WEST AFRICA AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIVITY PROGRAMME
PPAAO/WAAPP

COMMUNICATION STRATEGY
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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

AU- African Union
CARGS- Competitive Agricultural Research Grant Scheme
CORAF /WECARD- West and Central African Council for Agricultural Research and Development
CRI- CSIR- Crops Research Institute
ECOWAS- Economic Community of West African Studies
FARA- Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa
ICT- Information Communication Technology
IFPRI- International Food Policy Research Institute
IU- Implementing Units
MDGs- Millennium Development Goals
MOFA- Ministry of Food and Agriculture
NEPAD- New Partnerships for Africa Development
NARS- National Agricultural Research Systems
NCOS- National Centers of Specialization
NGO- Non- Governmental Organizations
NWC- National WAAPP Coordinator
PAD- Project Appraisal Document
RELC- Research Extension Farmer Linkage Committees
WAAPP- West Africa Agricultural Productivity Program
Executive Summary

The West African Agricultural Productivity Program, WAAPP, has a unique diversity and broad perspective that it draws from. The different country contexts, the interests and beliefs of stakeholders, levels of operation and engagement, cultural backgrounds and economic strengths and weaknesses, all make it a great endeavor. Its potential lies in the processes to achieve its goals - regional economic growth and alleviation of poverty - and in the use of mechanisms to sustain the project to its fulfillment.

The communication strategy program identifies these unique contexts as strengths but also as entry points and links to the realities of the life of the project. The stakeholders’ strengths and weaknesses, the agricultural and research processes that differ from country to country, the political and policy dynamics that must be regularized to support the regional integration endeavor, the alignment of national priorities with regional priorities and the need for resources and capacity to overcome project gaps.

The needs assessment exercise covered four of the six countries, namely Ghana, Nigeria, Cote d’Ivoire and Senegal. It was an effort to gauge the needs, challenges and issues on the ground and what needs to be strengthened to overcome potential risks. While the exercise did not cover Mali and Burkina Faso directly, the two can benefit from this exercise because they share a similar internal structure with other WAAPP countries and because some of the issues that have emerged have to do with experiences of the pilot project and a new experience for those that are just starting to implement the project.

The findings show a great need to employ some communication strategies to link up project processes at different levels and to enable stakeholders to contribute and participate effectively. It also shows need for communication structures and capacity that allows stakeholders to be in touch and engaged in an effort to appreciate differences emerging due to the unique diversity of the project.

The strategy helps to create a supportive and strengthened environment for stakeholders to understand the risk factors and issues by constantly exchanging information and knowledge and in appreciating the goals that must be achieved. It proposes that there be on-going exchange of knowledge and information at the regional level so the coordination units, the researchers that are focusing on different specialized areas can own, participate and engage in the different perspectives emerging from the project. Success stories, lessons and procedures shared will give ownership of the project processes to all actors as will challenges and solutions shared.

It also recommends a constant flow of communication among stakeholders within the countries and with individual institutions to give the project the support it needs and to have all the actors participate and relate in regard to the on-going issues of the project. This is only possible with the use of ICTs – Internet, information systems or platforms, web-portal alongside other
conventional forums like meetings, memos, newsletters and workshops. These are assets that will shrink distance and reinforce efforts to enable the internal publics – stakeholders - to engage and relate but to also inform them of the different perspectives of the project.

The strategy also highlights the significance of the partnership with the mass media. Both at regional and national level, the project needs media support in creating awareness in the wider publics. The media do this best by being co-partners in appreciating the core issues of this project – economic growth of the region through concerted effort in agricultural technology and production, and through regional integration. This can be best achieved through use of all possible channels of communication, even the mobile phone which has a significantly wide use among rural-based stakeholders, the farmers and producers.

The World Bank’s funding role is key as is its effort to maintain efficiency, quality and financial sustainability of the technology generation and dissemination system in the region. So is the role being played by CORAF/WECARD to implement the project. In the end, what one hopes will happen is that a streamlined and strategic mechanism of communication and all other elements will bring these broad and diverse project to a productive conclusion.
1. Strategic Communication Program

Introduction

The West African Agricultural Productivity Program, WAAPP, promises to reinforce agricultural potential in the West African region given the region’s strength in various crops including cocoa and cotton production, oil palm, cashew and groundnut, tree crops like rubber, fruits and plantain among others. The WAAPP is a World Bank-funded effort to address common agricultural production and environmental challenges, food insecurity and poor economic growth, which is common, hurdles facing the West African region and sub-Saharan Africa in general.

Its development objective is to contribute to sustained agricultural productivity in the ECOWAS region’s top priority commodity subsectors.

The specific project objectives are:

1. Regional integration and identity among members of the participating countries;

2. Accelerated use and dissemination of improved technology for purposes of reinforcing regional links, exchange of technical information and developing expertise in country specific priority areas;

3. Creation of supportive engagements and capacities that enable stakeholders to address poverty alleviation efforts and challenges in agriculture and environmental sector.

Achievement of these objectives should help generate increasing the efficiency, quality and financial sustainability of the technology generation and dissemination system in the region and attract partnership and private sector investment; It is also intended to use the advantage of regional integration to avoid duplication and to supplement public funding.

WAAPP was initiated in 2007 with implementation starting with Ghana, Senegal and Mali as part of a 10-year World Bank funded program. This phase (One) focused on mechanisms for sharing technology, establishing national centers of specialization (NCOS) and funding of technology generation and adoption in the participating countries top priority areas. These top priority areas are: roots and tubers (Ghana) rice (Mali), and drought-tolerant cereals for Senegal.

Phase two of this project focuses on the deepening and expansion of these objectives through strengthening of the centers of specialization, consolidation of technology dissemination and generation and improved technology.

