



PUBLIC FINANCE MANAGEMENT ACTIVITY COMMUNICATION DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY FOR PUBLIC FINANCE MANAGEMENT

THE MINISTRY OF LABOR AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS OF ARMENIA

Yerevan, Armenia, 2023

What is the Goal of having a PFM Communication Strategy?

This Strategy is designed to address the **availability and accessibility of information** on allocations and spending of public funds in the social sector to:

- broader public
- expert community
- private sector
- civil society

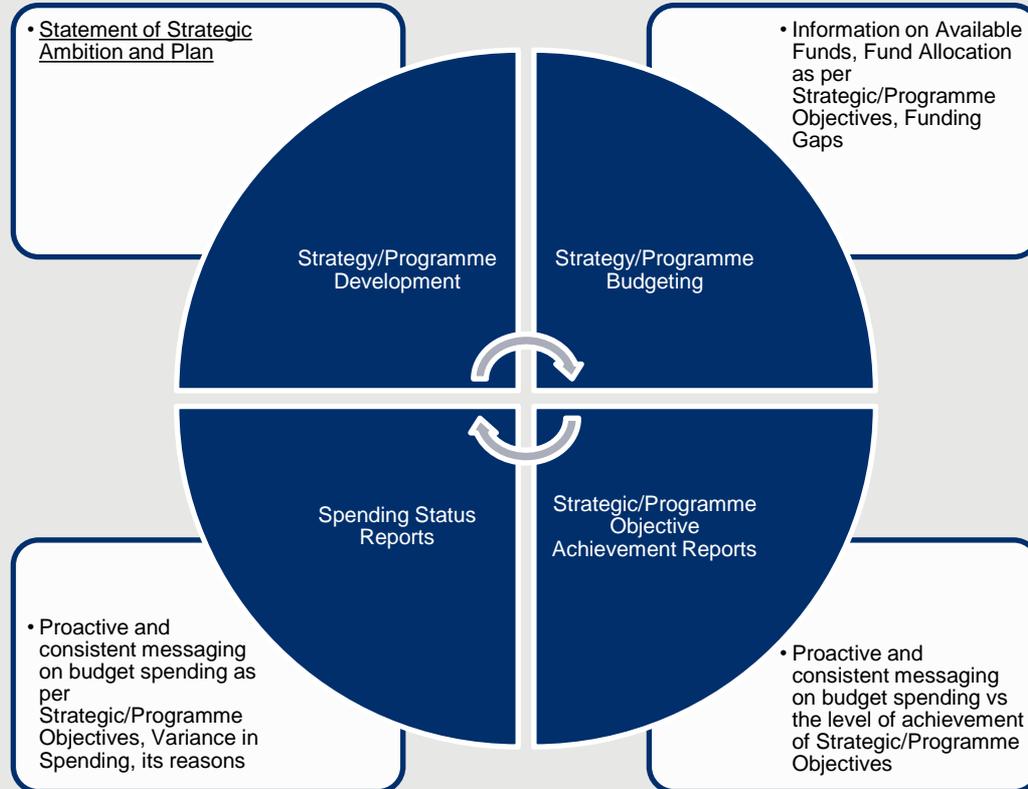
What are the Objectives of having a PFM Communication Strategy?

- Increased MOLSA **accountability on public finance** management and public spending
- Increased **public trust towards MOLSA** and the social reforms thereunder
- Enhanced effectiveness of policy implementation by ensuring **proactive, timely, and accurate communication** between the Ministry and the public.

PFM Communication Strategy: Main Target Groups

- Departments/units **within the Ministry**
- Other state institutions, including the **National Assembly**
- **Civil society** organizations, national and international organizations
- The **public**, including individuals and informal groups, nationals and non-nationals, citizens and noncitizens, and media organizations

PFM-related Strategic Communication Cycle



PFM Communication Strategy: Key Findings from Situation Analysis

1. Access/Availability of Information

- MOLSA's official **website does not provide a smooth user experience**, particularly when it comes to locating financial information.
- The only format where the financial information is available is the **state budget template, which is hard to comprehend**, especially for nonexperts.
- MOLSA's **Facebook page is more informative** than the official website, according to CSO representatives

**KIs conducted with: MOLSA staff (5), CSOs (2: one local and one international), and experts specialized in public finance management (3)*

PFM Communication Strategy: Key Findings from Situation Analysis

2. Quality of Information

- Information per fiscal year is presented in various templates, including in **Microsoft Word or Excel**, and often **is not downloadable**, creating additional problems for processing experts' reports.
- **Supporting documents** (ToRs, cost information, databases, etc.) for verification, monitoring, or justification purposes, **are unavailable** on the web.
- Financial information is **not linked to national priorities**.
- Financial reports are **not correlated with strategic performance**.
- **Lack of disaggregation** by various criteria, such as donors, type of funds (loan/grant), responsible party, etc.

