

# Gender-Sensitive Change Management & Communication Strategy

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## Introduction

The Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) is undertaking significant Public Financial Management (PFM) reforms, including modernizing the Department of Finance and Administration. This integrated Communications and Change Management Strategy outlines a practical approach to support these reforms, aligning with the PFM project's goal of improving transparency, accountability, and public awareness of financial management improvements in FSM. DoFA is undergoing a transformative change with a new organizational structure and the implementation of electronic systems, (the Revenue Management System (RMS) for tax, the FMIS system for Finance Management and ASYCUDA for customs) to modernize operations. This strategy supports both internal staff adaptation and external stakeholder engagement to ensure a smooth transition to the new systems and processes, guided by a Theory of Change approach that focuses on key outcomes and activities.

## Gender Sensitivity Commitment

**Gender Mainstreaming:** Gender sensitivity is embedded throughout this strategy – not treated as a standalone element. All communications will use inclusive language and ensure equal and fair visibility of women and men. Activities, visuals, and data will consistently represent and engage both female and male stakeholders, so that reforms benefit all FSM citizens. By mainstreaming gender in this way, the strategy upholds FSM's commitment to inclusive development and demonstrates that both women and men are equally benefiting from PFM reforms.

Gender sensitivity is embedded across all communications and change management efforts. This means:

- Ensuring gender-balanced visuals and examples on websites, brochures, and social media.
- Featuring both women and men in training sessions, public events, and testimonials.
- Using inclusive, non-stereotypical language in all materials.
- Collecting gender-disaggregated data for KPIs (e.g., number of women vs. men trained, represented online).
- Considering gender-specific needs in outreach (e.g., timing of events, accessibility, childcare considerations).

# PFM Project Communications Strategy

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This Communications Strategy outlines the approach for outreach and engagement under the Public Financial Management (PFM) Project. It aligns with the project's goal of improving transparency, accountability, and public awareness of financial management reforms in the Federated States of Micronesia.

## 1. Objectives

The following objectives guide all communications and change management efforts, with gender considerations integrated into each:

- **Increase Public Awareness:** Raise awareness of the PFM and DoFA modernization reforms and their benefits among all FSM citizens (women and men alike). The public should understand how new systems like FMIS, RMS, and ASYCUDA improve services for everyone.
- **Consistent, Inclusive Messaging:** Ensure consistent and clear messaging across National and State governments. All communications will use inclusive language that resonates with diverse groups and their individual needs, and messaging will be tailored to reach both male and female audiences in culturally appropriate ways.
- **Support Capacity Building:** Support internal capacity building within the Department of Finance & Administration (DoFA) and the project teams. This includes equipping staff with the knowledge and skills to adapt to new systems and workflows, and fostering female staff participation in training and leadership opportunities when needed.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Institutional capacity building beyond communications is acknowledged as a broader challenge, addressed through other project components.

- **Promote Transparency & Engagement:** Promote transparency through accessible information, reports, and events. Ensure access to all public information and encourage citizen engagement and feedback as a cornerstone of accountability and improved service delivery.
- **Embed Gender Equality in Communication:** Explicitly embed gender equality in all communication efforts, in line with the project's focus on equal participation and voice for women and men. This means planning outreach and feedback mechanisms so that women's voices are heard equally, portraying both genders in project visuals, and highlighting success stories of both male and female stakeholders.

## 2. Target Audiences

Effective communication requires understanding the key audiences and stakeholders of the DoFA reforms. This strategy focuses on both primary audiences directly impacted by the changes and secondary audiences who influence or support the reform process:

### Primary Audiences:

- General Public: FSM citizens (women and men across all states) who are taxpayers or service users. They need to know how the new tax and customs systems affect them and how to access the benefits.
- Businesses and Traders: Importers, exporters, entrepreneurs (including women-owned businesses) and the private sector who interact with customs and tax processes. They must be informed and trained on new procedures (e.g. online filing, electronic payments) to ensure compliance and support.
- Internal Staff: DoFA staff at national and state levels. They are the agents of change who need to adapt to new roles and systems. This also includes state-level finance or revenue offices, to ensure consistent adoption across FSM.