WAAPP 1B is intended to benefit consumers who are affected by extreme poverty and to involve agricultural producers and agribusinesses who are users of the improved technology. Other key participants who generate and disseminate technology are researchers, extension agencies, and universities.
The development objective of the proposed WAAPP-1B is to generate and disseminate improved technologies in the top priority areas of the participating countries that are aligned with top priorities of the Region. The three countries now about to implement WAAPP are, Nigeria, Cote d’ Ivoire and Burkina Faso. This is part of the project lifespan of 12-15 years which will cover all the ECOWAS countries. Their areas of specialization are:

Nigeria – Aquaculture

Cote-d’Ivoire – Banana Plantain

Burkina Faso – Fruit and vegetable.

The uniqueness of the World Bank funded WAAPP project is in the diversity of interests, backgrounds, goals and country contexts. The stakeholders represent this diversity both at the national level and the regional level where despite their country differences and commonalities, they are expected to transcend the national interests and goals to the regional standards and regulations in order to fulfill the expected development goals of the project. Ghana, Senegal and Mali have already been implementing the project in which a similar structure to implement the project was established. This includes a coordinating unit in each country, which is mainly the agricultural ministry or related government agency, research institution that have been assigned to generate and disseminate improved technology, active farming communities who are mainly small holder farmers, extension agencies, universities, agribusinesses and other end users and stakeholders in the agricultural sector.

2. Stakeholder Mapping

The stakeholder mapping exercise is intended to create better understanding of stakeholder interest, goals, levels of influence and potential to engage in the project. Most of these work in the field of agriculture, technology, ICTs and development and from meetings with some, there seems great support for the project. This may mean that they could influence and impact the project positively especially with better capacities.

The media have a great potential to be influential but have yet to appreciate this project for what it is hence need to be involved from this stage to enable partners and the general public to understand the benefits of the project across borders and within respective countries.

The WAAPP stakeholders represent different levels namely regional, national and organizational. Table 1 and 2 shows the role of the regional and national stakeholders. The regional structure is coordinated by CORAF/WECARD, which is the implementing agency. At the national level, the coordinating units manage the project by coordinating activities of the different stakeholders. At the institutional levels, each organization or institution has its own structure
### Table 1: Regional Stakeholders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholder</th>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Level of engagement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CORAF/WECARD-ECOWAS</td>
<td>Implementing agency, coordination of respective country units</td>
<td>Primary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WAAPP secretariats and government</td>
<td>Intergovernmental collaboration and support; Exchange of WAAPP secretariat information issues</td>
<td>Primary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Institutions and universities</td>
<td>Research, exchange of knowledge and technology across the region</td>
<td>Primary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media</td>
<td>Information dissemination of WAAPP issues across the borders and other related issues</td>
<td>Primary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other partners – Agra, AU, NEPAD, IFPRI</td>
<td>Peer Support</td>
<td>Secondary</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### National Stakeholders

National stakeholders, apart from those who operate at two levels (as above) mainly function within the country. They are (below) classified as primary or secondary depending on their level of activity and engagement. The primary stakeholders play core roles in the project while those classified as secondary are necessary but are not as engaged as the primary stakeholders. As stated above, levels of engagement correspond with expected communication activity and function.
Table 2: National Stakeholders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholder</th>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Level of engagement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Government/ministries</td>
<td>Policy support and direction</td>
<td>Primary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WAAPP secretariats</td>
<td>Coordination and management of country project and stakeholders</td>
<td>Primary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Institutions and universities</td>
<td>Research, generation and dissemination of improved technology</td>
<td>Primary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extension services</td>
<td>Training, and dissemination of skills to farmers</td>
<td>Primary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmers, producers, associations, cooperatives</td>
<td>Produce; End users of technology</td>
<td>Primary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media</td>
<td>Create visibility, Information dissemination of WAAPP issues, create public support</td>
<td>Primary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agri-business</td>
<td>Food processing, procurement</td>
<td>Secondary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic society</td>
<td>Monitor standards</td>
<td>secondary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private sector, especially in ICT sector</td>
<td>Sourcing, provision and design of required or alternative technology</td>
<td>secondary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public</td>
<td>Representation of public interest</td>
<td>secondary</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. The WAAPP SWOT Analysis
The SWOT analysis shows the strengths and weaknesses as internal factors within the stakeholder structure and the opportunities and threats that exist and which may be risk factors to the implementation of the project.

These contribute to the overall implementation of the project but particularly offer guidance in how the communication function should be devised and implemented. The threats and weaknesses below act as key follow-up indicators for strategy entry points and scaling up communication strategy tactics while strengths and opportunities offer guidance for what needs to be strengthened or built on.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholder</th>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
<th>opportunities</th>
<th>Threats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CORAF/WECARD</td>
<td>Implementing agency – coordination of respective country units</td>
<td>A regional diverse structure with great potential to link stakeholders and achieve goals</td>
<td>Limited and communication flow and exchange between the stakeholders and itself</td>
<td>Promise of new technologies and faster results</td>
<td>Regional regulations and standards for harmonization of process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governments</td>
<td>Oversee policy</td>
<td>Resources and expertise</td>
<td>Inadequate management and accounting practices; corruption</td>
<td>Public goodwill</td>
<td>Economic challenges; inadequate governance political insecurity - in Cote d’Ivoire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WAAPP Secretariats</td>
<td>Coordination and management of country project and stakeholders</td>
<td>Expertise and leadership</td>
<td>Limited communication structure and flow between peers and other stakeholders</td>
<td>Improve existing structure and engagements</td>
<td>Resources to enable it implement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Institutions</td>
<td>Generate and disseminate improved crop varieties and other technologies</td>
<td>Trained professionals; research structure</td>
<td>Inadequate technology capacity</td>
<td>Peer knowledge exchange</td>
<td>Slow processing Inter-government regulations and standards governing research &amp; scientific work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agri-business</td>
<td>Procure, process, and disseminate Above</td>
<td>Experience</td>
<td>Limited capacities in WBP procedure</td>
<td>Regional markets</td>
<td>Government non-commitment; cross-border business regulations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 4. Strategic Objective

The overall objective of the communication program is to set the vision, build support, understanding and communication capacity for the WAAPP collaborative effort. It will also create the links between structures and the processes that enable WAAPP stakeholders to engage participate and gain capacity as regional players and as they strive to achieve project goals at all levels.
5. Strategic Approach

WAAPP Vision

The West African Agricultural Productivity Program will make significant contribution to sustained agricultural productivity and facilitation of supportive engagements and capacities in the ECOWAS region’s top priority commodity sub-sectors.