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PFM Communication Strategy: Key Findings from Situation Analysis

3. Proactiveness

- Invitations **to public hearings lack visibility**, are often canceled, and are not programmatic.
- The level of public **participation is not exemplary**.
- **Insufficient capacity of civil society** to meaningfully participate in budgetary discussions, which defines a strong preference to the expert community.

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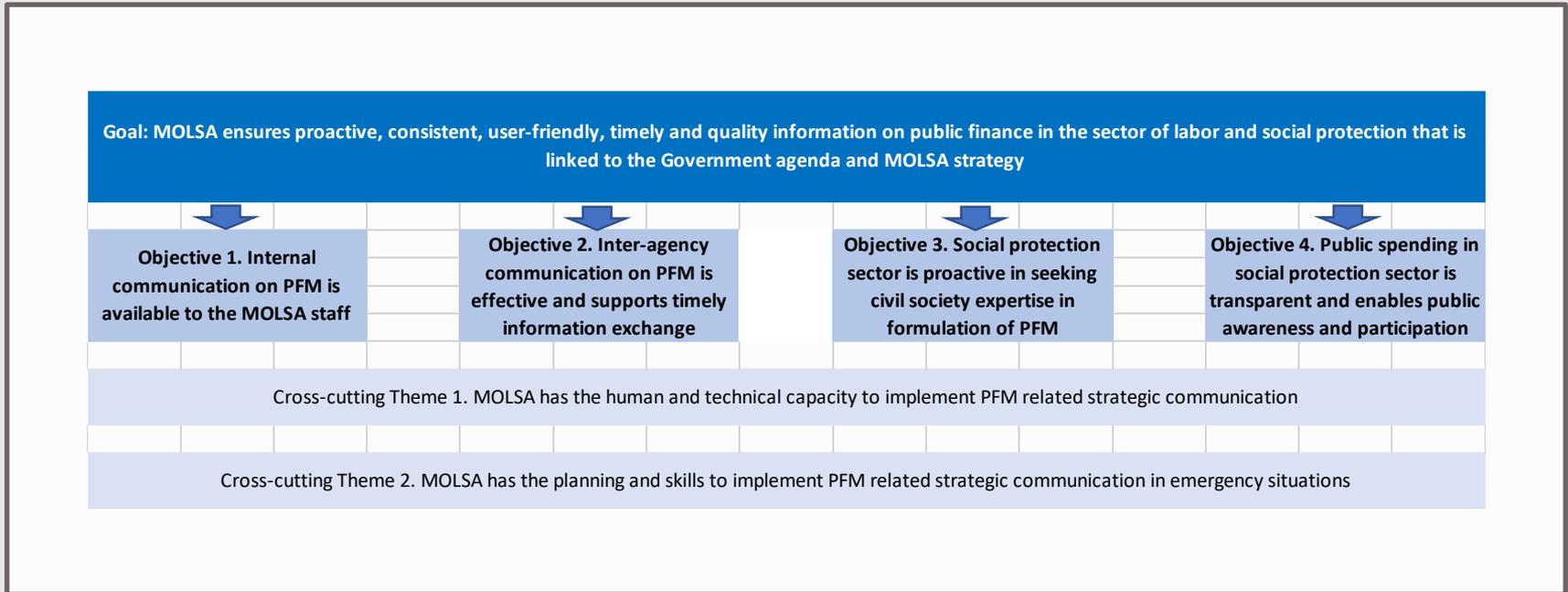
PFM Communication Strategy: Key Findings from Situation Analysis

4. Capacity

- **MOLSA** must be able to **effectively and proactively present** processed and analyzed financial information.
- **Civil society** representatives **should be able to understand better, analyze,** and contribute to the public finance management processes.

**KIs conducted with: MOLSA staff (5), CSOs (2: one local and one international), and experts specialized in public finance management (3)*

PFM Communication Strategy: Results Framework



PFM Communication Strategy: Main Approaches to Achieving the Strategic Objectives

Public access to PFM information that is complete, linked to MOLSA's overarching strategies, up-to-date, visual, analytical, and user-friendly (clear, concise, and jargon-free)

To increase the transparency of budget formation and social programs, it is essential to draw explicit connections between the disposal of funds, agency-specific targets, and Government programmatic priorities.

