

CGIAR Research Program on Aquatic Agricultural Systems

Communication Strategy

Making a difference in the lives of the poor Making a difference in the lives of the poor



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CGIAR

RESEARCH
PROGRAM ON
Aquatic
Agricultural
Systems



1. BACKGROUND

The CGIAR Research Program on Aquatic Agricultural Systems (AAS) is one of the CGIAR's 15 research programs. Through a program of participatory action research, referred to as "Research in Development", the Program aims to improve the lives of the many millions of people who depend on aquatic agricultural systems. Living along coastal zones and rivers, these communities are not only poor, they are also vulnerable to multiple drivers of change, notably demographic trends, climate change, sea level rise, and increasingly frequent and severe extreme weather events. They live there because these are generally highly productive systems that provide multiple opportunities for growing or harvesting food and generating income. AAS will confront this challenge of high ecological productivity mingled with high prevalence of poverty, vulnerability and inequity among social groups.

The program proposes to do this by harnessing CGIAR strengths in agricultural research and combining them with the skills and capacities of national agricultural research systems (NARS), nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), the private sector, advanced research institutes (ARIs) and other partners, to pursue an innovative program of integrated agricultural research.

2. THE AAS COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

This Strategy will create the platform to capture, collect, produce, manage, brand and share information that is generated throughout the Program's lifecycle.

To effectively support the Program this Strategy has the following objectives:

1. For AAS to be viewed as a leading source and disseminator of information and knowledge on effective approaches to rural development in aquatic agricultural systems through the use of innovative, relevant and appropriate communication tools and processes.
2. To support participatory action research processes that can sustain transformative community change by integrating strategic communication principles, tools and methods into program implementation.
3. To influence local, national and global audiences to engage the challenges and opportunities in the lives of AAS - dependent people by communicating Program activities and results in ways that will engage and influence them.
4. To help foster a strong program team leading to stronger program performance and improved outcomes through effective communication and information systems.

Guiding principles

To ensure effective and consistent strategy implementation the following principles will be used to guide the program's communication activities and workplans. A workplan for 2012 and indicative workplan for 2013 is included in Section 7 of the Strategy.

Quality

The AAS Program is committed to producing high quality and credible science that is guided, designed and pursued by the communities in which the program engages (research in development). All communication products and processes will be produced and shaped by content that is scientifically rigorous.

Partnership

AAS is one of 15 CGIAR Research Programs that will each make a contribution to achieving the CGIAR's strategic objectives. The Program will be an active participant in shaping and implementing system wide communication

strategies and activities. Additionally the program will collaborate with its partners, to establish and implement plans to increase its communication reach.

Knowledge sharing and learning

The AAS Program will embrace a culture of knowledge sharing and learning that sustains productive relationships, partnerships and networks. To support this, strengthen the performance of program participants, and better achieve program outcomes, the Program will design and adapt innovative knowledge-sharing and learning practices. This will support the delivery of outcomes of other parts of the Program by catalyzing knowledge sharing and learning by and among partners and stakeholders. It will require integration of information management, monitoring and evaluation and communication processes and activities

Open access

A number of the communities the Program will engage with may be excluded either technologically or economically from obtaining program related information and learning. As part of its implementation, the communication activities will strive wherever possible and practicable to allow open access to this information as well as non-program but AAS-related information.

Focus

The AAS Program will remain attentive to the current and future communications needs of its targeted internal and external audiences and will aspire to deliver the

- **Right message** (credible content, results and good stories) communicated in the
- **Right form** (approach has to be relevant and appropriate) to the
- **Right person** (identifying and tailoring for the target audience) using the
- **Right channel** (suitable and diverse range of tools and channels) being mindful of the
- **Right context** (take into account relevant external and internal trends) with the
- **Right support** (ensure required skills, knowledge and understandings)

Target audiences

To assist this Plan to maximize success and remain focused, the following key internal and external audiences (listed in no rank order) have been identified together with an analysis of the communication needs and how these will be met. These stakeholders will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure they remain relevant.