Given its diverse stakeholders and unique opportunities and strengths (as indicated above), this vision can be fulfilled through a well thought-out-multifaceted approach that will address its divergent levels of interest, involvement, stakeholders and needs. The priority of the project in this phase is to generate and disseminate improved technologies in the top priority areas of the participating countries that are aligned with top priorities of the region.

The strategic approach will involve linking actors and processes by reinforcing participation, engagements, relations and a sense of ownership through ICTS and through the facilitation of improved technologies.

The approach will build information and communication bridges across the gaps shown in the needs assessment findings (Ref: ANNEX1).

Given the project has three levels of functioning – regional, national and institutional, the approach will be multi-faceted to ensure that communication flows and stakeholders at different levels can engage through the possibilities of available technologies and capacities.

The strategic approach is based on four pillars which will guide the implementation of the project and benefit both the first group of countries – Ghana, Mali and Senegal – whose experience is a great asset for way forward in the project, as well as those about to implement the project now - Nigeria, Burkina Faso and Cote d’Ivoire. The pillars are cross-cutting in that they applicable for all the levels of communication – regional, national and institutional.

The four pillars are illustrated in the diagram below and discussed as follows:

1. Building relationships and knowledgeable team solutions

This will be achieved through strengthening of effective sharing of information and knowledge by stakeholders through consultation, and other means of communication to address major issues as identified in the project. The objective and activities of this pillar will cut across the regional landscape national and institutional levels.
2. Promoting (regional) ownership and participation

This will involve creating understanding, interest, support, identity and ownership of the WAAPP regional perspective among stakeholders and the public. It will enable stakeholders to see beyond their national borders and begin to appreciate the project as both national and regional; hence the opportunities that result from this perspective, e.g. trade across borders, new research findings and technologies from priority areas that can be benefit stakeholders across the region.

3. Building capacity, training and ICT promotion skills

This pillar will focus on building capacity, interest and support for use of ICTS and generation and dissemination of improved technologies. It will involve stakeholders at all levels to train and build capacity on ICT use and improved technology.

4. Creating awareness and visibility

This pillar will build its activity around reinforcing an understanding, interest and support of WAAPP objectives and activities in the media and among the public. It will involve all levels of stakeholders since the media cuts across the regional, national and institutional.
Activities

Various activities will be carried out under these approaches to fulfill the strategy objectives. These are:

i. Regional Level

1. Establish a common web portal that allows interaction and access by the WAAPP members and have a regularly updated flow of information which is well managed - CORAF.

2. Setting up of a communication committee under the supervision of CORAF/WECARD Information Manager which facilitate implementation of the communication strategy;

3. Workshops for peers in the research institutes to share knowledge and engage regarding research processes and technologies

4. Create awareness in the regional public through press conferences, articles and programs about the relevance of WAAPP, significance of improved technologies and research outcomes and its relevance to the agricultural sector;

5. Plan for meeting and workshops for coordination units, researchers and other stakeholders to sustain the regional perspective and engagements among stakeholders

6. Establish and sustain a French-English language practice in all documents, on the common web-site and information system and in all WAAPP activity.

7. Initiate radio/TV programs or forum that carry specific information about regional agricultural and development issues to create regional identity among member countries

8. Active discussions on the website with planned participation of members and planned workshops for different levels of participation e.g. among members of the research sector, regular forums

ii. National Level

1. Establish a common web portal that allows interaction and access by the WAAPP members and have a regularly updated flow of information which is well managed;

2. Assign or strengthen communications expert to coordinate corporate and internal communication including managing a web portal and the interactive dynamics for internal audience

3. Organize social activities and consultation to interest journalists and editors in regional cooperation, development and agriculture as news specialization

4. Install website for easy access of information by members
5. Develop ICTS that are user friendly and relevant, e.g. use of an information system that enables farmers, traders, extension workers and others, easy access to information e.g. commodity prices, new varieties etc.

6. Diversify Information on the web to be in English and French for easy access by all members

7. Identify a team of journalists to work and consult with at regional and national level for purposes of coverage of WAAPP and related issues

8. Devise open forums with media houses for planned talk, discussions and interviews on WAAPP-related issues

9. Build media activity around new products to interest the media and the public e.g release of new crop varieties in Ghana, the new bread in Dakar

10. Use existing community structure of social networking to introduce new products and reinforce facilitation of in which people meet for other social networks to introduce and reinforce use of ICTs including the mobile phones for agricultural information and services

11. Installation/device a user-friendly mobile phone with visual application and platform system to connect rural based farmers with crucial information and to speed up the ICT dynamic among rural communities

12. Identify existing TV and radio programs and print media columns or sections that can be used to create awareness about WAAPP activity.

**iii. Institutional**

1. Build capacity in ICT through training at institutional level so that national and regional capacities in ICT’s can be reinforced.

2. Use of mobile phones as a channel for information delivery and exchange linked to an information system that stakeholders have access to;

3. Use existing community structure in which people meet for other social networks to introduce and reinforce use of mobile phones for agricultural information and services

**6. Implementation Arrangement**

The overall objective of the implementation arrangement is to ensure that the objectives of the communication goals are met and that actors are assigned to fulfill this goal.

Overall, CORAF/WECARD will coordinate the information/communication implementation of the regional information activities in liaison with the respective country coordination units. These are Ministry of Food and agriculture (MOFA (Ghana), Agricultural diversification and
market development project, ADMP & CNRST (Burkina Faso) FIRCA (Cote d’Ivoire), ARCN (Nigeria), CNRA (Mali), and Senegal (FNRA).

