree-planting initiatives.

However, the study failed to assess the strategic communication of the government, which may have contributed to the study's failure to find the reason for the community's lack of organization and understanding regarding the benefits of tree planting.

According to Karunaratne (2023), environmental policies' effective communication is significant for ensuring public comprehension and support. Research has indicated that the public often misunderstands environmental management policies and may be skeptical or resistant. To address this issue, the study could have assessed whether the community participated in policy-making and whether clear and concise environmental messages were developed and disseminated to raise awareness and community engagement. By involving the community in the policy development process, emphasizing the personal and communal advantages of the policy, and utilizing communication strategies, public engagement and support for environmental management policies could have increased (Karunaratne, 2023).

Furthermore, the study exclusively relied on quantitative methods for data collection instead of utilizing a mixed-methods approach, which could have resulted in a more comprehensive understanding. According to Shorten & Smith (2017), mixed methods involve purposefully incorporating data from various sources, enabling researchers to assess a phenomenon from diverse perspectives and research lenses by facilitating a broader understanding. By incorporating mixed methods, the study could have provided a holistic view of the phenomenon and provided additional insights into its various components, ultimately contributing to the development of substantive theories (Venkatesh, Brown, & Bala, 2013).

### **2.3.3. The role of the Green Legacy in promoting sustainable development and combating climate change**

Lambert and Kanbiro (2023) studied the impact of the Green Legacy initiative on sustainable development and climate change in Ethiopia. The objective of the study was to assess the role of the Green Legacy Initiative in promoting climate change mitigation.

The study reviewed related literature, including the aims of the Green Legacy Initiative, climate change in Ethiopia, the impact of tree planting on climate change, and public engagement. It employed a mixed-methods approach to provide comprehensible insights.

Accordingly, the study's quantitative analysis revealed that the Green Legacy Initiative has a reducing effect on temperature increases. The qualitative analysis provided the challenges faced by Ethiopia's Green Legacy Initiatives, such as soil erosion, deforestation, land and forest degradation, etc. The study also concluded that tree planting and growth initiatives, as part of the Green Legacy, have a positive and critical contribution to the green economy, which is a safe side for biodiversity.

Despite providing insights into the successful strategies and challenges of the Green Legacy initiative, the study overlooked assessing strategic communication, which addresses environmental awareness, fosters public engagement, and promotes sustainable development. Effective communication between sources and recipients enhances support for policy-making and public engagement in environmental sustainability (Pillmann, 2000). According to Macabontoc & Vargas (2021), communication plays a crucial role in facilitating information exchange, establishing consensus among diverse opinions and interests, and building knowledge, decision-making, and action capacities among government, civil society groups, and the private sector.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This chapter outlines the general methods and approaches of the study. Particularly, it presents the research design, population size, sampling approach, methods of data collection, validity and reliability, methods of data analysis, and ethical considerations.

#### **3.1. Research design**

The objective of this research, in its descriptive manner, is to assess the strategic communication of the Ministry of Agriculture by focusing on Public Mobilization in the Green Legacy Initiative Campaign. It aims to broadly describe the Ministry of Agriculture's strategic communication and its efforts in public mobilization for the Green Legacy Initiative Campaign. The study utilized a mixed-methods approach combining quantitative and qualitative methods to broadly assess the strategic communication of the Ministry of Agriculture used for public mobilization in the Green Legacy Initiative Campaign. According to Creswell (2009), mixed quantitative and qualitative approaches are used to comprehensively understand the research problems and triangulate the results.

#### **3.3. Sample size**

The sample size was the number of items considered critically to balance representation against feasibility (Kothari, 2004). The sampling strategy should have effectiveness, representativeness, reliability, and flexibility (Kothari, 2004).

The Ministry of Agriculture is a government organization that manages agricultural development, environmental sustainability, and its policies. The Ministry provides agricultural and environmental skills, knowledge, and market opportunities for farmers, investors, exporters, and other key players. Therefore, the target population for this study was individuals within the agricultural sector, those connected to the ministry, and the public from Meta woreda in the Sebeta sub-city of Sheger City.

For the quantitative data, a simple random sampling technique was used to give an equal chance of participation to the Meta woreda population. The Green Legacy Initiative Campaign has been carried out in these three zones during the past five years. According to Thomas (2020), simple random sampling makes sure that every person in a total population has an equal chance of being chosen as a respondent. The total population of the woreda is 23,477, with a productive population between the ages of 15 and 59 amounting to 11,063. The productive population between the ages of 15 and 59 was used as the basis for determining the sample of the study.

For the qualitative data, a purposeful in-depth interview was used in this study. It involved the Green Legacy Initiative's technical committee, natural resource and agro-forestry and PR professionals from the ministry, natural resource and agro-forestry experts from the region, natural resource experts from the woreda, agricultural extension workers, and community leaders. According to Silverman, (2005), the use of the purposive sampling technique in interviews is based on the rationale that it allows the researcher to select a case based on processes that demonstrate issues of interest in the research and where they are likely to be present. Therefore, the involvement of the stakeholders was to achieve a broad understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the strategic communication employed by the ministry for the Green Legacy Initiative Campaign. The perspectives of these stakeholders on the challenges, successes, and limitations of the ministry's strategic communication provided important input into the assessment.

### **3.3.1. Sample size determination**

The determination of sample size for this study was determined by employing Yemane's formula (1967).

$$n = N / (1 + N(e^2))$$

Where:

n = sample size

N = total population size (11,063)

e = is the level of precision assumed to be 5%

Based on the above formula, the sample size of this study (n) is 386.

### **3.4. Methods of data collection**

This study employed the primary data collection method to obtain fresh and original information and insights. The selected respondents for both the questionnaire and interview schedule and in-depth interviews were those who participated in the tree-planting campaign with direct engagement and authentically shared their distinct experiences.

#### **3.4.1. Questionnaire**

Questionnaires are an important social science research method used commonly to collect quantitative data for analysis (Aliaga & Gunderson, 2000). This study utilized a mix of closed and open-ended questions to gain insight from respondents. This allowed the collection of diverse perspectives on the experiences, opinions, situations, and perceptions of the respondents about the strategic communication used for public mobilization in the Green Legacy Initiative campaign processes and its influences.

The questionnaire was initially developed in English and translated into Afan Oromo to maximize comprehension. The questionnaires addressed demographics, media access, and habits, providing a comprehensive view of factors influencing understanding and participation in the campaign. The questionnaire comprised Likert scale questions, which were analyzed in frequencies and percentages using SPSS. Before data collection, a pilot study was conducted to ensure the reliability and validity of the questionnaires. After the pilot study, 386 questionnaires were distributed to the respondents.

In addition to questionnaires, an interview schedule was employed for the illiterate population to collect data through face-to-face interactions while accommodating the literacy limitations of the respondents. The agricultural extension workers were used for the interview schedule. Before data collection, the researcher provided comprehensive training to the agricultural extension workers regarding the interview schedule, including reading the questions aloud, slowly, and clearly, providing additional clarification or rephrasing as needed, and ticking the options that the respondents chose from the choices and recording their voices as evidence.

### **3.4.2. In-depth Interview**

In-depth interviews are used to get an in-depth understanding of interviewees' beliefs, perceptions, and practices. A key strength of the interview as a research method is its ability to permit the exploration of diverse views on a topic (Newcomb, 1991). This study utilized interviews with the Green Legacy Initiative's technical committee, natural resource and agro-forestry experts and PR officers from the ministry, natural resource and agro-forestry experts from the region, natural resource experts from the woreda, agricultural extension workers, and community leaders by using open-ended questions to assess the strategic communications used for public mobilization for the Green Legacy Initiative campaign.

Hence, open-ended, and flexible questions about the experiences of implementing strategic communication and mobilizing the public were used in the interviews. Fifteen in-depth interviews were conducted, with the interviewees purposefully sampled for their exposure to the Green Legacy Initiative campaign implementation. This involved the Green Legacy Initiative's technical committee members (n = 2), natural resource and agro-forestry experts (n = 2) and PR officers (n = 2) from the ministry, natural resource and agro-forestry experts from the region (n = 2), natural resource experts from the woreda (n = 2), agricultural extension workers (n = 2), and community leaders (3) who participated in the public mobilization activities.

The selection of these interviewees for in-depth interviews was determined to gather a comprehensive range of perspectives regarding the utilization of strategic communication by the ministry in the public mobilization for the Green Legacy Initiative campaign. The number of interviewees in each category was determined by the experiences and expertise of those involved in the Green Legacy Initiative Campaign. An equal number of interviewees from each category was determined to provide an equal opportunity for different perspectives to be represented in the study.