### Secondary Audiences:

- Government & Leaders: FSM national and state government leadership, policymakers, and related agencies that need to stay informed and provide support for the reforms (ensuring political buy-in and resources).
- Development Partners: International partners and donors (e.g., the World Bank, development agencies) who have an interest in the success of PFM improvements. Regular updates demonstrate transparency and can secure continued support.
- Civil Society & Community Groups: Civil society organizations, including women's associations, business councils, and community leaders. Their understanding and advocacy can help disseminate information widely and ensure the reforms consider community needs. Engaging women's groups in particular will help reach female citizens who might not be reached by mainstream channels.
- Media: State-owned channels (PIO, newsletter, radio), local and national media outlets (newspapers like the Kaselehlie Press, radio stations, and online regional news outlets like Benar news). They are critical partners to amplify messages to the broader public in local languages and in an accessible manner.

## 3. Key Messages

Clear, consistent messages will be delivered to all audiences, highlighting the purpose and benefits of the PFM. All messaging will be framed in an inclusive way to emphasize benefits for everyone. Key messages include:

- **Modernization Benefits Everyone:** The modernization of tax and customs systems (RMS for tax administration and ASYCUDA for customs) will make revenue collection and trade processes faster, more efficient, and transparent, benefiting all FSM citizens and businesses. Improved efficiency means less time in queues and more convenient online services for women and men alike.
- **Stronger Financial Management for Public Good:** These DoFA reforms strengthen the management of public funds and revenues for the benefit of all communities in FSM. A robust CTA will ensure taxes and duties are collected fairly and used to improve services that everyone relies on (schools, healthcare, infrastructure), contributing to national development.
- **Inclusive Growth and Opportunity:** A modern CTA creates a fairer business environment – compliant businesses, whether small owned enterprises or large companies, will compete on equal footing. By facilitating trade and improving compliance, the reforms open opportunities for entrepreneurs of all genders to prosper under clear and consistent rules.
- **Citizen Engagement is Essential:** Citizen engagement and feedback are essential for accountability and better service delivery. The government invites input from both women and men – for example, through the DoFA website feedback portal – to ensure the new systems meet the needs of all users. An informed and engaged public will help make the reforms a success.
- **Training and Support for Staff:** The government is investing in training programs to ensure staff are capable and confident in using the new systems. Both female and male staff members are being supported equally to take on new roles and responsibilities. This means the public will be served by a professional, responsive team that understands the new processes.
- **Transparency and Fairness:** The reforms underscore transparency and fairness in financial management. By digitizing processes and providing clear information, it will reduce opportunities for corruption or bias. All taxpayers will be treated consistently under the new system, building greater trust in government services.

(All messaging will be reviewed to use gender-inclusive language and showcase diverse imagery and symbols/icons – avoiding stereotypes and showing women and men in various roles – so that audiences see that the reform is for everyone.

#### 4. Communication Channels

To reach the above audiences effectively, a variety of communication channels will be used. Each channel will be utilized with a gender-sensitive approach, ensuring content is accessible and appealing to both women and men. Key channels include:

