



Haiti Reconstruction Fund

# Communications Strategy

## **Need for a Communications Strategy**

The key objective of this communication strategy is to create a public platform that will allow the HRF to strengthen its links with key constituencies by informing them about its results, mandate and the role it plays in the reconstruction of Haiti, and to receive feedback from stakeholders. The HRF should be perceived as an efficient, lean, responsive, and flexible source of financing for some of the key reconstruction priorities as determined by the Government of Haiti.

To fulfill its mandate, the HRF needs an effective communications strategy to inform the public of its activities, ensure visibility, foster additional commitments, receive feedback, and provide all its stakeholders with the most up-to-date information about its activities, strategic direction and results. This communications strategy is driven by objectives and specific outcomes, taking into account its operational context, using as well the most effective tools to communicate with each audience. It has been developed with support and guidance from the World Bank's External Relations Team (WB EXT).

## **HRF Communications Environment**

The HRF plays an important and strategic role in the reconstruction of Haiti. At the same time, its performance and institutional image have to be carefully crafted to ensure complete compatibility with all other actors involved in the reconstruction. The HRF's image must constructively complement that of other Haitian and international institutions, contributing to their structural strengthening. This constitutes an additional and valuable contribution to the reconstruction process.

In the current context, the HRF already has an institutional image that reflects its constructive work and the political climate in which it has been functioning. It is important to assess the Funds' achievements and shortcomings to determine the most effective way to steer its communications strategy from this point onwards.

## **Institutional Messages**

The Haiti Reconstruction Fund needs to maintain a dynamic portfolio of institutional messages, given that its operational context will change rather often. At the moment, these are the key notions to be conveyed and reflected in all communications.

**The Haiti Reconstruction Fund (HRF) is a partnership between the international community and the Government of Haiti to help finance post-earthquake reconstruction.**

The HRF mobilizes, coordinates and allocates contributions from bilateral and other donors to finance high-priority projects, programs and budget support.

**The HRF is, and will likely remain the largest source of unprogrammed funding for reconstruction.**

As of June 30, 2011, nineteen donors have committed \$352 million to the Fund, of which \$335 million has been received. This money is unprogrammed and can be used flexibly to meet strategic reconstruction needs. 20% of all reconstruction finance disbursed to Haiti through June 2011 was channeled through the HRF.

**The HRF is chaired by the Government of Haiti and its priorities are set by the IHRC.**

The HRF Steering Committee is chaired by the Minister of Finance. Every reconstruction activity financed by the HRF must be requested and approved by the IHRC. At the request of the IHRC, the HRF Steering

Committee allocates funds. All projects financed through the HRF are in line with the Action Plan for National Recovery and Development.

**The HRF is providing the largest amount of money for some of Haiti's top reconstruction priorities.**

The HRF has financed the largest housing project to date in Haiti (\$65 million for the Neighborhood Housing Reconstruction Project administered by the World Bank) and is providing the most funding for debris management (\$42 million for two projects administered by the United Nations). Other sectors that have been supported through the HRF include education, disaster risk reduction, urban development, agriculture, and financial and economic recovery.

**Most of the HRF financing goes to reconstruction, not budget support.**

Of the \$344 million currently available for programming, less than 10% (\$30 million) has been allocated for budget support which helped to close the FY10 government budget deficit.

**The HRF is a low-cost, efficient mechanism for financing reconstruction.**

At its start, critics feared that the HRF would have administrative costs of 10% or higher. The HRF itself estimated that these costs would be around 6%. In fact, less than 3% of committed resources are being used to cover the administrative costs of the HRF Secretariat, Trustee and Partner Entities. The HRF can approve fast track financing for small projects of up to \$1 million in one week and larger amounts in as little as two weeks after receiving a request from the IHRC.

**The HRF is a long-term partner for Haiti's rebuilding.**

The HRF has a planned lifespan of seven years and will continue to support the reconstruction through December 2017. It can raise, allocate and disburse funds throughout that period. The Government of Haiti, through the IHRC or another entity, will always determine the funding priorities of the HRF.

## **Stakeholder Messages and Appropriate Tools**

The HRF faces a challenging task as it must craft its communication strategy to address a wide spectrum of audiences ranging from donor countries to individual citizens. It is therefore important to create a diverse set of communication tools that will grant the required flexibility and efficient penetration. Among the key audiences, we have:

### **Citizens of Haiti**

Developing messages for Haitian citizens requires a broad approach taking into account education, literacy and socioeconomic levels, as well as language preference and key concerns.