Target Audiences		What are their communication needs	Face to face/Virtual	Program, Research, Impact Updates	Annual reports	Website	Knowledge Portal	Social Media (1)	Multimedia (2)	Activity/ Policy Briefings	Outreach events	Workshops	Leadership teams	Media	Science Papers
Primary investors	CGIAR Fund Council Bi-lateral donors	To understand progress, results and challenges in implementing the Program To have the opportunity for feedback		•	•	•		•	•	•	•				
Core institutions	Organizations whose contributions to the program are essential for success and cannot be provided by another institution. Core institutions include national government agencies with explicit mandates for coordinating research and development in AAS and/or provincial government structures responsible for coordinating development in program hubs	To have an understanding of the CRP and its approach together with partnership engagement frameworks with agreed objectives, plans and evaluation processes		•		•			•	•	•				
Key implementing partners	Organisations that are essential for success because of their capacity for implementation, demonstrated successes and the specific value they will add. These key partners include major development NGOs as well as advanced research institutes.		•	•		•			•	•	•	•	•		
Policy makers, influencers and opinion leaders	Those who can influence, set or advise on policies that impact the livelihoods of AAS-dependent people e.g. Government Ministers, planners, advocates, lobbyists, village elders, cultural and/or religious leaders.	Appropriate and non-technical information that provides them with the evidence to promote and support policies that will benefit people dependent on aquatic agricultural systems.	•	•		•		•	•					•	
Research Community	National and international researchers with a research interest in the topics being pursued in the AAS Program	Information on Program methodology, approach and results and opportunities for input	•				•		•						•
Participating CGIAR Centers	Those Centers focusing on integrated agricultural systems - IWMI and Bioversity	An understanding of the CRP and its approach together with pathways for engagement and participation	•	•					•		•		•		

Target Audiences		What are their communication needs	Face to face/Virtual	Program, Research, Impact Updates	Annual reports	Website	Knowledge Portal	Social Media (1)	Multimedia (2)	Activity/ Policy Briefings	Outreach events	Workshops	Leadership teams	Media	Science Papers
Communities	Fishers, farmers, producer organizations, extension agents, cooperatives etc. in aquatic agricultural systems	To understand the Program's approach to community engagement and rural development and be aware of the pathways for engagement and participation and be encouraged to participate	•			•		•	•		•	•			
Media	International, national and local media (print, radio, TV)	Information and material that will help them tell stories on the challenges and opportunities in AAS and the work/results of the AAS Program.		•	•	•		•	•						•
Governance and Management	The Board of Trustees of The WorldFish Center who have fiduciary responsibility for the program	Timely and relevant program implementation and governance information	•			•									
	Program Oversight Panel who have delegated responsibility from BoT for program implementation	Timely and relevant program implementation information	•			•									
	Program Leadership Team	Timely and relevant program management information together with guidance and advice to the PLT's Working Groups	•		•	•	•								
Staff within the Lead Centre, participating Centers and delivery partners	To remain aware of the program's implementation and results, channels for engagement and opportunities for advocacy in relevant spheres of influence		•	•		•		•	•		•				

3. STRATEGIC INTERVENTIONS

Objective	Key Actions
To be viewed as a leading source and disseminator of information and knowledge on effective approaches to rural development in aquatic agricultural systems through the use of innovative, relevant and appropriate communication tools and processes.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Coordinate the production and sharing of high quality credible communication products (science, program and impact) from the AAS Program as well as those from other Centers and partners 2. Build and maintain appropriate and relevant communication channels/tools 3. Collaborate with partners to integrate communications 4. Appropriate use of social and multi-media to enable conversations and collaboration with key stakeholders and assist in building a constituency of partnerships
To support participatory action research processes that can sustain transformative change in aquatic agricultural systems by integrating strategic communication principles, tools and methods into the AAS Program implementation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Integrate communication processes and practices into Knowledge Sharing and Learning research theme 2. Build the communication capacity of our people, partners and other actors in the countries, hubs and communities in which we engage
To inform local, national and global audiences on the challenges and opportunities in the lives of people dependent on aquatic agricultural systems by communicating Program activities and results in ways that will engage and influence them.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Collaborate in creating, implementing and supporting hub and country focused Communications Plans 2. Build a group of AAS 'Champions' (from the governance and management in the lead and participating Centers and partners) who will deliver key messages that can influence and inform opinions and decisions that would impact on the lives of people dependent on aquatic agricultural systems
To help foster a strong program team leading to stronger program performance and improved outcomes through effective communication and information systems	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop and maintain an information system to gather and store Program information (products and processes) from planning, rollout and implementation phases of the Program 2. Support monitoring and evaluation processes as a way for internal communication 3. Support the use of tools for assisting in collaboration 4. Collaborate with Bioversity and IWMI to develop shared understandings of communication objectives and align work plans

4. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Communications will be monitored on an ongoing basis and evaluated at the end of every 12 month period.

Key performance indicators will include, but are not limited to:

- Increased program reach, awareness and recognition
- Changes in target audiences knowledge, perceptions or attitudes
- Extended reach through integration into partner's Communications Plans
- Leading global knowledge hub for AAS related information
- Achievement of activities included in the communication plans (Program and Country)
- Meeting communication plan objectives

5. MANAGEMENT

Primary responsibility for this Strategy rests with the Communications Working Group of the AAS Program Leadership Team.