- **Official Websites:** The DoFA website will feature a dedicated, regularly updated section for DoFA reforms (to be discussed with the web developer as a future activity). This section will include announcements, FAQs, step-by-step guides, and video tutorials about the new RMS and ASYCUDA systems. All online content will use gender-balanced visuals (e.g., photos of both male and female staff or citizens interacting with the systems).
- **Social Media:** Official social media pages (such as DoFA's Facebook and President's Office) will share updates, infographics, and short videos to engage the public. Social media content will highlight how the reforms benefit families and businesses, using relatable examples (e.g., stories of a mother running a small business filing taxes online). Posts will be crafted to encourage questions and comments, creating an interactive dialogue.
- **Press Releases & News Media:** Press releases and feature articles will be provided to the national newspapers the *Kaselehlie Press*, and local state media to announce major milestones. Success stories, such as a female entrepreneur benefiting from faster customs clearance or a male taxpayer using the online tax portal, will be pitched to media to personalize the impact of reforms. Engaging stories and data will be shared to encourage media coverage that reaches wide audiences across genders.
- **SMS and Radio Public Service Announcements:** Recognizing that SMS and radio are vital channels in FSM, especially for reaching communities with limited internet, short public service announcements (PSAs) will be broadcast in English and local languages. These PSAs will explain upcoming changes (e.g., new tax filing procedures) in simple, listener-friendly terms. Radio spots and SMS broadcasts will be aired at various times (including times when women, who may have different schedules, can listen) to maximize reach.
- **Community Outreach & Events:** Face-to-face communication remains crucial. Public meetings, workshops, and community forums will be held in each state to demonstrate the new systems and address questions. Stakeholder workshops for businesses (importers, exporters, store owners) will include hands-on system demonstrations. Community meetings, possibly through churches or local women's groups, will help reach those who might not attend formal events. These events will be scheduled with consideration for working parents and caregivers – for example, offering sessions at convenient times or providing childcare support – to enable both women and men to attend.
- **Internal Communication:** It was raised during a meeting for the establishment of the Project Steering Committee, about the importance of a bimonthly newsletter or email bulletins and briefings will keep everyone informed about implementation progress. This can also be uploaded to the website dedicated section. Regular team meetings and possibly an internal chat forum will allow staff (Teams channel) to voice concerns and share tips as they learn the new systems. Ensuring transparent, two-way internal communication fosters a culture where staff of both genders feel equally heard during the change process.
- **Printed Materials and Merchandise:** Printed brochures, quick-reference guides, and posters will be distributed to explain new procedures. Materials will feature clear

diagrams and gender-inclusive visuals (e.g., showing both a male and a female taxpayer completing an online form). At public events, promotional items (such as banners, flyers, and merchandising) will carry key messages and project branding. All visual materials will be vetted to avoid gender stereotypes and show diverse participants.

By leveraging multiple channels as above, the strategy ensures broad coverage. Importantly, every channel will be utilized in a way that does not unintentionally exclude any group – for instance, using local language where needed, providing both text and visual content for varying literacy levels, and ensuring imagery and examples speak to both women and men.

## 5. Activities

A range of communications and change management activities will be implemented to achieve the objectives. These activities integrate outreach, training, and feedback mechanisms – embedding gender sensitivity at each step. Major activities include:

- **Website Revamp and Content Management (ongoing):** Lead the revamp of the DoFA website and maintain it with up-to-date content. This includes publishing news updates, how-to guides, public notices, and key documents (e.g., new tax forms) in a user and mobile friendly format. The website will be designed for accessibility (mobile-friendly, clear navigation) and will prominently feature both women and men in imagery and success stories.
- **Multimedia Public Information Campaign:** Execute a comprehensive outreach campaign across various media to explain the reforms to the public. This will involve creating easy-to-understand radio announcements, short video explainers for social media, infographics, and press articles. Campaign content will highlight practical benefits (e.g. “Spend less time in line – file taxes online!”) and will use examples that resonate with both female and male audiences.
- **Training Programs for Staff:** (this section will be left out for now, to limit the scope of this strategy)
- **Development of Communication & Branding Toolkit:** (ongoing) Develop a communication branding and style guide covering logos, document templates, and visual identity for the reform initiative. This is ongoing, and website and citizen’s budget report is already following a new branding. All communications materials and messages will be reviewed against this guide to maintain consistent and inclusive branding.
- **Stakeholder Workshops and Demonstrations:** Conduct targeted workshops for key stakeholder groups (e.g., business owners, import/export agents, local accountants). These sessions will provide hands-on demonstrations of the new electronic systems, allowing participants to try the software (like how to register in RMS or process a customs declaration in ASYCUDA). Separate workshops or breakout sessions will be considered for women entrepreneurs or smaller vendors if needed, to ensure they

feel comfortable to ask questions. Support materials (user manuals, FAQs) and contact info for technical assistance will be given out.