PFM Communication Strategy: Main Approaches to Achieving the Strategic Objectives

Targeted communication that is proactive and interactive

The communication thread should not wait to be initiated by the counterparts but rather be forward-looking

PFM Communication Strategy: Main Approaches to Achieving the Strategic Objectives

Technical and human capacity to maintain continuous, accessible, high-quality, and targeted communication

Ensuring ongoing capacity building of the MOLSA team responsible for communication, especially regarding the employment of modern technology and technique. This should be informed by a strong knowledge of the specifics of each target group of audience, their perceptions, level of education, etc.

Recommendations for Capacity Building

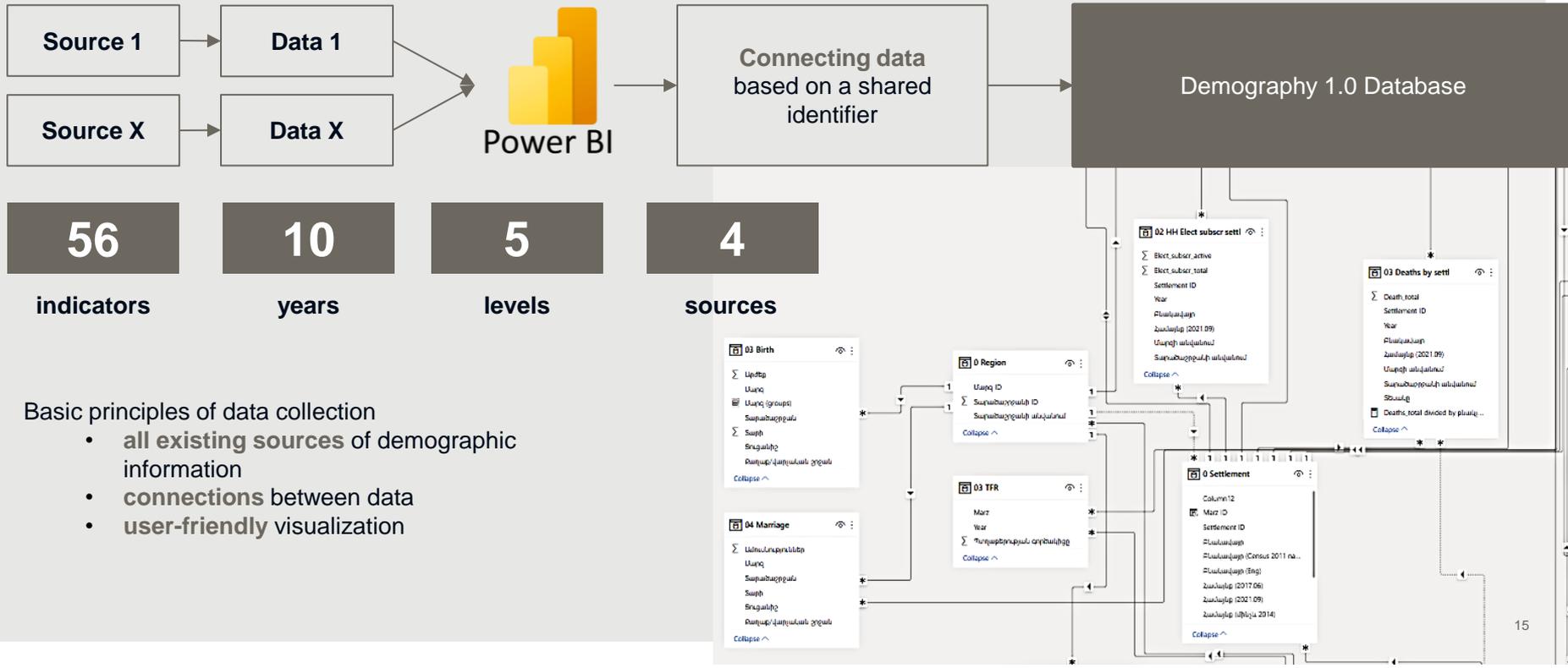
- Delegate the responsibility of PFM communication to either the Nork Technology Center or the National Institute of Labor and Social Research
- Conduct a comprehensive functional review to analyze and optimize the practices of information exchange and processing, both before and after financial data is translated into a communication message

Recommendations for Technological Solutions

- Leveraging modern technologies
- Applying data-driven approach that utilizes technically advanced computational and visual tools
- Ensuring clear and concise messaging and avoiding excessive technical jargon
- Supplementing the narrative with visual aids, infographics, or multimedia formats that simplify complex concepts and data
- Diversifying the channels through which people can access information utilizing the official website, mobile applications, social media platforms, interactive maps, and other means
- Fostering accountability mechanisms by encouraging dialogue, feedback, and inquiries