Activities for WAAPP 1 B mainly revolve around technology generation and dissemination which calls for the coordination and communication between agricultural research systems or institutions (NARS) and regulatory services across borders and within the country, communication between extension services and farmers/producers as well as with agribusiness. Institutional communication will be implemented through the respective communication sections to ensure flow of communication within the organization.

A working committee to coordinate communication implementation and represent members of the different institutions/stakeholders will ensure that communication flow is relevantly kept updated and teams and members are able to engage meaningfully on the on-goings of the project and to discuss hurdles and challenges as they learn lessons from each other. This will help to create ownership and identity. Appointment of a communications expert or firm to advice on the communication strategy alongside other communication issues will be an asset.

The implementation exercise will facilitate the flow and exchange of information among internal and external audiences. This will be done through:

1. Setting up of a communication committee under the supervision of CORAF/WECARD Information Manager which facilitate implementation of the communication strategy;

2. Establishment/reinforcement of ICTs through the use of information system, web portal and Internet which is linked to a mobile phone system for agricultural information.

The committee should be chaired by the coordinating chair but the implementation exercise will be presided over by a communications expert/editor. It should be made up members from the different sectors of WAAPP, if possible with media expertise, e.g. communications officer of NCOs. This will help represent issues within WAAPP and facilitate a professional output of the information/communication sector.

This Committee will link up with the communications manager at CORAF to help:

1. feed the regional WAAPP website and other communications needs;

2. Update/inform stakeholders about communication issues;

3. Coordinate/ build relations between WAAPP and other regional/agriculture/ICTs sector partners;

4. Advise/organize interviews by WAAPP spokespersons in the media
v. Organize media monitoring activities to evaluate quality and frequency of media coverage;

vi. Conduct research on public perceptions on regional integration issues, ICTs and agriculture, use of technology.

**Institutional Arrangement**

The mandate of the Committee will include:

1. Developing and organizing the material for the website
2. Assigning/collection stories required for the website
3. Monthly newsletter emerging from web material
4. Regular arrangement for interactive discussions among members of the team
5. Ensure an English/French version of the material on the web

**Corporate Relations**

The Committee will:

i. Manage corporate and media relations

ii. Develop rapport/relations with media houses – local and international journalists

iii. Identify a team of journalists to work and consult with and make arrangements for social networking as an effort to interest them in WAAPP efforts, issues to do with regional integration, ICTS and agriculture, etc

iv. Organize a receptions around WAAPP activity to interest, educate and update journalists and get their feedback; Can also tap into existing media forum, e.g. Press club or media associations functions;

v. Devise in collaboration with media houses for forums of discussion on WAAPP related subjects;

vi. Identify opportunities for collaboration within existing media activities and forums, e.g. a weekly TV or radio program through which WAAPP-related issues topics can be aired or interviews with experts done to further inform and educate the public about the project
Implementation arrangement for the Region

CORAF/WECARD will set up/strengthen a communication committee that will coordinate activities between countries and ensure representation at all levels is maintained. This will guarantee communication updates at all levels.

The committee will be coordinated by the communication manager who will ensure that the committee is in touch regularly through the web interaction, video phone conferencing and emails. He/she will ensure information/communication updates from the different components and sectors of the WAAPP are represented.

The web portal and information system will keep members updated on various aspects of the project through the web interaction – progress, delays, different country policy approaches, good practices, farmer activity, member participation and involvement et al.

The information system, web portal or any information should be communicated in both French and English to allow access and to break the French/English divide and encourage the regional unity.

Partners/NGOs – Collaborate with other partners like Agra, ECOWAS, Africa Union, and Nepad interest the public in regional integration, research, agriculture and development.

7. Capacity Building and Training

Training and building capacity of the WAAPP structure and personnel is key to implementation processes and achievement of the project goals. Part of the handicaps of the project emerge from the inadequacies within the project processes, especially with structure and skills at different levels.

There are outstanding private sector possibilities for helping to build ICT phone capacity. One such, organization based in Dakar Senegal, has the ability to devise a mobile phone platform system to connect rural based farmers with crucial information and to speed up the ICT dynamic among rural communities. The company is able to devise a user-friendly product (using visuals) that would take into account the literacy levels in the region.

Regional Level

There is need for workshops to create understanding among stakeholders about the concept of regional integration and the benefits to food security, economic growth and trade. CORAF with the support of World Bank could initiate and coordinate this as part of team-building -and- ownership effort among stakeholders in the region.

There is also a need for training of stakeholders and staff on ICTs, especially as it relates to the information systems and web portal to create familiarity and to make easier for stakeholders to
access information about WAAPP activities. This will cut across from the regional level, national to institutional to help stir up activity on communication flow and engagement.

Research institutions as referenced in the needs assessment that are handicapped by lack or inefficient Internet systems need their capacities updated so they can have better tools for delivery and engage with peers across borders and with other levels of stakeholders who need information on their work.

**National Level**

There is need for building capacities in communication structures within organizational and coordination units. There is also need for updated training for use new varieties and technologies as well as skills for communication, ICTs, as they work with farmers and producers who look up to them for such skills. In some areas, capacity and training of technicians and agricultural experts need to be addressed due to the lag of training given political will and economic downturn, e.g. in Cote d’ Ivoire

Farmers and producers need familiarity and training with the use of new and improved technologies. Given the mobile phone is widely in use in all WAAPP-related rural communities, there is a need to introduce and create familiarity with additional user-friendly and visual mobile phone applications to interest the producers and farmers enable them to believe they can rely on the cell phone to do agricultural business. Given most rural farmers, (some up to 70 per cent) are illiterate, visual applications packages are necessary to help them find the mobile phone relevant for farming and for other farmer-related information. This will involve specifications to meet this need and therefore their involvement to inform what would best meet this need. This could be done through a survey or group discussion to help crystallize their need.