### 3.6. Validity and Reliability

According to Cooper and Schindler (2014), validity is a research instrument's ability to accurately assess what is intended to be assessed. The goal of validity is to achieve high validity for the intended findings (Yin, 2011). In this study, the data collection tools, including the questionnaire and interview questions were designed directly based on these research questions and objectives. The validity was ensured by reviewing the survey and interview questions with experts from the Natural Resource and Agro-forestry Directorate of the Ministry of Agriculture, the Regional Natural Resource Bureau, the ministry's PR officers, and the study's advisor.

Finally, a pilot study of the questionnaire was conducted before the actual data collection process. The questionnaires were distributed to 15 deliberately selected respondents from the Meta woreda. Based on the results of the pilot study and the feedback from the experts, the study's advisor, and respondents, the contents of the questionnaire were reviewed to ensure the validity of the research tools. The review of the questions allowed the researcher to refine the wording and content of the data collection instruments to ensure they effectively captured the desired information. After the pilot was conducted, both reliability and validity were assessed using SPSS's Cronbach's Alpha reliability.

**Table 1: Reliability test result**

#### Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.940	21

### **3.5. Methods of data analysis**

The collected data was analyzed using different data analysis techniques. Quantitative or survey data was analyzed using SPSS. This included systematically coding, and analyzing the responses using appropriate statistical tests like descriptive. In qualitative analysis, rigorous thematic analysis and systematic transcribing, translating, and coding of the interview transcripts were undertaken to identify key patterns, themes, and insights. The analysis involved organizing the interview questions and answers and identifying key concepts and themes. Moreover, to increase the flexibility of the analysis, the quantitative and qualitative findings were integrated to facilitate a comprehensive understanding of the research.

### **3.7. Ethical consideration**

Researchers have the responsibility to inform respondents of all features of the project that can reasonably be expected to influence participation (Wimmer and Dominick 2011:69). Thus, the participants were informed about the objective of the study, which was to help them participate in it voluntarily and ensure their anonymity and safety. They were also informed that their responses could be kept confidential. To preserve confidentiality, the respondents' identities were replaced with their job titles or other reasonable codes.

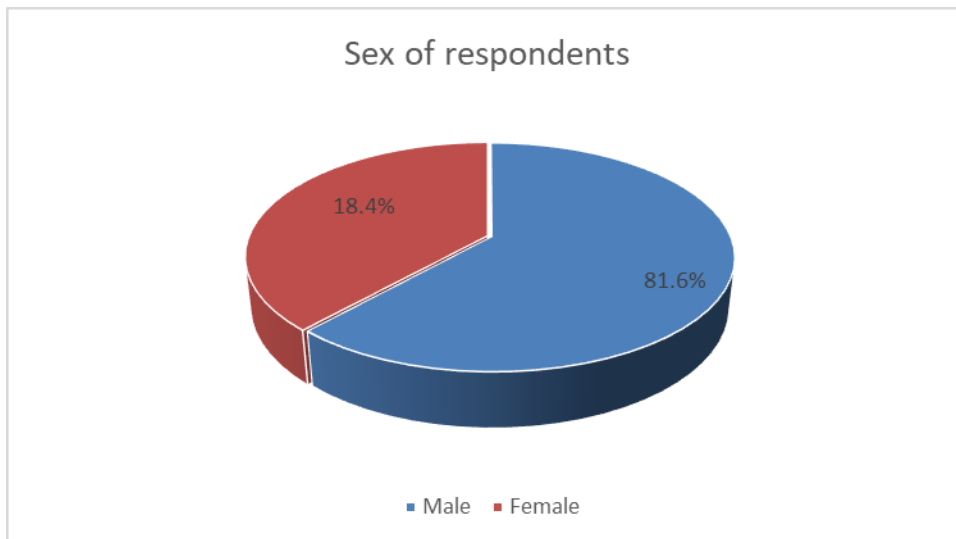
## CHAPTER FOUR

### 4. Analysis and Data Interpretation

The objective of this study is to examine the strategic communication of the Ministry of Agriculture, with a focus on public mobilization in the Green Legacy Initiative Campaign. The study employed a mixed-approach research design. Accordingly, the frequency and percentage tables present the quantitative findings of the study. On the other hand, the findings of the qualitative data are presented in thematic form. A comprehensive discussion of the findings is also presented through the integration of both quantitative and qualitative data outputs.

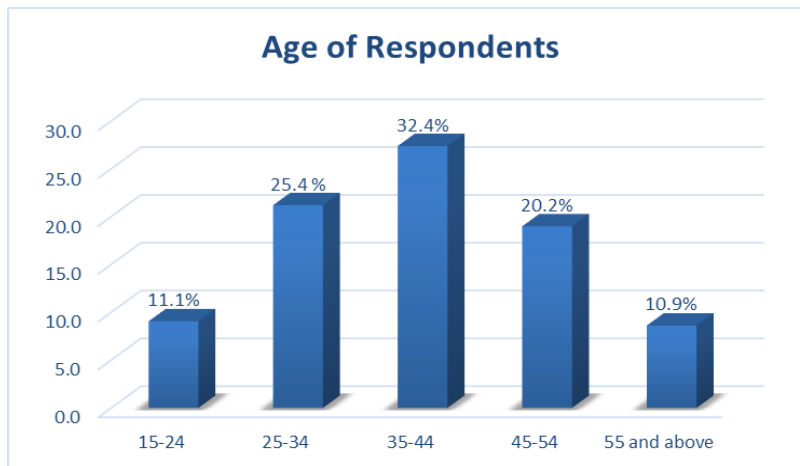
#### 4.1. Demographic background of the respondents

Figure 1: Sex of respondents



The above chart shows that out of 386 respondents, 315 (81.6%) were male and 71 (18.4%) were female. This shows that there were more male respondents than females in the survey.

**Figure: Age of the respondents**



The above graph shows that a high percentage of the respondents (32.4%) are within the age group of 35–44, whereas (25.4%) are between 25–34 and 20.2% are between 45–54. The smaller age group falls between 15–24 (11.1%) and 55 and above (10.9%). This result indicates that there is a varied age range among the respondents, with the highest percentage falling within the 35–44 age range.

**Table 4: Educational level of the respondents**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Elementary	124	32.1	32.1	32.1
High school	57	14.8	14.8	46.9
Diploma	40	10.4	10.4	57.3
First Degree	35	9.1	9.1	66.3
Illiterate	130	33.7	33.7	100.0
Total	386	100.0	100.0	

The above table shows that the majority of respondents 130 (33.7%) were illiterate, while 124(32.1%) respondents had an elementary educational background. Additionally, a notable

number of the respondents 57(14.8%) had a high school educational background. However, a small number of respondents 40(10.4%) and 35(9.1%) had first degree and diploma, respectively. This indicates that the respondents had different levels of education, with the majority being illiterate and having primary educational levels.

**Table 1Table 5: Occupation of the respondents**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Students	68	17.6	17.6	17.6
Government workers	108	28.0	28.0	45.6
Farmers	120	31.1	31.1	76.7
Unemployed	90	23.3	23.3	100.0
Total	386	100.0	100.0	

As shown in the above table, the majority of the respondents 120(31.1%) were farmers, while a significant number of respondents 108(28%) were government workers. Some respondents were also unemployed and students, with 90(23.3%) and 68(17.6%), respectively. This implies that the respondents of the questionnaire had different occupational backgrounds, with the majority farmers, government workers, and jobless.

In general, the outputs show the respondents have different demographic backgrounds, with sex imbalances, varying age ranges, different educational levels, and diverse occupational backgrounds that can affect the data in different ways. The gender imbalance, which is an underrepresentation of females, may affect responses, as the perspectives of females are not represented effectively.

Besides, varying age ranges may have diverse experiences that impact the responses. Moreover, diversity of educational level and occupation background may also have an impact on the respondent's understanding because educational level and occupation background may shape individuals' attitudes and beliefs, so this also may influence the responses.

### 4.3. Findings and Discussions

This section presents the analysis and findings of the quantitative and qualitative data of the research questions.

#### 4.3.1. Descriptive Statistics Result

This section presents the interpretation of the frequencies and percentages of the respondents. The frequency represents the number of respondents who have selected a particular value option, which is strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree, while the percentage indicates the proportion of respondents who have chosen one value option.