- **Public Meetings and “Mobile” Outreach:** Beyond formal workshops, the team will hold public info sessions in community halls, marketplaces, and other public venues in each state. Using a “roadshow” approach, officials can travel to communities (including remote or outer islands) to explain changes. Where possible, female staff or champions will co-lead these sessions to encourage questions from women attendees and to demonstrate women’s roles in the reform. Timing and location of meetings will be planned to maximize inclusivity (e.g., avoid scheduling at times that clash with household duties; consider providing a kids’ corner or childcare at larger events).
- **Press Conferences and Media Engagement:** At major milestones. Ensure that spokespersons include both male and female leaders (for example, a female tax officer or a male customs officer sharing their experience) to project an image of gender-balanced leadership. Provide media kits with human-interest angles, such as how a woman-owned business benefited from easier tax filing, to encourage coverage.
- **Helpdesk and Support Channels: Establish a dedicated helpdesk** to support users of the new tax/customs systems. This will include a telephone hotline and an email support address, staffed by trained personnel (with both women and men represented among support staff). The helpdesk will answer inquiries, assist users in navigating the online system, and troubleshoot issues. In addition, develop comprehensive FAQs and “How Do I...?” guides (both online and in print) for common tasks like tax registration or customs declarations. These guides should be written in plain language and visually illustrated, making them usable by people of varying literacy and tech comfort levels.
- **Feedback Mechanisms:** (ongoing on website) Create formal feedback loops to gather input and gauge public sentiment. This could involve short feedback forms on the website, suggestion boxes at offices, and periodic user satisfaction surveys. At community forums and trainings, facilitators will actively solicit feedback from participants – ensuring that women’s feedback is equally captured (possibly by providing options for anonymous or women-only feedback sessions if it encourages more open input). This continuous listening approach helps catch any unforeseen gender-differentiated impacts early (e.g., if women entrepreneurs face specific challenges with the new system, those can be identified and resolved).
- **Inclusive Event Planning:** *Cross-cutting with above activities:* All events, training sessions, and meetings will follow inclusive planning practices. This means providing advance notice to allow those with family responsibilities to plan attendance, scheduling events at varied times (not always after-hours or always business hours only), and offering accommodations like childcare, transportation, or stipends for rural attendees when feasible. These tactics are crucial to enable equal participation; for instance, providing on-site childcare for a day-long training can make the difference in whether a young mother in the DoFA staff is able to attend. The project

team will budget for and encourage such measures as part of the communications and change management efforts.

- **Mentoring and Internal Champions:** Within DoFA, identify and support **change champions** – respected staff (both female and male) who embrace the reforms and can mentor others. For example, a senior female officer could champion the new tax system, demonstrating its use to colleagues, while a male officer might lead peer discussions addressing concerns. The communications lead (National Communication Officer for PFM) will work with these champions to share their stories (internally via newsletters or externally as role models) and to ensure consistent messaging. This peer-to-peer support network will help sustain morale and reinforce training beyond formal sessions.

By carrying out the above activities, the strategy ensures a holistic approach: from creating awareness and understanding, to enabling adoption through training and support, and continuously refining the approach based on feedback. Every activity is designed with an eye toward inclusivity – making sure that women and men are both participants and beneficiaries in equal measure.

## 6. Theory of Change: Communications & Change Management Summary

### Long-Term Goal

To modernize customs and tax operations in FSM through a new organizational structure and the integration of an electronic system (RMS + ASYCUDA), resulting in:

- **Improved operational efficiency**
- **Enhanced transparency and service delivery**
- **Greater public trust and compliance**

(Note: This color is used throughout this section to highlight communication-specific activities.)