Journalist/editors – need for training and building of capacity on development journalism, participatory approaches and the significance of regional integration and use of new technologies for economic growth. Facilitation of talks by experienced regional journalists/editors to speak about topics like “Reporting for the region: Lessons and challenges” or diplomats on the issue

**New Products**

Planning and training is necessary as new products from the program emerge. For instance the breakthrough with the popular bread in Dakar which is using local cereals and the new varieties released in Ghana. There is need for a marketing strategy for such products and for planned media activity to create awareness about these new products

**8. Monitoring and Evaluation**

Monitoring and evaluation indicator will focus on change of attitudes, beliefs and patterns of relations, engagements and frequency of a communication flow among stakeholders.
Qualitative research, namely focus group discussion, interviews, observations, questionnaires and surveys will be used to gauge change of behavior and establish how needs have been met or how patterns of attitudes and perceptions have changed. This will help to establish trends in the issues to do with capacity, regional attitudes and, familiarity with technology. Research will also be done to establish the impact of the new and improved technologies and how it is affecting end users like farmers and producers.

Media coverage through content analysis of print media and electronic media to monitor how often patterns of coverage have changed will also be done. Research efforts will be tied to implementation patterns so that within the first quarter of implementation surveys will be done to gauge progress and to figure out any need for change of tactics in regard to implementation. More research will be planned for on a quarterly basis. Tracking of the website will also be an essential indicator in terms of hits and return guests.

9. Conclusion and Recommendations
The success of the WAAPP communication strategy will depend on the successful building of relations, capacities and engagements across regional levels, hence between countries and in strengthening national and institutional flow of communication.

With an efficient communication system, internal audiences will be able to engage, exchange information and participate fully in the project activities and decisions. The need to impact an information system(s) that meets the needs of the different levels in order to sustain the global objective of the project will be a great asset.

The media will involving the media from this level will also help speed up WAAPP objectives through the support they are likely to gain once the WAPP regional agenda is understood by the public, the policy makers and other partners and stakeholders.

10. Action Plan
The following is a table to illustrate the action plan for implementation. It includes the audiences, activity, responsibility channels or tactics, time lines and where possible, cost. A summary of key activities and capacity efforts have also been attached.
Action Plan for WECARD/CORAF

Key Activities

- Set up of a regional communications/Information committee which will facilitate implementation of the communication strategy;

- Reinforce the information system, web portal and Internet and initiate regular web discussions among WAAPP coordination units, research teams and members in the different countries about the different activities in the project;

- Post information on the web in English and French for easy access by all members.

- Identify a team of journalists to work and consult with at regional and national level, reinforce their professional skills and appreciation of regional integration, agriculture, development-related issues and the essence of development journalism;

- Organize field visits for journalists to different WAAPP project sites;

- Organize annual regional journalist award for top notch and consistent reporting of agricultural and development news, regional integration and technology generation and use. The awards can be split into the three (above) sectors or combined.

- Initiate radio/TV programs /press interviews and columns that focus on specific information on agricultural and development issues in the region, the relevance of the WAAPP initiative and the significance of improved technologies and research to the agricultural sector;

- Launch the WAAPP in Nigeria, Burkina Faso and Cote d’Ivoire by inviting key speakers, representatives from the three countries and key editors and journalists; Launch second phase of the WAAPP by inviting a key speaker /expert and representatives from the three new countries and key media personnel – editors and identified key journalists.

- Generate media and public interest through new products e.g. release of new crop varieties and the popular bread in Dakar

- Workshops, field and exchange visits for peers in the research institutions to share knowledge and engage in research processes and technologies
Regional workshops and field visits for all teams - coordination units, researchers and other stakeholders for updates and knowledge sharing on progress of specific sectors e.g. research, administrative and governmental hold-ups and technology breakthroughs.

Key Capacity Building activities

Regional

- Establish a common web portal that allows interaction and access by the WAAPP members
- Set up of a communication committee under the supervision of CORAF/WECARD Information Manager which facilitate implementation of the communication strategy;
- Organize workshops to create understanding among stakeholders about the concept of regional integration and the benefits to food security, economic growth and trade;
- Train/improve staff skills on ICT use, in regard to information systems and web portal to help improve familiarity and sharing information about WAAPP activities and stakeholders
- Install/Improve Internet systems in WAAPP institutions for better output, delivery and engagement;
- Train journalists on appreciation of regional integration, agriculture, development-related issues and the essence of development paradigm
- Reinforce/train journalism professional skills and appreciation of regional integration, agriculture, development-related issues and the essence of development journalism;

National level

- Workshops/Meetings for coordination units, researchers and other stakeholders to sustain the regional perspective of the project and engagements;
- Install or improve communication system – Internet, web portal or information system
- Updated training for use of improved technologies and new crop varieties - researchers, extension agents and farmers
- Training for use of web portal and interactive processes for WAAPP secretariat (communication and ICT staff);
Institutional

- Install or improve communication system – Internet, web portal or information system;

- Train/ improve staff skills on ICT use, in regard to information systems and web portal to help improve familiarity and sharing information about WAAPP activities and stakeholders

- Updated training for use of improved technologies;

- Training for use of web portal and interactive processes for WAAPP secretariat (communication and ICT staff);
# ACTION PLAN for WECARD/CORAF

Effective sharing of information and knowledge by stakeholders through consultation, and other means of communication to address issues as identified in the project