Strategy Implementation will be led by the Head of Operations.

6. RESOURCES

The implementation of this Strategy will be supported by a minimum investment of \$320,000 in 2012.

This investment will be reviewed during the development of the roll out plans in Zambia, Bangladesh and Solomon Islands.

The 2013 and 2014 investment levels will be established during the budget and operational planning processes that will commence in July 2012.



7. PROGRAM LEVEL COMMUNICATION ACTION PLAN FOR 2012 (AND INDICATIVE ACTIVITY IN 2013)

Objective	Activity in 2012	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Indicative Activity in 2013
To be viewed as a leading source and disseminator of information and knowledge on effective approaches to rural development in aquatic agricultural systems through the use of innovative, relevant and appropriate communication tools and processes.	Develop and present AAS Communication Strategy to the PLT Communication Working Group and the POP		●			Review and refine Strategy
	Build an AAS website and social media platforms (Face book, Twitter, SlideShare, Wikipedia)		●	●		Review and refine web site
	Capture and adapt content (Science, Program, Impact)to be used in different communication products (website, social media, publications)		●	●	●	Capture and adapt content
	Contribute content to the CGIAR website and CGIAR publications		●	●	●	Contribute content to the CGIAR website and CGIAR publications
	Develop an AAS Branding Manual		●	●		
	Build the capacity of the Program communication team to successfully deliver communication products and engage in communication processes		●	●		Establish capacity building program in focal countries
	Define an AAS communication product family	●	●			
	Define appropriate monitoring indicators and measure	●	●	●	●	Assess performance and reset indicators and performance management systems
To support participatory action research processes that can sustain transformative change in aquatic agricultural systems by integrating strategic communication principles, tools and methods into the AAS Program implementation	Provide input and advice on communication processes to the AAS Rollout Plans	●	●	●		Review and refine processes
	Provide input to the Knowledge Sharing and Learning Science theme	●	●	●	●	Build and manage integrated information management and communication processes
	Identify and recommend appropriate communication tools for participatory action research		●	●		Review and refine tools
	Define appropriate monitoring indicators and measure		●	●	●	Assess performance and reset indicators and performance management systems
To inform local, national and global audiences on the challenges and opportunities in the lives of people dependent on aquatic agricultural systems by communicating Program activities and results in ways that will engage and influence them.	Provide input to the development of Country Program communication plans		●	●	●	Review and refine plans
	Develop and equip (skills and products) Program leadership and key partners to form a team of AAS 'Champions'			●	●	Facilitate knowledge sharing and learning opportunities
	Undertake a communication needs assessment in Zambia, Solomon Islands and Bangladesh and respond accordingly		●			Build and deliver capacity building activities
						Undertake a communication needs assessment in Cambodia and The Philippines and respond accordingly
	Prepare appropriate communication material in support of global and country meetings and events	●	●	●	●	Prepare appropriate communication material in support of global and country meetings and events
	Establish a program of webinars and other staff engagement activities		●	●	●	
	Define appropriate monitoring indicators and measure	●	●	●	●	Assess performance and reset indicators and performance management systems
To help foster a strong program team leading to stronger program performance and improved outcomes through effective communication and information systems	Input information and advice to the PLT Communication Working Group	●	●	●	●	Input information and advice to the PLT Communication Working Group
	Identify effective internal collaborative and knowledge sharing tools and develop system to capture and store information collected and generated	●	●			Review and refine tools
	Develop communication working arrangements with Bioversity and IWMI		●			Develop share communication strategies
	Define appropriate monitoring indicators and measure	●	●	●	●	Assess performance and reset indicators and performance management systems



**Research
Program on
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Agricultural
Systems**

The CGIAR Research Program on Aquatic Agricultural Systems is a multi-year research initiative launched in July 2011. It is designed to pursue community-based approaches to agricultural research and development that target the poorest and most vulnerable rural households in aquatic agricultural systems. Led by the WorldFish Center, the Program is partnering with diverse organizations working at local, national and global levels to help achieve impacts at scale. For more information, visit aas.cgiar.org.

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Design and layout
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Photo credits

Front cover: Design: Samuel Stacey

Large photo: Mike Lusmore

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This publication should be cited as: CGIAR Research Program on Aquatic Agricultural Systems (2012) Communication Strategy. CGIAR Research Program on Aquatic Agricultural Systems. Penang, Malaysia. AAS-2012-11.

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