**Table 6: The strengths and weaknesses of the ministry’s strategic communication.**

No.	Statement	Values	Frequency (N) 386	Percent
1.	The ministry effectively creates awareness about the Green Legacy Initiative and its objectives.	Strongly disagree	47	12.2
		Disagree	87	22.5
		Neutral	39	10.1
		Agree	142	36.8
		Strongly agree	71	18.4
2.	The ministry contributed to changing the attitude and behavior of the public regarding the GLI Campaign.	Strongly disagree	19	4.9
		Disagree	97	25.1
		Neutral	34	8.8
		agree	139	36
		Strongly agree	97	25.1
3.	The ministry gave clear messages on biophysical relations in the GLI campaign.	Strongly disagree	57	14.8
		Disagree	133	34.5
		Neutral	42	10.9
		Agree	107	27.7
		Strongly agree	47	12.2
4.	The ministry had remarkable strengths in mobilizing and	Strongly disagree	21	5.4
		Disagree	94	24.4

	engaging the public in the GLI Campaign.	Neutral	23	6
		Agree	160	41.5
		Strongly agree	88	22.8
5.	The ministry has collected feedback to use as input into the GLI campaign plans and activities	Strongly disagree	33	8.5
		Disagree	157	40.7
		Neutral	34	8.8
		Agree	117	30.3
		Strongly agree	45	11.7
6.	The ministry utilized appropriate communication channels and platforms to engage the public and relevant stakeholders	Strongly disagree	53	13.7
		Disagree	76	19.7
		Neutral	39	10.1
		Agree	127	32.9
		Strongly agree	91	23.6

Source: Survey Data (2024)

The above table shows that 386 respondents asked questions to see their level of agreement with the strengths and weaknesses of the ministry's strategic communication. Regarding the question about the effectiveness of the ministry in creating awareness about GLI, the results indicate that 36.8 percent agreed, 18.4 percent strongly agreed, 12.2 percent strongly disagreed, and 22.5 percent disagreed, while 10.1% remained neutral. These results show that the ministry successfully used its communication to create awareness about the Green Legacy Initiative campaign.

The survey posed a question to the respondents relating to their agreement with the effectiveness of the ministry in changing public attitudes and behaviors.

The output shows that 36 percent of the respondents agreed, 25.1 percent strongly agreed, 4.9 percent strongly disagreed, and 25.1 percent disagreed, whereas 8.8% remained neutral. This result suggests that the strategic communication of the ministry was effective in changing public attitudes and behaviors.

The respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the ministry's strategic communication for effectively conveying a clear message regarding biophysical relations. The result shows that 14.8 percent strongly disagreed, 34.5 percent disagreed, 27.7 percent agreed and 12.2 percent strongly agreed. However, 10.9 percent of the respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement. This result shows that the ministry has weaknesses in regularly disseminating clear messages on biophysical relations.

A question was posed to the respondents to see whether they agreed with the ministry's strength in mobilizing and engaging the public and stakeholders. The results indicate that 41.5 percent agreed, 22.8 percent strongly agreed, 5.4 percent strongly disagreed, and 24.4 percent disagreed, 6 percent neither agreed nor disagreed. These results reveal that strategic communication had remarkable strengths in mobilizing and engaging the public and stakeholders for the GLI Campaign.

In terms of the question about the effectiveness of the ministry in collecting feedback from the audiences, 8.5% strongly disagreed and 40.7% disagreed, whereas 30.3% agreed and 11.7% strongly agreed. However, 8.8% of the respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with this. Based on the comparison of both agreements and disagreements, it can be concluded that the strategic communication wasn't effective in collecting feedback from the audiences.

The respondents were also asked whether they agreed with the effectiveness of the channels and platforms in mobilizing and engaging the public and relevant stakeholders; 32.9 percent agreed, 23.6 percent strongly agreed, 13.7 percent strongly disagreed, and 19.7 percent disagreed. However, 10.1 percent of respondents neither disagreed nor agreed with this. Accordingly, these results imply that strategic communication uses effective and appropriate communication media for public mobilization and engagement.

**Table 7: The effectiveness of the ministry’s communication channels and platforms**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Statement</b>	<b>Values</b>	<b>Frequency (N) 386</b>	<b>percent</b>
1.	The ministry effectively employed local radio and TV to disseminate messages about the GLI campaign and mobilize the public	Strongly disagree	30	7.8
		Disagree	91	23.6
		Neutral	25	6.5
		Agree	155	40.2
		Strongly agree	85	22
2.	The ministry successfully used print media (e.g., newspapers, and magazines) to effectively convey information about the GLI campaign.	Strongly disagree	45	11.7
		Disagree	123	31.9
		Neutral	32	8.3
		Agree	144	37.3
		Strongly agree	42	10.9
3.	The ministry effectively employed campaign materials, such as brochures, flyers, and billboards as a communication channel to mobilize the public	Strongly disagree	40	10.4
		Disagree	145	37.6
		Neutral	30	7.8
		Agree	126	32.6
		Strongly agree	45	11.7
4.	The ministry efficiently utilized agricultural extension workers as communication channels to support the public in the seedling planting and taking care of the planted seedling activities	Strongly disagree	43	11.1
		Disagree	86	22.3
		Neutral	17	4.4
		Agree	192	49.7
		Strongly agree	48	12.4
5.	The ministry successfully used local community leaders and influencers as communication channels and community-based organizations like schools, universities, and religious places in addition to channels and	Strongly disagree	28	7.3
		Disagree	91	23.6
		Neutral	27	7.0
		Agree	184	47.7
		Strongly agree	56	14.5

	platforms to mobilize and engage the public to participate in the GLI continuously.			
6.	The communication channels and platforms that the ministry employed had effectively mobilized and engaged the public and contributed to creating awareness about the GLI Campaign	Strongly disagree	6	1.6
		Disagree	108	28
		Neutral	38	9.8
		Agree	156	40.4
		Strongly agree	78	20.2

Source: Survey Data (2024)

The above table shows the questions the respondents asked regarding their agreement with the ministry’s effective utilization of communication channels and platforms. One of the questions was about the ministry’s effective utilization of local radio and TV; 62.2% either agreed or strongly agreed, 31.4% either disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 6.5% of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed. The respondents also specified that they have FM radio functionality on their mobile phones, which they use to stay informed and entertained under open-ended questions. These results reveal that the ministry has effectively employed radio and TV to distribute messages and engage the public.

The other question was about the ministry's effective use of print media to spread information about the Green Legacy Initiative Campaign; 48.2% agreed or strongly agreed, and 43.6% disagreed or strongly disagreed, while 8.3% remained neutral. Regarding this, during the interview schedule, the participants were asked how they accessed and understood the print materials, as they are illiterate. They explained that they relied on their literate children to read and explain the content to them. These results confirm that the ministry effectively used print media to spread information about the Green Legacy Initiative Campaign.

Regarding the question about the ministry's effectiveness in using campaign materials to mobilize and engage the public, 48% either disagreed or strongly disagreed, 44.3% agreed or strongly agreed, and 7.8% neither agreed nor disagreed. These results show that the ministry's strategic communication had weaknesses in employing campaign materials to mobilize and engage the public.

Concerning the question about the ministry's engagement with agricultural extension workers for awareness creation, 62.4% agreed or strongly agreed, 33.3% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 4.4% neither agreed nor disagreed. These results imply that the ministry had successfully engaged agricultural extension workers to mobilize and engage the public in the campaign activities.

Relating to the question about the ministry's effective use of local community leaders, organizations, and influencers for mobilization and engagement, 62.2 percent agreed or strongly agreed, 30.8% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 7% neither agreed nor disagreed. These results reveal that the Ministry of Agriculture effectively employed community leaders, influencers, and organizations to engage the public.

In terms of the question about the strategic communication of the ministry's effective utilization of communication channels and platforms to mobilize and engage the public and create awareness about the campaign, 60.6% agreed or agreed strongly, 29.6% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 9.8% remained neutral. These results demonstrate that the ministry employed communication channels and platforms to mobilize, engage the public, and create awareness about the campaign.