### Key Outcomes

Outcome	Description
1. Internal Staff Adaptation	DoFA staff are trained, confident, and proficient in new systems and roles.
2. Public Awareness & Engagement	Citizens and businesses understand the changes, benefits, and how to use the system.
3. Stakeholder Support	Importers, exporters, and institutions are equipped, supportive, and capable of system use.

4. Continuous Learning & Feedback	Feedback loops drive system improvements and ensure relevance and adoption.
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## Pathway of Change

### Inputs & Activities

- Development of change management & **communications plans**
- Competency mapping, staff performance evaluations
- Comprehensive training (technical, customer service, mentoring)
- **Multimedia public information campaigns (radio, social media, website)**
- Stakeholder workshops and hands-on system demos
- Creation of helpdesks, FAQs, and user guides
- Monitoring systems and feedback collection tools

### Outputs

- Trained DoFA staff, internal trainers, and mentors
- Clear, accessible public-facing information and system guides
- Public workshops, forums, and technical support hubs
- **Public service announcements and awareness materials**
- Stakeholders equipped with digital system access and knowledge

### Short-Term Outcomes

- Increased staff readiness and confidence
- **Broader public and business awareness of the system**
- Reduced resistance and fear of digital systems
- Clear understanding of new procedures and benefits

### Medium-Term Outcomes

- High adoption of the FMIS, RMS and ASYCUDA across DoFA and users
- Stakeholder satisfaction with new system interactions
- Fewer manual errors and increased procedural efficiency
- Staff applying learned competencies in real-time

### Long-Term Impact

- A fully digitized, transparent, and efficient DoFA
- Strengthened public trust and increased voluntary tax/customs compliance
- Modernized public service delivery aligned with FSM's development goals

## Assumptions

- Leadership remains committed to supporting change and allocating resources
- Staff are open to change and willing to engage with new systems
- Public and businesses are receptive once benefits are clearly communicated
- Technological infrastructure supports smooth system implementation
- Continuous feedback leads to timely course correction

## Risks & Mitigation

As with any big change, a few issues that could arise have been mapped down as main risks that could affect how well this strategy works and ways to mitigate them.

Risk	Mitigation
Employee resistance	Ongoing communication, mentoring, incentives
Training gaps	Custom modules, self-paced learning, helpdesk
System usability concerns	Simplified guides, live support, phased rollout
Public confusion	Multilingual outreach, visual demos, local media use

## Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E)

- Internal: Staff skill assessments, performance reviews, role clarity
- External: Public engagement metrics, helpdesk query resolution, feedback forms
- System usage: Login rates, transaction success, error reports
- Quarterly reviews: Data-informed strategy refinements

## 7. Conclusion

By integrating change management and communications into one unified strategy, FSM's DoFA modernization initiative is positioned to achieve its goals of efficient, transparent public finance systems with broad-based support. The activities and messages outlined above not only inform and prepare stakeholders for technical changes, but also foster a culture of inclusivity and trust that will endure beyond the project. Crucially, the **gender-sensitive approach** running through every section of this strategy means that the reforms actively promote equal participation and benefits for women and men. This inclusive approach strengthens the overall impact – when all members of society see themselves represented and are enabled to engage, reforms are more likely to succeed and be

sustained. With clear objectives, targeted messaging, robust outreach, and continuous feedback, the Department of Finance & Administration can navigate the transformation confidently, knowing that both its internal team and the public are on board.

In summary, this strategy will help ensure that FSM's journey toward modernized PFM is not only effective in terms of systems and processes, but also equitable and empowering for all citizens of the Federated States of Micronesia.