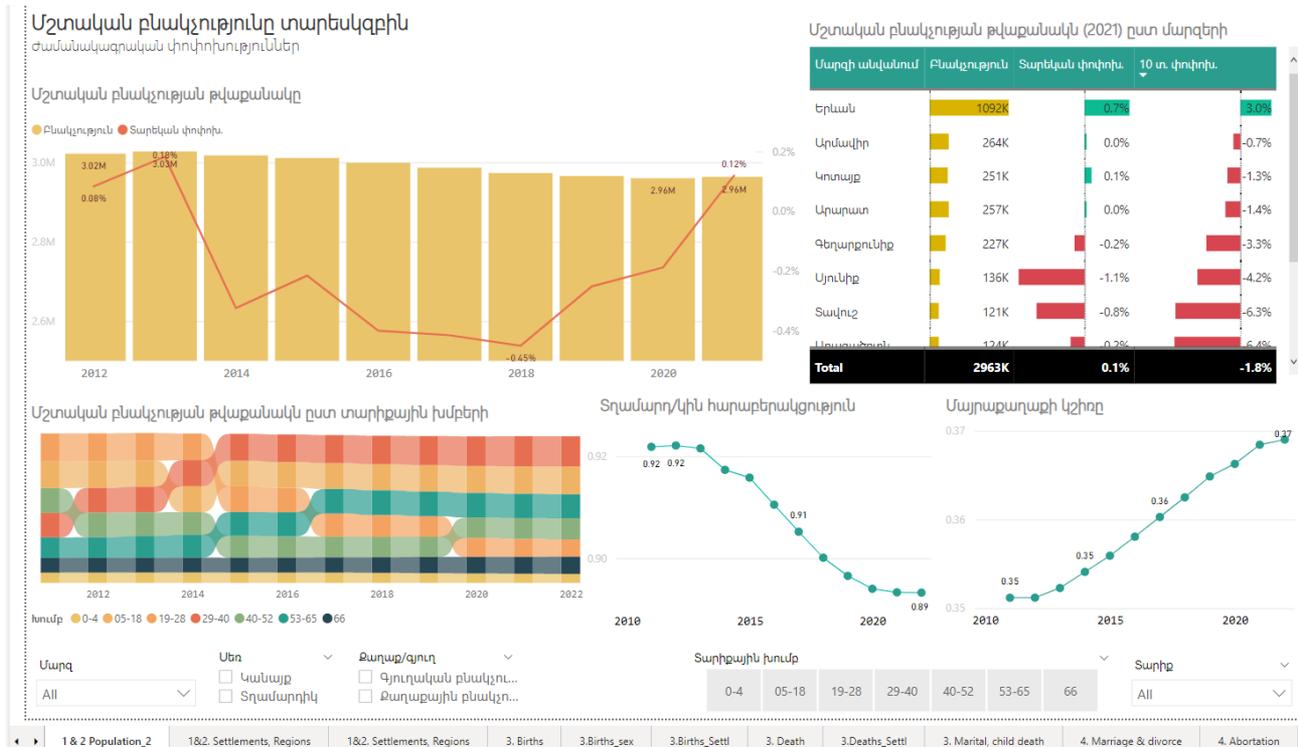
Example of Technological Solution: Power BI for Population Data [1]

Applied methodology and approaches



Example of Technological Solution: Power BI for Population Data [2]

Visualization of the Database



Example of Technological Solution: Power BI for Population Data

PFM Communication Strategy: Media Engagement

- Enhanced cooperation with national and private TV/radio channels, journalist clubs and organizations, public influencers, and opinion makers specializing in public finance analysis, statistics, projections, and related topics by providing comprehensive training to their representatives for fostering a shared understanding and preventing potential miscommunication, misinterpretation, and other challenges

PFM Communication Strategy: Emergency Communications

Communication in emergency situations is vital in coordinating response efforts, disseminating essential information, and ensuring the safety and security of affected population groups.

- It should be planned beforehand and not in an emergency.
- Information sharing refers to the established “communication tree” that will enable rapid information exchange.
- Diversified communication channels – each emergency scenario found relevant to the context might require or be possible with different communication channels (e.g., electricity cuts, the scale of the emergency, etc.).
- Considerations of ethics and sensitivity – this might involve a strict definition of lexis (vocabulary);
- Inclusivity – information should reach all parties affected. When doing this exercise, some specifics to finance-related information might come up.