**Table 8: The clarity, relevance, and consistency of the ministry’s messages.**

No.	Statement	Values	Freq	percent
1.	The messages disseminated by the ministry about GLI were relevant and clear, avoiding complex technical terminology that may confuse.	Strongly disagree	19	4.9
		Disagree	119	30.8
		Neutral	12	3.1
		Agree	180	46.6
		Strongly agree	56	14.5
2.	The ministry’s messages clearly communicated the objectives of GLI to mobilize and engage the public	Strongly disagree	53	13.7
		Disagree	87	22.5
		Neutral	14	3.6
		Agree	208	53.9
		Strongly agree	24	6.2
3.	The messages of the ministry regarding the sustainability of the planted seedlings were consistent across different media channels.	Strongly disagree	19	4.9
		Disagree	170	44.0
		Neutral	51	13.2
		Agree	120	31.1
		Strongly agree	26	6.7
4.	The messages were consistently crafted for various target audiences, considering their needs and understanding	Strongly disagree	40	10.4
		Disagree	76	19.7
		Neutral	66	17.1
		Agree	164	42.5
		Strongly agree	40	10.4
5.	The messages distributed by the ministry provided clear practical steps that the public could follow to ensure the successful planting, and nurturing of the seedlings	Strongly disagree	48	12.4
		Disagree	106	27.5
		Neutral	49	12.7
		Agree	140	36.3

		Strongly agree	43	11.1
6.	The messages of the ministry clearly communicate the positive impact of GLI on the environmental and agricultural sustainability and livelihoods of citizens	Strongly disagree	36	9.3
		Disagree	80	20.7
		Neutral	24	6.2
		Agree	203	52.6
		Strongly agree	43	11.1
7.	The messages obtained clear instructions on the proper care of the planted trees, such as watering, trimming, and protection from diseases	Strongly disagree	59	15.3
		Disagree	86	22.3
		Neutral	66	17.1
		Agree	123	31.9
		Strongly agree	52	13.5
8.	The update messages from the ministry were consistently disseminated to the public via SMS.	Strongly disagree	38	9.8
		Disagree	134	34.7
		Neutral	34	8.8
		Agree	145	37.6
		Strongly agree	35	9.1
9.	The regularity of message dissemination through the employed channels and platforms was effective in engaging the public and relevant stakeholders during planting and post-management activities.	Strongly disagree	60	15.5
		Disagree	167	43.3
		Neutral	26	6.7
		Agree	105	27.2
		Strongly agree	28	7.3

Source: Survey Data (2024)

The results in the above table show that the strategic communication of the ministry has crafted clear, relevant, and consistent messages to mobilize and engage the public, create awareness, and provide technical information regarding tree planting and post-management activities.

Accordingly, of the total respondents (386) to the questionnaire, 61.1% agreed or strongly agreed that the ministry crafted clear, relevant, and consistent messages by avoiding complex technical language that may confuse the public. Additionally, out of 386 respondents, 47.4% strongly

agreed or agreed that the developed messages provided practical steps for the success of planting and nurturing seedling activities.

Moreover, 60.1% of respondents also agreed or strongly agreed that the ministry's messages conveyed the objectives of the GLI Campaign. Furthermore, 52.8% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the messages crafted for various target audiences regarding the Green Legacy Initiative Campaign objectives, tree planting, and post-management activities considered the needs and understanding of the audiences. Besides, 63.7% of respondents also agreed or strongly agreed that the crafted messages effectively communicated the positive impact of the Green Legacy Initiative Campaign on the environment, agriculture, and community livelihoods. In addition, 46.7% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the consistent dissemination and effectiveness of the update messages via mobile SMS. Finally, 45.4% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the strategic communication of the ministry has provided clear instructions on the proper care of the planted trees, like watering, trimming, and protection from diseases.

Although the result shows that the ministry's message has effectively communicated the objective of the Green Legacy Initiative Campaign and provided a clear and relevant message regarding technical areas of tree planting and post-management activities, the impact of the initiative, and instructional messages on how to take care of the planted trees, there were gaps in some areas of the ministry's messages. Thus, of the total respondents (386) to the questionnaire, 48.9% disagreed or strongly disagreed with the consistency of the disseminated messages regarding the sustainability of planted trees across different media channels. Furthermore, 58.8% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the regular message dissemination through various channels and platforms, specifically for post-management activities.

#### **4.4. Analysis of the in-depth interview questions**

The interview questions of this study were organized in themes relating to the Ministry of Agriculture's strategic communication utilization for the public mobilization campaign in the Green Legacy Initiative. The responses of the interviewees were categorized based on the themes

of the interview questions. Fifteen interviewees were involved in this study, including environmental experts, natural resource and agroforestry experts, PR officers, agricultural extension experts, members of the technical committee of the Green Legacy Initiative, and community leaders who have participated in public mobilization. These interviewees worked in diverse organizations, including governmental and non-governmental organizations. Although their responsibilities varied, they were involved in mobilizing the public, creating awareness, coordinating the campaign, and engaging the public for the Green Legacy Initiative Campaign. Accordingly, their responses are grouped and presented under the identified themes.

#### **4.4.1. The strategic communication used by the ministry**

From the interview response, we can comprehend that the Ministry of Agriculture employed different communication strategies. The Ministry of Agriculture's Natural Resource and PR departments, in collaboration with the PM's office and PR of the technical and steering committee, regional, zonal, woreda, and kebele stakeholders, agricultural agencies and professionals, and the media, organized extensive campaign programs to mobilize the public and raise awareness at all levels. The ministry paid special attention to public outreach, including information sharing, public mobilization, and participation in the tree-planting campaign and post-management.

*During the campaign, the ministry employed a multifaceted communication strategy to disseminate information and engage the public at all levels by utilizing media platforms like TV and radio. In addition to radio and TV, the ministry also used mobile SMS to create awareness and engage the public in tree planting and post-planting activities. Although it was not as much as expected, the ministry was also disseminating messages on its social media and website (Natural Resource Expert of the Ministry, 2024).*

*Moreover, the ministry coordinated its sectoral stakeholders at regional, zonal, woreda, and kebele levels and mobilized the public using agricultural extension workers, community and religious leaders, and influencers, such as artists and investors. The ministry also used community institutions, such as schools and universities, and grassroots organizations like Ekub*

*and Edir to mobilize and engage the public for the Green Legacy Initiative Campaign (Member of the Technical Committee, 2024).*

*The ministry has been providing capacity-building training for agroforestry experts at regional, zonal, and woreda levels to build the technical expertise of the experts working with the community. Experience-sharing activities have also been organized for farmers among woredas in collaboration with the regional agricultural bureau. The ministry's kebele sectors also helped the communities plan, plant, and care for trees (Member of Community Leaders, 2024).*

#### **4.4.2. The strengths of strategic communication**

According to the interview responses, the strategic communication of the ministry had strength in effectively contributing to the mobilization and engagement of the public and relevant stakeholders for the Green Legacy Initiative Campaign's tree-planting and post-management activities.

*The ministry had a significant role in effectively coordinating the local stakeholders, including regional agricultural bureaus, zonal, woreda, and kebele agricultural administrations, for the campaign's effectiveness. Additionally, the ministry's strategic communication employed a diverse range of platforms and channels to reach the public (Natural resource expert of Meta woreda, 2024).*

*To facilitate widespread awareness and active participation, the ministry established collaboration at various levels, from the regional level to the kebeles. This collaboration empowered the local communities to take ownership of the initiative and actively participate in tree planting and care activities. The collaboration created a chain of communication, allowing for the effective dissemination of information and the planning of tree-planting activities (PR Officer of the Ministry, 2024).*

#### **4.4.3. Communication channels and platforms and their effectiveness**

Interview responses suggest that the Ministry of Agriculture employed several communication channels and platforms for public mobilization in the Green Legacy Initiative Campaign. These encompassed traditional media channels like TV and radio, print media such as newspapers,

magazines, flyers, and brochures, as well as different platforms like social media and websites. The ministry, in collaboration with regional agricultural bureaus and zonal, woreda, and kebele agricultural administrations, employed a variety of public engagement strategies, such as community leaders, community organizations, influencers, and agricultural extension workers, in areas where communication channels and platforms were not available.

*The communication channels and platforms were effective in disseminating information for public mobilization and awareness creation for the Green Legacy Initiative Campaign. However, the effectiveness of these communication channels and platforms varied. Communication channels like TV and radio were effective in reaching a wide audience in areas where access to the Internet and social media was limited (PR Officer of the Ministry, 2024).*

*Particularly, local FM radio broadcasting in local languages played a crucial role in mobilizing and engaging the public in rural areas. The campaigns held at community organizations, religious places, and public gathering places using community leaders and influencers were also very effective in helping the ministry and regional stakeholders reach mass audiences. This strategy also allowed two-way communication and interaction with the public, creating an opportunity for discussion and engagement (Sebeta Sub-City Natural Resource Expert, 2024).*

According to the PR Officer of the Ministry (2024), there were gaps in effectively using communication platforms like social media and websites to release timely updates, technical messages, and site-match information, especially on post-management activities. According to the interviewee, most of the public in urban areas uses social media like Facebook, Telegram, and WhatsApp, specifically the youth. The shortfalls of using social media for awareness creation and message dissemination harm the success of the campaign.