Radio programs and mass media tools such as comics, graphics, and marketing tools in Kreyol and French should be at the top of the list. This does not preclude some higher level policy materials or events (such as televised debates), but one must remember that there is a need to maintain a very consistent and attractive presence at the level of the population at large. The HRF is exposed to some unwarranted criticisms and must have effective tools to respond to these types of actions.

### **Government of Haiti**

The Haitian Government is the key partner of the HRF. However, the HRF's existence and control mechanisms could be seen as an imposed alternative to government disbursement channels. The Fund must then highlight the complementarity and flexibility it offers to the government to implement the strategic direction it wants to give to the reconstruction. Additionally, all HRF successes must be presented as achievements of the

reconstruction effort led by the GOH. The communications tools of choice must be the informal channels, and the strengthening of the personal dimension between key decision makers and the HRF leadership.

### **Haitian Media**

The Haitian media is very proactive, but shows variable levels of professional training and access to sources. For this reason, it is important to ensure a) constant reinforcement of institutional messages, b) access to valid information, c) capacity to provide rebuttals as soon as misinformation emerges, and d) a permanent degree of engagement and specialized training to avoid dissemination of unverified information. It is equally necessary to highlight the primacy of Haitian authorities in the management and guidance of HRF operations, the number of representatives in the steering committee, the facts about the fund, and ensure a consistent cycle of information to maintain the HRF in their media radar.

### **Donors and potential donors**

Donors require a more internal and institutional approach in terms of communications. The HRF has already developed a very efficient channel of communication with donors via electronic media. It has also developed printed communications and promotional tools that have created a robust, well-calibrated and familiar image among donors. In terms of key messages, the reliability, transparency, and good management of resources put under the care of the HRF is the main message. One must also highlight the value of good and multilateral donorship, as well as the reliability of using Partner Entities to ensure sound disbursement and implementation of resources.

### **Partner Entities**

Partner Entities, (UN, IADB IFC and WB), because of their role in the implementation and oversight of HRF-funded projects, require a more intensive two-way communication flow. Direct follow-up on projects, funding, technical assessments, and many other HRF-related operations require a thorough effort on cross-institutional awareness, inter-agency coordination and cooperation, relying as well on a solid framework of institutional and personal links. In terms of key messages, emphasis is to be given to HRF institutional, regulatory and operational awareness, complemented with appropriate measures to ensure donors' and HRF's visibility where HRF funding warrants it.

### **International bodies**

International bodies such as the Office of the Special Envoy require a flow of operational and strategic information to support their own role in steering the funding and strategic direction of the reconstruction effort. In this case, HRF institutional, regulatory, financial and operational awareness must be given top priority, linked to the ability to rapidly respond to customized requests. As in the case with Partner Entities, it is also of great value to ensure that solid institutional and personal links complement effective lines of corporate communication.

### **International Media**

The international media also needs to understand the nature of the fund, its institutional niche and its mode of operation. Funding commitments, disbursements and the nature of preferencing require special attention in the case of foreign media, as simple assumptions can lead to juicier headlines. Assumptions lead to the wrong type of news, which can be very difficult to correct ex post facto. Communication tools such as reports, news releases and other printed material need to be complemented with a personal link to the main correspondents covering Haitian issues. Training adapted to the international media is also required. A lexicon of specific terms is also required.

## **Approach:**

The HRF Communications Strategy should follow an overall approach that maximizes Haitian input in order to be grounded in the local reality. This has the following implications for the Strategy:

- A local communications officer or firm should be hired to assist the HRF in communicating its messages within the country
- The branding of the HRF should have a local identity, e.g. through a competition amongst Haitian schoolchildren to design the HRF logo, slogan and jingle
- Haitian images of the reconstruction should be used in HRF publications, e.g. through an amateur and professional photo competition
- Goods and services for the Strategy should be procured, whenever possible, from Haitian suppliers
- Publications and communications should be issued in the official languages of the country (Kreyol and French) depending on the audience

This approach will help ensure that Haitians more fully recognize, understand and benefit from the messages that are being communicated via the Strategy.