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholder</th>
<th>Strategic issues</th>
<th>Messages</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Timelines</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>Monitoring Indicators</th>
<th>Budget cost Estimates ($)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The WAAPP secretariats</td>
<td>Improved flow and exchange of information</td>
<td>Knowledge and information exchange will build a common purpose</td>
<td>1. Hold Regional workshops on updates and discussions on project progress, research lessons, country administrative issues;</td>
<td>Quarterly</td>
<td>WECARD/CORAF</td>
<td>Survey to gauge impact on shared knowledge and interaction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As above</td>
<td>As above</td>
<td>As above</td>
<td>2. Organize regional field visits for information and knowledge exchange e.g. for researchers, agribusiness</td>
<td>Quarterly</td>
<td>WECARD/CORAF</td>
<td>As above</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As above</td>
<td>Above</td>
<td>As above</td>
<td>3. Post updated news on the web and initiate interactive sessions with stakeholders on current project issues in both French and English</td>
<td>Regularly</td>
<td>As above</td>
<td>As above</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media</td>
<td>Media coverage of agricultural and development issues is limited</td>
<td>Regional Integration and agriculture will improve country economies</td>
<td>4. Identify a team of journalists at regional and national level, hold workshops to reinforce their professional skills and appreciation of regional integration, agriculture, development-related issues and the essence of development journalism;</td>
<td>Right away and quarterly Follow-ups</td>
<td>As above</td>
<td>Attendance survey of journalist opinion and needs assessment on coverage of news</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholder</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Media</td>
<td>Inadequate appreciation of development news</td>
<td>Set the pace of regional integration with development news</td>
<td>5. Invite key speakers, experts on the above issues as well as agricultural research experts to speak to the journalists at the above forum on current agricultural development issues and the role of the WAAPP project and the significance of research and technological breakthroughs</td>
<td>Quarterly</td>
<td>WECARD/CORAF</td>
<td>Number of participant; content analysis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WAAPP secretariats</td>
<td>Inadequate coverage of development and agriculture</td>
<td>The WAAPP will improve development efforts and standard of life</td>
<td>6. Launch second phase of the WAAPP by inviting a key speaker/expert and representatives from the three new countries and key media personnel – editors and identified key journalists. Use occasion to speak about achievements made in Ghana, Mali and Senegal;</td>
<td>When ready to launch</td>
<td>WECARD/CORAF</td>
<td>Attendance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media</td>
<td>Lack of interest in regional, development and agriculture news and a</td>
<td>You can be a winner with the region’s development news</td>
<td>7. Organize annual regional journalist awards for top notch and consistent reporting of agricultural and development news, regional integration and technology generation and use among rural communities.</td>
<td>Annual</td>
<td>As above</td>
<td>Attendance and how journalists content analysis of TV/Radio and print</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stakeholder</td>
<td>Strategic issues</td>
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<tr>
<td>WAAPP secretariats</td>
<td>Inadequate awareness of the WAAPP project and goals</td>
<td>New technologies will increase farm yields</td>
<td>8. Send press releases/briefs to announce new crop varieties, breakthrough in technology generation e.g. the popular bread in Dakar and elsewhere within the WAAPP.</td>
<td>Regularly</td>
<td>WECARD/CORAF</td>
<td>Responses by journalists and the public</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. Create understanding, support, ownership and regional team spirit of the WAAPP among stakeholders and the public

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WAAPP secretariats NCOs; research</td>
<td>Realign national goal with the regional mission</td>
<td>WAAPP teamwork will always motivate faster results</td>
<td>1. Regional workshops and team building exercises to strengthen team relationship and support</td>
<td>Quarterly</td>
<td>WECARD/CORAF</td>
<td>Survey, Feedback received Coverage by media</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Institutes Universities</td>
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<td>3. Initiate articles and TV/radio programs on development and the WAAPP project based on information from all countries involved</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>As above</td>
<td>Media coverage Feedback from TV/radio program</td>
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<td>WAAPP secretariats</td>
<td>Improved flow and exchange of information</td>
<td>Knowledge and information exchange will build a common purpose</td>
<td>4. Hold Regional workshops on updates and discussions on project progress, research lessons, country administrative issues;</td>
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## 2. Create understanding, support, ownership and regional team spirit of the WAAPP among stakeholders and the public

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<tr>
<td>WAAPP secretariats</td>
<td>Improved flow and exchange of information</td>
<td>Knowledge and information exchange will build a common purpose</td>
<td>2. Organize regional field visits for information and knowledge exchange</td>
<td>Quarterly</td>
<td>WECARD/CORAF</td>
<td>Survey to gauge impact on shared knowledge and interaction</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>3. Post updated news on the web and initiate interactive sessions with stakeholders on current project issues in both French and English</td>
<td>Quarterly</td>
<td>As above</td>
<td>As above</td>
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<tr>
<td>WAAPP secretariat</td>
<td>Inadequate coverage of agricultural and development issues</td>
<td>Agric news is key to economic growth</td>
<td>Strengthen and assign communications expert to coordinate corporate and internal communication including Web portal and interactive dynamics for internal audience</td>
<td>Immediate</td>
<td>WECARD/CORAF</td>
<td>Internal feedback</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As above</td>
<td>Inadequate coverage of agricultural, development issues and regional integration</td>
<td>Shift the news paradigm to agriculture and development</td>
<td>Networking activities and consultation to Interest journalists and editors in regional development as news expertise, agriculture and development</td>
<td>Immediate</td>
<td>As Above</td>
<td>Feedback Content and quality of coverage</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As above</td>
<td>Inhibited sharing of information</td>
<td>We can get beyond the language barrier</td>
<td>Info. on the web to be in English and French for easy access</td>
<td>Immediate</td>
<td>As above</td>
<td>Feedback from members</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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</table>
Action Plan for WAAPP Implementing Units and Stakeholders

Key Activities

- Set up of a communications/Information committee this will facilitate implementation of the communication strategy;

- Reinforce the information system, web portal and Internet and initiate regular web discussions among WAAPP coordination units, research teams and members about the different activities in the project;

- Post information on the web in English and French for easy access by all members.