#### **4.4.4. Clarity, relevance, and consistency of messages**

The interviewees' responses imply that the messages distributed by the Ministry of Agriculture for public mobilization were effective in terms of clarity, relevance, and consistency. The ministry's collaboration with regional agricultural bureaus and involvement of regional natural resources and agro-forestry experts, as well as the technical committee of the Initiative for message crafting, have played a crucial role in ensuring message clarity, relevance, and

consistency. The involvement of these experts helped in crafting and framing the message for the local context, communicating them in local languages, and supporting tree planting and post-management activities.

Additionally, the interview responses pointed out that the crafted messages clearly, relevantly, and consistently communicated the objectives and long-term impact of the Green Legacy Initiative Campaign.

*The engagement and behavior change that has been seen among the public, particularly in rural areas, who actively participated in tree-planting activities and contributed to the legacy in various ways can be evidence for well-crafted messages. Despite the relevance, consistency, and clarity of the messages, there was a weakness in the regular dissemination of technical messages, specifically about post-management information and site-matching, especially in urban areas (Oromia Regional Natural Resource Officer, 2024).*

#### **4.4.5. Public awareness and behavior change in terms of sustainability**

According to the interview responses, the ministry played a crucial role in increasing public awareness and behavior change regarding seedling sustainability through strategic communication and outreach, collaboration with different stakeholders, and capacity building. The ministry provided training, workshops, and informational materials to educate the natural resource and agro-forestry experts at different levels, community leaders, and volunteers on seedling planting, seedling care, sustainable practices, and the goals of the initiative to raise awareness and empower the public for the sustainability of the initiative.

As stated by the Oromia Regional Natural Resource Officer (2024), the ministry's engagement with the relevant stakeholders, such as international organizations, technical and steering committees, NGOs, local authorities, and community leaders, also fostered collaboration in creating public awareness and achieving the goals of the Green Legacy. The ministry has also been conducting regular seedling survival assessments twice a year, following the rainy and dry seasons, to assess the survival rate of the planted seedlings and evaluate the impact of public awareness and behavior change regarding post-management.

*The ministry also assessed the impact of the planted trees during the five years in terms of the environmental, social, and economic impacts of the Green Legacy Initiative. Additionally, this year, the ministry initiated virtual meetings with regional agricultural bureau officials and woreda agricultural natural resource experts every week to discuss the sustainability of the planted trees and public engagement (Natural Resource Expert of the Ministry, 2024).*

*Although the ministry's strategic communication was effective in creating awareness and mobilizing and engaging the public, there were gaps in awareness creation and behavioral change regarding the long-term sustainability of the planted seedlings. The ministry's strategic communication has a weakness in creating awareness and bringing about behavioral change through targeted education and training regarding the significance of watering, weeding, and taking care of the planted seedlings regularly to ensure the impact of the initiative (Oromia Regional Natural Resource Officer, 2024).*

#### **4.4.6. Weaknesses of strategic communication**

It can be inferred from the interview responses that there was a weakness in the strategic communication of the ministry in disseminating technical messages regarding biophysical relations and post-management regularly.

*Although the ministry has been working on distributing biophysical relations and post-management messages, there are still gaps in effectively distributing the information continuously (Agricultural Extension of Meta woreda, 2024).*

*Additionally, there was a gap in post-management practices, such as proper data collection, and documentation, at the regional and national levels. There was a shortage of print materials such as brochures, flyers, and posters that communicate the impacts of the Green Legacy Initiative and post-management practices. There was also a gap in employing social media and websites*

*to disseminate information and engage the public, especially the urban public and youth, in tree planting and post-management activities (Natural Resource Expert of the Ministry, 2024).*

*There was also a significant gap in documenting the campaign materials. Additionally, there is currently no dedicated communication strategy specifically crafted for the Green Legacy, the Green Legacy is incorporated within the broader communication framework of the ministry. The initiative also doesn't have a communication strategy in which campaign activities are planned and implementations monitored and evaluated (Member of the Technical Committee, 2024).*

## **4.5. Discussion**

### ***1. The strengths and weaknesses of the strategic communication of the Ministry of Agriculture***

The findings showed that the Ministry of Agriculture's strategic communication for public mobilization in the Green Legacy Initiative Campaign demonstrated significant strengths and notable weaknesses. In terms of strength, the ministry effectively mobilized the public, engaged relevant stakeholders, and created awareness about the initiative and its objectives through its strategic communication using appropriate and rich communication channels and platforms, as well as crafting clear, relevant, and consistent messages. According to Adamkolo et al. (2022), strategic communication is employed as a significant tool to obtain consent from diverse stakeholders, establish accountability, foster cooperation and relationships, and improve participation and collaboration.

This shows that the campaigns conducted by the ministry effectively mobilized the public, engaged relevant stakeholders, and created awareness about the initiative and its objectives through the use of appropriate and rich communication channels and platforms, as well as crafting a clear, relevant, and consistent message. According to (Snyder, 2007), communication activities within campaigns are organized with the intentional purpose of accomplishing a

specific and measurable goal. The findings indicated that the Ministry was successful in meeting these campaign objectives through its communication efforts.

Additionally, the findings implied that the ministry's strategic communication has strengths in collaborating with stakeholders at different levels for information dissemination, involving regional bureaus, experts, technical and steering committees, and relevant local and international stakeholders. Hart and Nisbet (2012) stated that building partnerships with local influencers, environmental groups, and government agencies can improve the campaign's trustworthiness and success. The ministry effectively used targeted outreach methods, messaging, and extensive stakeholder collaboration to strategically mobilize and engage the public in alignment with best practices for impactful campaigns outlined in the literature.

Moreover, it has utilized its strategic communication in capacity-building activities through training and workshops that provide natural resource experts and communities with knowledge and skills. However, the ministry's campaign had weaknesses in providing clear messages on biophysical relations and collecting feedback from the audiences. As Nisbet (2010), using clear and concise language that matches the audience's understanding; employing narratives, examples, and metaphors to illustrate the message and make it memorable; and incorporating verifiable facts and data to enhance the message's reliability.

## *2. The effectiveness of the communication channels and platforms utilized by the ministry*

Regarding this, both survey and interview results showed that the ministry effectively employed communication channels like TV, radio, and print media and enabled reaching wide audiences, including rural communities with limited access. Traditional media like local radio proved highly effective for mobilization and awareness creation, specifically in rural areas where internet or mobile access is limited. Most of the respondents specified that they have FM radio functionality on their mobile phones, which they use to stay informed and entertained. According to Dutta-Bergman (2005), TV and radio advertisements can disseminate messages to a wide audience in an effective manner. As stated by Griffin (2009), the media can influence public perceptions of

what issues are most important by emphasizing certain issues through more reports and prominent placement.

In addition to radio and TV, the ministry also used mobile SMS to create awareness and engage the public in tree planting and post-planting activities. Mobile applications can also convey real-time updates, interactive maps of tree planting locations, and educational content empowering individuals to take action (Gupta, 2020). The ministry's effective and strategic use of a mix of communication channels appears to have been an effective approach for reaching and engaging the target population. According to Griffin (2009), the media can influence public perceptions of what issues are most important by emphasizing certain issues through more reports and prominent placement. Additionally, the use of a variety of media also allowed the audiences to get the messages from the media they already owned, had access to, and preferred.

Furthermore, the ministry also engaged influencers, community leaders, and institutions in public mobilization and awareness creation. According to Cairns and Slade (2017), collaborating with schools, universities, and community groups can help expand reach to diverse audiences. The involvement of community leaders, elders, and local influencers helped to reinforce the ministry's messages. As respected individuals among the public, they also served as credible and relatable messengers to connect with the public and influence behavioral change. Nisbet (2010) stated that building partnerships with local influencers, environmental groups, and government agencies can improve the campaign's trustworthiness and success.

According to the interview results, the ministry had a gap in utilizing social media platforms and websites. Social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, and Telegram help reach a wider audience by sharing interactive content, facilitating discussions, promoting behavior change, and collecting feedback. According to Kaplan & Haenlein (2010), social media like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram have become prominent tools for such campaigns due to their power to involve large audiences. Although these channels would be effective in reaching mass audiences and engaging different stakeholders in tree planting and post-management, the ministry was not using them effectively.