## Annex 1: FSM's Key Financial & Revenue Systems

System	Purpose	Led by	What it does
<b>FMIS – Financial Management Information System</b>	Manages government finance.	Department of Finance & Administration (DoFA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepares and tracks the national &amp; state budgets</li> <li>• Processes payments, payroll, and accounting</li> <li>• Produces financial reports for transparency</li> </ul>
<b>RMS – Revenue Management System</b>	Modernizes tax administration.	Customs & Tax Administration (CTA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lets taxpayers register, file, and pay taxes online</li> <li>• Tracks tax debts and compliance cases</li> <li>• Improves revenue accounting and reporting</li> </ul>
<b>ASYCUDAWorld – Customs Management System</b>	Automates imports and exports.	CTA (Customs Division)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Handles customs declarations &amp; payments</li> <li>• Detects and tracks smuggling or undeclared goods</li> <li>• Facilitates faster, paperless trade at FSM's borders</li> </ul>

### Users and Communication Needs

System	Internal / External Focus	Main Users	Why It Matters
<b>FMIS</b>	Internal	Government staff (DoFA, finance officers, auditors)	Improves how government manages its own budget, payments, payroll, and reporting. Citizens don't interact with it directly, but benefit indirectly from better public financial management.
<b>RMS</b>	External-Facing	Citizens and businesses (taxpayers)	Enables people to register, file, and pay taxes online. It's important that the public knows how to access and use it.
<b>ASYCUDA</b>	External-Facing	Importers/exporters, customs brokers	Used to process imports and exports. Businesses interacting with customs need to use it, so awareness and training are critical.

## Annex 2: Citizens budget report: Communications Plan

# Citizens budget report Communications Plan PFM-II (Draft)

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List of general activities expected to be delivered per every year

### 1. Edit, Enhance and Print the Report:

- Content editor (if needed, hopefully inhouse)
- Translations as requested by States (hopefully in-house).
- Layout: CIU Inhouse. Maybe additional external graphic support.
- FSM photos for the report (I will work with what I have so far, ideally take more photos).

Cost: Printouts: Depending on number of copies needed. There is not good quality providers in FSM but research made in Guam successfully identified quality printshops that can deliver to FSM.

### 2. Create an ad-hoc Interactive Website within DOFA website:

- Summarize and make the Citizen's budget report interactive (here is an example: <https://soec.sprep.org/tuvalu/>). I was involved in this work but didn't do the procurement so not sure about the costs.
- CIU comms will produce the content (photos, graphics and summary) but we need to outsource web development.
- Additionally, can consider an update of the whole DOFA website under this project.

Cost: Rough estimates \$7,000 for an interactive website alone and \$20,000 if we also update the whole DOFA website.

### 3. Design and Print Brochures:

- Create a Citizen's budget brochure.
- Design: Can be done in-house.

Cost: Printing: \$500 to \$1500 for 500 full-color copies (using our current US-based provider 4imprint like SEEP brochures or Guam based companies).

#### 4. Launch Event:

- Communication materials described above must be ready; Organize and promote a launch event through social media and Kpress (check existing CIU framework agreement or individual ad fee). We need PMU to detail this action.

Cost: PMU to provide (2x year 3, 4x year 4 and 6x year 5)

#### 5. Social Media Strategy:

- Create a social media strategy with FB posts highlighting the report's key points.
- Channels: PIO office <https://www.facebook.com/piofsm> and State's social media channels, among others.
- Support committee hearings broadcasted on FSM Congress YouTube channel and website

Cost: Set up a FB ad campaign with scheduled posts to boost and a budget. Liaise with PIO on website broadcasts.

#### 6. Additional Activities:

##### Citizen Budget Video Stories:

- Highlight impactful stories from the budget on social media (e.g., gender, education, infrastructure).

Cost: Depending on the amount and quality of the videos, this can be an in-house production supported by an external video editor or fully nationally outsourced.

**Posters** (key messages): Focus on key messages distilled from the report summary. Posters will be used to embellish the DOFA offices, and other National and State Departments. We can produce one poster focusing on each Department and a few cross-cutting (e.g., Gender).

Cost/time: Depends on the numbers to print. Procurement 3 months.

**Data Source and validation:** Each communication action will include an M&E component to better understand the impact of the activity.

Cost: If there is a survey, CIU M&E can better estimate the costs.