- Identify a team of journalists to work and consult with at national level, reinforce their professional skills and appreciation of regional integration, agriculture, development-related issues and the essence of development journalism through workshops;

- Organize field visits for journalists to different WAAPP project sites;

- Create the WAAPP Kit of summarized key issues in the project and region and give to journalists;

- Initiate radio/TV programs/press interviews and columns that focus on specific information on agricultural and development issues in the region, the relevance of the WAAPP initiative and the significance of improved technologies and research to the agricultural sector;

- Launch the WAAPP in Nigeria, Burkina Faso and Cote d’ Ivoire by inviting key speakers, key editors and journalists; Launch second phase of the WAAPP in Ghana, Mali and Senegal by inviting a key speaker/expert and key media personnel - editors and key journalists.

- Print brochures, calendars, posters for distribution among stakeholders and target members of the public;

- Generate media and public interest through new products e.g. release of new crop varieties and the popular bread in Dakar

- Workshops and field visits for stakeholders to share knowledge and discuss project issues
WAAPP COMMUNICATION ACTION PLAN -

1. Effective sharing of information and knowledge by stakeholders through consultation, and other means of communication to address major issues as identified in the project

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<th>Stakeholder</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>i). WAAPP secretariats government,</td>
<td>Limited flow and exchange of information</td>
<td>Exchange knowledge and information for a common purpose</td>
<td>1. Set up of a communications/Information committee which will facilitate implementation of the communication strategy;</td>
<td>Quarterly</td>
<td>WAAPP Secretariats</td>
<td>Survey on impact of communication program effectiveness</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>2. Appoint a communication expert/firm to oversee strategic communication program and to coordinate external and internal communication</td>
<td>December 2010</td>
<td>WAAPP secretariat (communications and ICT expert)</td>
<td>Survey to gauge interaction and information on the web;</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>3. Install or reinforce a web portal in French and English and linked to all WAAPP members.</td>
<td>Regularly</td>
<td>As above</td>
<td>feedback on web activity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above</td>
<td>As above</td>
<td>4. Post current news on project and include interviews with members, e.g. farmer activity, scientists behind new crop variety;</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>As above</td>
<td>Assess participation</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stakeholder</td>
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<tr>
<td>WAAPP secretariats government</td>
<td>Limited flow and exchange of information</td>
<td>Knowledge and information exchange is key for team growth</td>
<td>5. Plan interactive sessions for members on the Web portal;</td>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>WAAPP secretariat</td>
<td>Interviews and Evaluations to gauge stakeholder interest, participation and impact</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>As above</td>
<td>6. Print a newsletter for distribution to members</td>
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<tr>
<td>As above</td>
<td>7. Meetings &amp; workshops to discuss project progress, updates and address issues of concern e.g. country policy delays</td>
<td>Quarterly</td>
<td>As above</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii). NCOS research institutions Universities Agribusiness</td>
<td>Sharing of information &amp; knowledge will benefit project teams</td>
<td>1. Organize workshops and field visits for teams for updates and knowledge sharing on progress of specific processes e.g. generation of technology or new findings, farmer responses to new varieties etc;</td>
<td>Quarterly</td>
<td>WAAPP secretariat and teams</td>
<td>As above</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(iii) Farmers, cooperatives, associations, and extension agencies</td>
<td>Focus on common goal of project</td>
<td>Informatio n exchange Increase skill</td>
<td>1. Group meetings to discuss: how best to participate in the WAAPP project; use of new technologies e.g. mobile phone for agricultural information and issues related to adoption of new crop varieties</td>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>WAAPP secretariat and teams</td>
<td>Evaluations for impact and participation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stakeholder</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Uncertainties due to unfamiliarity with new products</td>
<td>New crop varieties have been tested for better yields</td>
<td>2. Farm demonstration sessions for new crop varieties and use of new technologies e.g. new mobile phone applications; Radio listener groups on given times</td>
<td>Initially and as need arises</td>
<td>WAAPP secretariat with farmer teams and extension agents</td>
<td>As above</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Group effort will increase knowledge</td>
<td></td>
<td>3. Train and organize farmers for radio listening groups and use of new technologies. Groups listen weekly</td>
<td>Monthly for training and weekly for listening groups</td>
<td>WAAPP secretariat, farming teams and extension agencies</td>
<td>Numbers in attendance and interest generated</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. Create understanding, support, ownership and regional team spirit of the WAAPP among stakeholders and the public

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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WAAPP secretariats, research Institutes and universities, agribusiness, extension workers, farmer</td>
<td>Promote ownership and regional team spirit among stakeholders</td>
<td>The WAAPP is a regional opportunity to grow</td>
<td>1. Regional exchange visits among peers</td>
<td>Quarterly</td>
<td>WAAPP secretariat</td>
<td>Survey, Feedback received; Coverage by media</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WAAPP secretariats</td>
<td>As above</td>
<td>Lets align national plans with regional goals</td>
<td>2. Planned Interactive discussion on the web portal on different project happenings</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>WAAPP secretariat (communication expert)</td>
<td>Interest generated; feedback received</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WAAPP secretariats</td>
<td>Generate interest about agriculture, development and regional integration issues in the public</td>
<td>The WAAPP regional effort will improve lives</td>
<td>3. Initiate articles &amp; TV/radio programs that inform the public about the WAAPP activities and related issues</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>As above</td>
<td>Extent of media coverage Feedback from TV/radio program</td>
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### 3. Build interest, support and capacity for use of ICTS and generation and dissemination of improved technologies