In addition to this, sustaining the utilization of social media and websites can help mobilize the youth widely and engage the public, especially for post-management activities and the sustainability of the Green Legacy Initiative Campaign. According to Lamberton & Stephen (2016), social platforms also allow environmental campaigns to facilitate discussions, spread educational material, and initiate behavior change through interactive campaigns. Contrary to this, the ministry didn't regularly employ social media and websites to disseminate information and engage the public, especially for post-management activities.

### *3. The clarity, relevance, and consistency of the ministry's messages*

The findings show that the messages crafted and distributed by the Ministry of Agriculture for public mobilization for the sustainability of the planted seedlings were effective in terms of clarity, relevance, and consistency. According to Paul (2011), message is one of the significant elements of strategic communication. Muehling & McCann (1993) stated that when messages produce target information, they can capture more attention, generate greater interest, facilitate cognitive feedback, improve message recognition, and promote better topic recall.

Message clarity, relevance, and consistency are crucial factors in environmental campaigns, as the campaign requires consistent and regular message dissemination to create awareness and drive behavioral change. Accordingly, the findings show that the ministry's strategic communication was effective in crafting and distributing clear, relevant, and consistent messages. Chan & Chan (2013) noted that creating awareness through messages helps draw public attention to vital social and behavioral issues. Thus, the ministry's collaboration with regional agricultural bureaus and involvement of regional natural resources and agro-forestry experts, as well as the technical committee of the Initiative for message crafting, have played a crucial role in ensuring message clarity, relevance, and consistency.

The findings show that the involvement of these experts helped in crafting and framing the message for the local context, communicating it in local languages, and avoiding complex technical language that may confuse the public. As stated by Nyaga (2018), framing environmental messages significantly influences environmental education, corporate participation in green initiatives, and the choices of initiatives. Moreover, framing makes a significant connection between new information and what audiences already know or believe. As Doyle (2007) stated, framing messages can impact perspectives through complex interactions between audience traits, messaging elements, and alignment with prior ideas, as well as other contextual factors. Framing is mainly impactful in bringing attention to, legitimizing, and helping interpret context or difficult topics associated with environmental issues

Additionally, findings showed that the crafted messages clearly, relevantly, and consistently created awareness, contributed to changing the attitude and behavior of the audiences, and communicated the objectives and long-term impact of the Green Legacy Initiative Campaign. According to Scannell & Gifford (2013), when messages frame climate change as a threat to individuals' geographical identity, they can have a significant influence on individuals' value-belief systems and, subsequently, their behaviors. This shows that crafting and disseminating clear, relevant, and consistent messages plays a significant role in changing the attitudes and behaviors of audiences and sustaining an environment; the ministry was also successful in creating such messages.

Even though the crafted messages were clear, relevant, and consistent, technical messages on post-management lacked regular dissemination. The findings showed that there was a shortfall in regularly creating and disseminating messages on post-management activities. This gap in the regular dissemination of technical details limited the ability to fully drive the needed behavioral change and sustain the initiative's impact over a long period of time. The regularity of message crafting and dissemination regarding post-management activities like watering, pruning, etc. maximizes the initiative's effectiveness and lasting impact, though the ministry has weaknesses in this regard.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

This chapter outlines the summary of the findings presented in the preceding section. It also presents the recommendations that are drawn from the findings. The recommendations aim to rectify the gaps in the ministry's strategic communication and provide a framework for future studies.

#### **5.1. Conclusion**

Based on the findings, the researcher has drawn the following conclusion:

The findings provided significant understanding regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the ministry's strategic communication. In terms of its strengths, the ministry's strategic communication was effective in collaborating with relevant stakeholders at various levels. The ministry collaborated with the regional, zonal, woreda, and kebele agricultural administrations, natural resource experts, technical and steering committees, influencers, community leaders, grassroots organizations, and relevant local and international stakeholders, to distribute information, create awareness, and engage the public.

The ministry was also effective in employing communication channels like TV, radio, newspapers, magazines, and mobile SMS to disseminate information and engage the public. The ministry was successful in developing clear, relevant, and consistent messages that created awareness and engaged the public.

Moreover, it was also effective in building experts and community capacity and empowering them through training and workshops. This contributed to the long-term sustainability of the Green Legacy Initiative Campaign, as it helped the public become aware of the initiative and its objectives. The ministry was also successful in using community institutions like schools and universities and grassroots organizations like Ekub and Edir as mobilization centers.

However, alongside the strengths, the findings disclosed aspects where the ministry's strategic communication has deficits. One notable weakness is the lack of clear messages regarding site matches. Although the ministry's strategic communication was effective in mobilizing and engaging the public and creating awareness, there was a gap in disseminating clear messages that provided detailed information regarding the interconnectedness of the seedlings and planting sites regularly.

Another major weakness of the ministry's communication strategy was the limited feedback collected from the audiences. Even though the ministry effectively distributed information, created awareness, and engaged the public, there was a shortfall in capturing important feedback and opinions from the target audiences, which shows that the ministry's strategic communication had a gap in practicing symmetric.

The findings also shed light on the effective and appropriate utilization of communication channels and platforms. The ministry was effective in using traditional media such as TV, radio, and print media to create awareness, mobilize and engage the public, and reach broader audiences with limited access. Its use of mobile SMS was also effective and successful in mobilizing the public and raising awareness.

On the contrary, the findings indicated that the ministry's strategic communication had weaknesses in using social media platforms and websites. Although social media platforms and websites were used in the ministry's strategic communication, there were gaps in regularity.

Regarding message development, the ministry was adept at crafting clear, relevant, and consistent messages. The ministry's collaboration with regional agricultural bureaus, natural resource experts, technical and steering committees, and PR officers played a significant role in ensuring the messages' clarity, relevance, and consistency. This effectively helped to create awareness about the Green Legacy Initiative Campaign, its objectives, and its long-term impact.

Although the ministry's strategic communication was effective in creating clear, relevant, and consistent messages, there was a gap in message regularity. The findings revealed that there was a lack of regularity in distributing technical messages regarding biophysical relations and post-management of the planted seedlings.

Finally, the ministry's strategic communication had strengths in mobilizing and engaging the public, creating awareness, collaborating with relevant stakeholders, and capacity-building. However, it had weaknesses in social media utilization, feedback collection, message clarity, regularity regarding biophysical relations, and post-management activities. It also had weaknesses in employing campaign materials like brochures, flyers, and billboards.

## **5.2. Recommendation**

The following points are recommended based on the quantitative and qualitative findings.

- Developing a comprehensive communication strategy for the Green Legacy Initiative campaign separately. Developing a communication strategy will help to utilize appropriate communication channels and platforms, craft clear, relevant, and consistent messages, create awareness, mobilize and engage the public, and monitor and assess communication activities and awareness levels.
- Assessing communication effectiveness in reach, awareness, engagement, and behavioral change by collecting data through surveys, interviews, and traditional and social media.
- Improving message dissemination regarding biophysical relations to strengthen the public's understanding in terms of seedling types and site-match, as well as climate regulation. This can be improved with the development and dissemination of educational materials such as videos, brochures, and flyers through regular use of communication channels and platforms to create awareness of biophysical relations.
- Increasing social media and website utilization to reach a large public, specifically the urban public and youth, create awareness, and engage them in tree planting and post-management activities. By consistently, regularly, and effectively using platforms like Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, YouTube, and Telegram, the ministry can disseminate communication materials, raise awareness and mobilize and engage a wider public.

- Sustaining message regularity by utilizing the guidelines that were developed for the Green Legacy Initiative Campaign and crafting communication materials. The ministry should also create a strategy to review the campaign materials to sustain the clarity, relevance, consistency, and regularity of the message. Additionally, the ministry should also provide regular training and workshops for natural resource experts, agricultural extension workers, and the community.
- Strengthening post-management communication to ensure the long-term sustainability of the Green Legacy Initiative. The ministry's strategic communication should provide regular and broad guidance on post-management activities, including information on seedling care, watering strategies, pest and disease management, and control.
- Finally, the ministry should document the communication materials by creating a database to organize and store the produced materials during the Green Legacy Initiative Campaign. Communication materials like brochures, flyers, posters, articles, news, documentaries, videos, press releases, and social media posts should be documented as they serve as resources for future references, evaluation, and development of future campaign materials.