## Communication Tools:

- 1) Mass Media
  - a) Radio Programs: A set of radio programs focusing on specific themes related to the reconstruction. Pre-recorded and broadcast through different radio outlets as well as website downloads (MP3s). French and Kreyol.
  - b) TV Debates: A set of 3 TV debates focusing on specific themes related to the reconstruction. Key opinion makers, representatives from government, and reconstruction stakeholders will be invited to discuss key themes. Pre-recorded and broadcast via national TV channels and also available for download via YouTube.
  - c) Newspapers announcements: Optional tool to be used in case there is a need to make a specific statement within local media
  - d) Scheduled Press releases:
  - e) National distribution: These are to be distributed via a vetted journalist distribution list. Distribution will be done in coordination with country office communication official.
  - f) International distribution: In close coordination with World Bank's External Relations team, these scheduled press releases will be prepared and distributed
  
- 2) Printed Media
  - a) Reports: 6 months and 1 year reports, covering activities, programs, structures, and past performance. English and French, Digital and paper distribution.
  - b) Brochures: Paralleling the Report's distribution, these are summarized versions of the report. English, French, and Kreyol. Digital and paper distribution.
  
- 3) Marketing tools
  - a) Calendars : Reconstruction themed calendars for 2011
  - b) Logo and jingle competition: competition for Haitian schoolchildren to design the logo of the HRF.
  - c) T-shirts, and Caps
  - d) Sponsorship of events related to the reconstruction process.
  - e) Photo competition
  
- 4) Other Tools:
  - a) E-mail list and announcements
  - b) Communications to donors and steering committee members
  - c) Op-eds and speaking engagements
  - d) Informational training for national and international journalists
  - e) Input Tracking System (ITS)
  - f) Targeted interventions: This includes private presentations to key decision makers on specific issues of relevance to the HRF.
  - g) Issuance of policy notes to advise on the best possible use of the HRF funding mechanisms, optimization of fund-raising strategies
  - h) Website

## Communications Strategy Timeline

Until December 2011, the HRF faces a set of key benchmarks in its institutional evolution and the calibration of its messages and media tools have to be done in accordance with these.

December 2010	First sixth months	Issuance of the first 6-months report, as well as 2011 promotional materials. Launching of website Press releases Logo competition Photo competition Promotional calendars Journalist trainings	Delivery of promotional materials, as well as sponsoring events and other activities
December 2010-May 2011	Haiti electoral period.	Private discussions with key decision makers and presidential candidates to inform them of the HRF, its procedures and its utility.	
May 2011	New government	Private discussion with newly elected officials both in the executive and parliamentary branches, along with briefings for decision makers.	Second batch of promotional materials, Policy debates and Radio programs.
June 2011	One year anniversary	Issuance of one year report, along with promotional material Embargoed press conference for announcement. and set of pre-arranged interviews with national and international media.	

October 2011	End of mandate of the IHRC	Presentations and representations focused on key audiences and decision makers. Issuance of advisory policy notes. Speaking engagements and Op-eds	
December 2011	18 months of HRF operations	Issuance of key report. Embargoed press conference for announcement. Set of pre-arranged interviews with national and international media.	

## Expected Outcomes

Objectives	Outcomes	Indicators
Maintenance of a well defined institutional presence.	HRF is able to mark its own media space	Different constituencies can identify the HRF as a separate entity and understand broadly the nature of its mandate.
Visibility for HRF Donors	HRF funded projects can convey donor's commitment to Haiti's reconstruction in a visible, distinguishable and effective manner.	Project information and partner entities information about project implementation
Preemptive approach to define the message	HRF takes advantage of opportunities to advance its message in an innovative manner.	The HRF displays a capacity to seize appropriate media opportunities to promote its message and institutional image.
Predefined approach to address crises	HRF communication strategy contains viable preparations to address unexpected events or message problems	The HRF team is able to respond effectively to unexpected media events or issues and can maintain the integrity and effectiveness of the HRF message.
Consistency of message	HRF message is consistent, facilitating its absorption by different constituencies	The HRF displays the same message in all occasions and places.
Top of the line communication flow with all stakeholders.	The HRF maintains a high quality and satisfactory communication flow with all stakeholders	Stakeholders confirm their degree of satisfaction regarding two-way institutional communications with the fund.