PFM Communication Strategy: Performance Monitoring

- Periodically review and update the strategies outlined in the document to ensure their alignment with the Government Program 2021-2026
- Regularly monitor progress and evaluate the effectiveness of the communication strategies
- In the final year of implementation, a comprehensive review should be conducted to assess the overall progress and impact of the communication strategies in line with MOLSA's strategy

PFM Communication Strategy: Quality Assurance

Develop a “quality checklist” to be applied to each communication message answering the following questions:

- What: does the message convey the information or data it intends to?
- Who: does the message address who is the primary audience, or who is concerned?
- When: does the message clarify the timeframes, e.g., the reform that will be effective starting or ending a specific date?
- Where: does the message clarify the geographic area affected, or what agency or agencies are involved?
- How: does the message clarify in what ways a new service will be delivered?
- Could the message be more illustrative in a chart/graph or infographic? If yes, how should it be designed?
- What is the best outreach media for this message: website, Facebook, YouTube, or other?
- How does the message reach those not using the above channels?
- Other as found relevant

PFM Communication Strategy: Implementation Plan

Objective 1.	Internal communication on PFM is available to the MOLSA staff	2023	2024	2025	2026
Activity 1.1	Review the existing PFM information exchange processes among the MOLSA departments				
Activity 1.2	Discuss the PFM information needs in various departments and the type of analytical data required				
Activity 1.3	Redesign the existing processes to address the information needs				
Activity 1.4	Define the necessity for various access levels to the financial information				
Activity 1.5	Pilot and mainstream the new processes				

PFM Communication Strategy: Implementation Plan

Objective 2.	Inter-agency communication on PFM is effective and supports timely information exchange	2023	2024	2025	2026
Activity 2.1	Review the existing PFM information exchange processes between MOLSA and stakeholders (incl. Nork Center, National Statistical Committee, National Institute of Labor and Social Affaires, National Assembly)				
Activity 2.2	Discuss the PFM information needs among the stakeholders and the type of analytical data required				
Activity 2.3	Redesign the existing processes to address the information needs				
Activity 2.4	Pilot and mainstream the new processes				

PFM Communication Strategy: Implementation Plan

Objective 3.	Social protection sector is proactive in seeking civil society expertise in formulation of PFM	2023	2024	2025	2026
Activity 3.1	Define the types of analytical information that is useful for external stakeholders				
Activity 3.2	Transfer the annual MOLSA budget for the last 3-5 fiscal years to Power BI platform				
Activity 3.3	Define the types of analytical information that is useful for external stakeholders and run on the Power BI, including against the GOAM Program priorities and MOLSA strategic objectives				
Activity 3.4	Upload the visuals on the official web-site				
Activity 3.5	Based on the analysis, develop a FAQ and a chatbot				
Activity 3.6	Develop clear criteria for CSO participation in public hearings of the next annual budget, as well as a calendar of hearings, and post on the web-site and FB				

PFM Communication Strategy: Implementation Plan

Objective 4.	Public spending in social protection sector is transparent and enables public awareness and participation	2023	2024	2025	2026
Activity 4.1	Develop a quality checklist for each post to be assessed against before the upload				
Activity 4.2	Define the main target FB groups and post respective updates as per the groups				
Activity 4.3	Set respective outreach targets per the groups				
Activity 4.4	Develop a list of themes/topics, on which short yes/no answer inquiries will be sent out by various channels (incl. FB, SMS, etc.)				
Activity 4.5	Jointly with journalism clubs/organizations, international specialized organizations develop training materials for media representatives on how to cover financial information in social protection				

PFM Communication Strategy: Implementation Plan

Cross-cutting Theme 1.	MOLSA has the human and technical capacity to implement PFM related strategic communication	2023	2024	2025	2026
Activity CC 1.1	Assign departments/point persons to be responsible for the above activities				
Activity CC 1.2	Organize a comprehensive training for the assigned on Power BI and other subject matter technical solutions				
Activity CC 1.3	Organize a study tour for the assigned persons to countries with successful experience in PFM communication in social sector				
Activity CC 1.4	Obtain license if necessary				
Cross-cutting Theme 2.	MOLSA has the planning and skills to implement PFM related strategic communication in emergency situations	2023	2024	2025	2026
Activity CC 2.1	Develop a quick guideline/checklist on what, when, where, who, and how information on financial reallocations in the social sector is made in emergency situations				
Activity CC 2.2	Assign responsible departments/point persons				
Activity CC 2.3	Organize training for the assigned				

— QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS





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