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## **Appendix 1: Survey questionnaire**

Dear respondents,

I am a postgraduate student at Addis Ababa University in the College of Humanities, Language Studies, Journalism, and Communication. This questionnaire is prepared for conducting my thesis research entitled Strategic Communication of the Ministry of Agriculture: Assessment of Public Mobilization in the Green Legacy Initiative Campaign.

The purpose of my research is to assess the strategic communication of the Ministry of Agriculture employed for public mobilization in the Green Legacy Initiative Campaign. I would like you to complete my questionnaire as honestly as possible. The questionnaire has five parts and relates to the strategic communication of the Ministry of Agriculture and your participation in the Green Legacy Initiative Campaign.

Your responses will be anonymous, and you won't be identified in the report of this research finding. Please read the instructions carefully and respond to the questions in the order they are presented. If you encounter any problems or would like to discuss any aspects of the study, please contact me.

Thank you for your cooperation!

*Contact information*

*Mobile: +251930767519*

*E-mail: marthionakebite@gmail.com*

## Section I: Demographic Data

Please fill in your personal information for demographic data by ticking “√”

1. Sex: Male  Female
2. Age: 15-24  25-34  35-44   
45-54  55 and above
3. Educational level: Elementary  High school  Diploma   
First Degree  Second Degree & above   
Other (specify) -----
4. Occupation: Student  Employed   
Self-employed  Unemployed   
Other (please specify) -----

## Section II: Ministry of Agriculture’s Strategic Communication

Please indicate to what extent you agree with the following statements:

1. Strongly disagree, 2. Disagree, 3. Neutral, 4. Agree, 5. Strongly agree

No.	Questions	1	2	3	4	5
1.	The ministry effectively created awareness about the Green Legacy Initiative and its objectives.					
2.	The ministry’s communication contributed to changing the attitude, and behaviour of the public regarding the GLI Campaign.					
3.	The ministry gave clear messages on biophysical relations in the GLI campaign.					
4.	The ministry had a remarkable strength in mobilizing and engaging the public in the GLI Campaign.					

5.	The ministry has collected feedback to use as input into the GLI campaign plans and activities.					
6.	The ministry utilized effective and appropriate communication channels and platforms to engage the public and relevant stakeholders.					

### Section III: The Ministry of Agriculture’s communication channels

Please indicate to what extent you agree with the following statements:

1. Strongly disagree, 2. Disagree, 3. Neutral, 4. Agree, 5. Strongly agree

No	statements	1	2	3	4	5
1.	The ministry effectively employed local radio and TV to disseminate messages about the GLI campaign and mobilize the public					
2.	The ministry used print media (e.g., newspapers, magazines) to effectively convey information about the GLI campaign					
3.	The ministry employed campaign materials, such as brochures, flyers, and billboards as a communication channel to mobilize the public					
4.	The ministry utilized agricultural extension workers as communication channels to support the public in the seedling planting and taking care of the planted seedling activities					
5.	The ministry used local community leaders and influencers as communication channels and community-based organizations like schools,					

	universities, and religious places in addition to channels and platforms to mobilize and engage the public to participate in the GLI continuously.					
6.	The communication channels and platforms that the ministry employed had effectively mobilized and engaged the public and contributed in creating awareness about the GLI Campaign.					

#### Section IV: The Ministry of Agriculture’s messages

Please indicate to what extent you agree with the following statements:

1. Strongly disagree, 2. Disagree, 3. Neutral, 4. Agree, 5. Strongly agree

No.	statements	1	2	3	4	5
1.	The messages disseminated by the ministry about GLI were relevant and clear, avoiding complex technical terminology that may confuse.					
2.	The messages conveyed by MoA effectively communicated the objectives of GLI to mobilize and engage the public					
3.	The messages of the ministry regarding the planting and sustainability of the planted seedlings were consistent across different media channels.					
4.	The ministry’s messages were crafted for various target audiences, considering their needs and understanding					
5.	The messages distributed by the ministry provided practical steps that the public					

	could follow to ensure the successful planting, and nurturing of the seedlings.					
6.	The messages of the ministry effectively communicate the positive impact of GLI on the environmental and agricultural sustainability and livelihoods of citizens					
7.	The messages obtained clear instructions on the proper care of the planted trees, such as watering, trimming, and protection from diseases					
8.	The update messages from the ministry were consistently disseminated to the public via SMS.					
9.	The regularity of message dissemination through the employed channels and platforms were effective in engaging the public and relevant stakeholders during tree planting and in post management activities.					

**Section V: Open-ended questions regarding the effectiveness of the ministry’s strategic communication, message clarity and relevance, and the effectiveness of communication channels**

1. How clear and relevant were the messages distributed for the campaign in communicating the sustainability of the planted seedlings?
2. How effective and strategic was the communication of the ministry in conveying the objective of the Green Legacy Initiative Campaign?
3. What were the key strengths of the strategic communication of the ministry during the campaign?
4. Did you notice any weakness in the communication of the ministry during the campaign? If so, please discuss them.
5. Do you think the Ministry of Agriculture has been using appropriate media for the campaign? If so, how?
6. Please share any comments or suggestions you have regarding the strategic communication of the ministry for the Green Legacy Initiative Campaign.

## Appendix 2: Translated survey questions

Kabajamoo deebii kennitootaa,

Ani Yunivarsiitii Addis Ababaa, kolleeejii Humanities, Language Studies, Journalism, and Communication keessatti barattuu digrii lammaffaati. Qorannoo koo mata-duree “Strategic Communication of the Ministry of Agriculture: Assessment of Public Mobilization in the Green Legacy Initiative Campaign” jedhurrattin hojjachaa jira.

Xiyyeefannaan qorannoo kanaa tarsiimoo qunnamtii Ministeerri Qonnaa Sagantaa Ashaaraa Magariisaatiif hawaasa dammaqsuu fi hirmaachisuuf itti gargaarame hammam bu’a qabeessa akka ture madaaluudha.

Kanaaf gaaffiwwan dhiyaataniif deebii sirrii ta’e akka naaf deebistan kabajaan isin gaafachaa, deebiin yookiin yaadni isin asirratti kennitan iccitiidhaan kan qabamu akkasumas barreefama kamirrattuu kan hin maxxafamne waan ta’eef, bilisummaadhaan deebiin sirrii akka deebistan isin gaafadha.

Gaaffiwwan kennaman sirriitti deebisuuf qajeelfamoota sirriiti akka dubbistan isin hubachiisaa, yoo gaafii qabaattanii fi waan isiniif galuu dide gaafachuu barbaaddan karaalee armaan gadiitiin na qunnamuu dandeessu.

Hirmaannaa keessaniif ulfaadhaa!

*Mobile: +251930767519*

*E-mail: [marthionakebite@gmail.com](mailto:marthionakebite@gmail.com)*

**Kutaa I: Odeeffannoo dhuunfaa keessan**

Gaafilee armaan gadii kanneen deebii sirrii ta’e mallattoo “√” fayyadamuun deebisi.

1. Umriin kee meeqa? 18-24  25-34  35-44   
45-54  55 and above

2. Saalli kee maali? Dhiira  Dubara

3. Sadarkaan barnootaa kee maali? Sad. 1<sup>ffaa</sup>  Sad. 2<sup>ffaa</sup>

Dippiloomaa  Digrii 1<sup>ffaa</sup>

Digrii 2<sup>ffaa</sup> fi isaa ol

Kan biro (ibsi) -----

4. Hojiin kee hoo? Barataa  Qacaramaa

Kan dhuunfaa  Hojii dhabaa

Kan biro (ibsi) -----

**Kutaa II: Gaafilee tarsiimoo qunnamtii Ministeera Qonnaatiin wal-qabatan.**

Gaafileen armaan gadii kunneen tarsiimoo qunnamtii Ministeerri Qonnaa Sagantaa Ashaaraa Magariisaarratti hawaasa dammaqasuuf fayyadamerratti xiyyeeffata. Gaafilee kanneen mallattoo “√” kana fayyadamuun yaadicharratti walii galuu kee laakkofsota kennaman filachuun deebisi.

1	2	3	4	5
Sirritti walii hin galu	Walii hin galu	Yaada hin qabu	Waliin gala	Sirritin walii gala

Lakk.		1	2	3	4	5
1.	Ministeerri qonnaa waa'ee Sagantaa Ashaaraa Magariisaatii fi kaayyoosaarratti hawaasaaf hubannoo laateera.					
2.	Ministirichaa waa'ee Sagantaa Ashaaraa Magariisaa ummata hubachiisuun jijjiirraan ilaalchaa fi amalaa akka dhufu gochuu keessatti gahee isaa bahateera.					
3.	Ministeerichi Sagantaa Ashaaraa Magariisaa irratti hawaasni wal simuu gosa biqiltootaa fi iddoo dhaabbii isaanii hubannoo gahaa akka argatu taasiseera.					
4.	Ministeerichi duula Sagantaa Ashaaraa Magariisaa irratti hawaasa dammaqsuu fi hirmaachisuu irratti cimina qabaayyu.					
5.	Ministeerichi Sagantaa Ashaaraa Magariisaa keessatti yaada hawaasarraa sassaabee, akka galteetti karoora fi raawwii isaa keessatti fayyadameera.					
6.	Ministeerichi hubannoo uumuu fi hirmaachisuuf miidiyaalee idilee fi hawaasaa garagaraa sirritti fayyadameera					

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### **naatiin wal-qabatan**

**Gaafileen armaan gadii kunneen miidiyaalee Ministeerri Qonnaa duula Ashaaraa Magariisaarratti hawaasa dammaqasuuf fayyadamerratti xiyyeeffata. Gaafilee kanneen mallattoo “√” kana fayyadamuun yaadicharratti walii galuu kee laakkofsota kennaman filachuun deebisi.**

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Sirritti walii hin galu</b>	<b>Walii hin galu</b>	<b>Yaada hin qabu</b>	<b>Waliin gala</b>	<b>Sirritin walii gala</b>

<b>Lakk.</b>	<b>Gaafilee</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
1.	Ministeerichi karaa bu'a qabeessa ta'een miidiyaalee raadiyoo fi TV fayyadamuun ergaa waa'ee Sagantaa Ashaaraa Magariisaa dabarsaa tureera.					
2.	Ministeerichi hubannoo uumuuf, miidiyaa maxxansaa (gaazexootaa fi barruulee) garagaraa kan fayyadame yoo ta'u, maxxansaaleen kunis hawaasa bira gahaniiru.					
3.	Ministeerichi Sagantaa Ashaaraa Magariisaatiif ummata kakaasuu, hirmaachisuu fi hubannoo uumuuf, ergaaleesaa karaa maxxansaalee harkatti kennaman kanneen akka biroosharii fi filaayarii fayyadameera.					
4.	Ministeerichi ogeessota ekisteenshinii qonnaa fayyadamuun hawaasni Sagantaa Ashaaraa Magariisaa, biqiltuu dhaabuu fi kunuunsa biqiltuu dhaabamee irratti akka hirmaatuuf kakaasaa tureera.					
5.	Ministeerichi manguddoota, abbootii Gadaa fi amantii, jaarsolii biyyaa, namoota beekkamoo akka artistootaa, akkasumas dhaabbilee hawaasaa akka manneen barnootaa, yuunivarsiitii fi iddoowwan amantaa fayyadamuun hawaasa dammaqsaa akka hawaasni duula Sagantaa Ashaaraa Magariisaa irratti hirmaatu fi biqiltuu dhaabee kunuunsu taasiseera.					
6.	Miidiyaaleen idilee, hawaasaa fi toorri intarneetii duula Sagantaa Ashaaraa Magariisaatiif ministeerichi fayyadame, hubannoo uumuun hawaasa kakaasuu fi					

hirmaachisuu keessatti bu'a qabeessa ture					
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**Kutaa IV: Gaafilee ergaalee Ministeera Qonnaatiin wal-qabatan**

Gaafileen armaan gadii kunneen ergaalee Ministeerri Qonnaa duula Ashaaraa Magariisaarratti hawaasa dammaqasuuf fayyadamerratti xiyyeeffata. Gaafilee kanneen mallattoo “√” kana fayyadamuun yaadicharratti walii galuu kee laakkofsota kennaman filachuun deebisi.

1	2	3	4	5
Sirritti walii hin galu	Walii hin galu	Yaada hin qabu	Waliin gala	Sirrittin walii gala

Lakk.	Gaafilee	1	2	3	4	5
1.	Ergaaleen duula Sagantaa Ashaara Magariisaaf ministeerichi tamsaasaa ture ifaa fi jechoota walxaxoo fi burjaajessoo irraa bilisa turani.					
2.	Ergaaleen ministeerichi tamsaasaa ture waa'ee Sagantaa Ashaaraa Magariisaa fi kaayyoo isaa sirritti ibsuun, hawaasa kakaasaa, hubachiisaa fi hirmaachisa turan.					
3.	Ergaaleen ministeerichi miidiyaalee garagaraarratti sirna biqiltuu dhaabu fi itti fufiinsaan kunuunsuu irratti tamsaasaa ture, ergaalee garaa agarummaa hin qabne ykn					

	wal simoo turan.					
4.	Ergaaleen ministeerichaa hawaasaa fi fedhii fi hubannoo hawaasaa giddu galeessa kan godhateefi kan hubachuuf nama hin rakkisne ture.					
5.	Ergaaleen ministeerichi tamsaasu, gochaan/qabatamaan akka hawaasni biqiltuu itti dhaabuu fi kunuunsee guddisu irratti hubannoo uumeera.					
6.	Ergaaleen ministeerichaa haala milkaa'aa ta'een bu'aa Ashaaraan Magariisaa itti fufiinsa eegumsa naannoo, fi qonnaa jireenya lammiilee jijjiiruu saffisiisuu keessatti akka gahee qabu hubachiiseera.					
7.	Ergaaleen ministeerichi biqiltuu dhaabuu fi kunuunsuu (bishaan obaasuu, aramuu, fi kkf) irratti tamsaasaa ture ifaa fi salphaatti kan hubatamu ture.					
8.	Ministeerichi odeeffannoo haaraa, wal simoo fi itti fufiinsa qaban karaa bilbila harkaa/mobile SMStiin tamsaasaa tureera.					
9.	Ministeerichi itti fufiinsaan miidiyaalee fayyadamuu biqiltuu dhaabuu fi kunuunsuu irratti ergaalee tamsaasuun hawaasa fi qaamolee dhimmi ilaallatu dammaqsaa fi hirmaachisuu irratti milkaa'aa ture.					

**Kutaa V: Gaafileen armaan gadii kunneen bu'a qabeessummaa qunnamtii tarsiimawaa, ergaalee ifaa fi barbaachisoo ta'anii fi midiyaalee Ministeerri Qonnaa duula Ashaaraa Magariisaatiif fayyadameratti xiyyeeffatu. Gaafileen kunneen ibsa bal'aa waan barbaadaniif, waan dhugaa fi qabatamaan jiru barreessuun deebisi.**

1. Itti fufiinsa kunuunsa biqiltuu dhaabamee keessatti ergaawwan duula kanaaf raabsaman hangam ifaafi barbaachisoo turan?
2. Kaayyoo duula Sagantaa Ashaaraa Magariisaa dabarsuu keessatti qunnamtiin ministeerichaa hangam bu'a qabeessaa fi tarsiimawaa ture?
3. Duula Sagantaa Ashaaraa Magariisaarratti cimina ijoo qunnamtii tarsiimoo ministeerichaa maal ture?
4. Tarsiimoo qunnamtii ministeerichaa irratti dadhabinni jiraayyuu? Yoo akkas ta'e, maal akka ture ibsi.
5. Ministeerri Qonnaa duula Sagantaa Ashaaraa Magariisaatiif miidiyaa sirrii fi ummata hunda bira qaqqabu fayyadameera jettee yaaddaa? Yoo fayyadameera jettees, yoo hin fayyadamne jettes ibsi.
6. Duula Sagantaa Ashaaraa Magariisaaf qunnamtii tarsiimawaa ministeerichi fayyadame ilaalchisee yaada dabalataa yoo qabaatte ibsi.

### **Appendix 3: Interview Questions**

1. What is your job title?
2. A brief description of your organization and your responsibilities.
3. What were the main communication strategies used by the ministry in mobilizing and engaging the public for the Green Legacy Initiative Campaign?
4. What were the main strengths of the strategic communication of the ministry in mobilizing the public for the campaign?
5. Did the ministry use communication channels and platforms effectively? If so, how?
6. How were the disseminated messages? Do you think they were clear, relevant, and consistent for the public?
7. Did the ministry assess public awareness and behavior change regarding the sustainability of the planted seedlings?
8. In your opinion, what were the weaknesses of the ministry's strategic communication