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<tr>
<td>ii). NCOs Researchers</td>
<td>Need for improved capacity for generation of improved technologies and use of ICTS</td>
<td>Use of improved technologies will improve research effort and efficiency</td>
<td>1. Access and training in improved technologies</td>
<td>On-going</td>
<td>WAAPP secretariat</td>
<td>Feedback on numbers trained and use</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University</td>
<td>As above</td>
<td>Improve efficiency with access to information and technology</td>
<td>2. Install or improve Internet access and use of technology delivery</td>
<td>December 2010</td>
<td>As above</td>
<td>Number of installation &amp; survey on improved use</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agri-business</td>
<td>As above</td>
<td>ICTS more efficient for information delivery and choice</td>
<td>1. Train farmers and demonstrate on use of new crop variety and access to agricultural information through mobile phone farmers</td>
<td>Regularly</td>
<td>WAAPP secretariat</td>
<td>Feedback from producer and end users</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>iii. Extension agents</td>
<td>Need for improved capacity for generation of improved technologies and use of ICTS</td>
<td>ICTS more efficient for information delivery and choice</td>
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<tr>
<td>iv. Farmer groups associations, cooperatives</td>
<td>As above</td>
<td>Use of mobile phone can make farming more efficient</td>
<td>Train on use of mobile phone for agricultural use; Adoption and access to new crop variety</td>
<td>In six months</td>
<td>WAAPP secretariat</td>
<td>Frequency and effect and use of Mobile phone/new crop varieties</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

4. **Build an understanding, interest and support of WAAPP objectives and activities in the media and for public support**

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<tr>
<td>WAAPP secretariat</td>
<td>Better coverage of agricultural and development issues</td>
<td>Agric news is key to economic growth</td>
<td>1. Assign communications expert to coordinate corporate and internal communication including Web portal and interactive dynamics for internal audience</td>
<td>Immediate for Strategy implementation</td>
<td>WAAPP secretariat</td>
<td>Internal feedback</td>
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<tr>
<td>As above</td>
<td>Inadequate coverage of agricultural, development issues and regional integration</td>
<td>Shift the news paradigm to agriculture and development</td>
<td>social networking and consultation to Interest journalists and editors in regional development as news expertise</td>
<td>Immediate</td>
<td>WAAPP Secretariat</td>
<td>Feedback Content and quality of coverage</td>
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<tr>
<td>WAAPP secretariats</td>
<td>Lack of engagement due to language barrier</td>
<td>Language is no barrier to development</td>
<td>Information on the web to be in English and French for easy access</td>
<td>December 2010</td>
<td>As above</td>
<td>Survey on hits and use of website</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>WAAPP Secretariat</td>
<td>Inadequate interest in regional and agriculture news</td>
<td>Regional and development news is a specialized field</td>
<td>1. Identify a team of journalists to work and consult with regularly</td>
<td>Immediately</td>
<td>WAAPP secretariat &amp; consultant</td>
<td>Feedback</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media</td>
<td>Inadequate skills to cover regional integration, development and agriculture news</td>
<td></td>
<td>2. Workshops on current regional, development and agricultural issues</td>
<td>Quarterly</td>
<td>AS above</td>
<td>Monitor response and coverage</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WAAPP secretariats</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3. Organize media function for release of new products e.g. new crop varieties</td>
<td>As need arises</td>
<td>WAAPP secretariats</td>
<td>Response and coverage</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WAAPP Secretariat</td>
<td>Agriculture and development not newsworthy</td>
<td>Support News on agriculture and development</td>
<td>Plan open forums with media houses for planned alks and interviews or discussion on regional-WAAPP-related issues</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>WAAPP secretariat</td>
<td>Survey for response</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ANNEX1: Needs Assessment

Introduction

The needs assessment exercise was part of the communication strategy to gauge the communication and information needs of the West African Agricultural Productivity Program, WAAPP, and in turn contribute to the design of the Strategic Communication Program and the implementation of the Action plan and achievement of project goals.

It focused on a wide range of elements including stakeholder mapping and their interests and level of engagements and understanding, socio-political and economic circumstances that would likely affect the project as well as other contexts, challenges, and workings of the WAAPP project and its stakeholders. Key to it was also the media environment and the information and communication structure and capacity of the WAAPP and as related to relevant institutions, socio-political contexts, communication activities, the civil society and other partners.

The exercise took place between May 16 and June 5 and carried out in four of the six countries in the WAAPP project. These are Ghana, Nigeria, Cote d’Ivoire and Senegal. It involved representatives and staff of the World Bank, country coordination units (WAAPP secretariats), and national centers of specialization (NCOS), research institutes, extension service, producer/farming cooperatives and associations, the media in the different countries, civil society, private sector, agri-business and ICTs. The organizations represented included:

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It was done at a time when Ghana, Mali and Senegal, the first three countries implementing the WAAPP project had reached midway in the first phase. The project had been initiated by the World Bank in 2007 but implementation had functionally been effective from 2008.

Nigeria, Burkina Faso and Cote D’Ivoire had just begun the process of implementation hence with a lot of room to integrate communication into its implementation process and plan for ways of handling challenges.
As pointed out by one of the stakeholders, part of the big lesson to the pilot groups had been the fact that stakeholders had been working towards their goals separately, an approach that denied the project the global regional approach it needed.

“We were all working very hard to meet our goals but we were not communicating with each other or linking our goals with others at the national level or regionally”.

The assessment was done using different techniques and in consultation with World Bank staff in communication and agriculture in DC and the different country offices where the WAAPP is being implemented.

The techniques used include review of relevant literature, questionnaires, interviews, focus group discussions, direct observation, report studies and profiling of stakeholder organizations.

**Situational Analysis**

1. **Inconsistent Communication**

Overall, some stakeholders have met through meetings, workshops and missions. However, communication gaps and inconsistencies are evident at all levels, namely regional, national and institutional. There is a general lack of consistent and planned communication flow within organizations, among stakeholders at the national level and at the regional level. This is evidenced by the fact that core stakeholders like the WAAPP secretariats that have a lot common going on regionally, have not had a flow of information exchange taking place. This means that challenges like country regulations, delays and the need to understand respective country differences were not shared by the team.

National stakeholders on the other hand whose activities are interlinked and should influence each other’s direction did not have on-going communication and ownership of the challenges the overall project was facing. Members worked within their mandate but without the function of planned communication for the broad interest of the rest of the stakeholders. As such researchers who for instance in Ghana released new crop varieties, did not necessarily link up with extension workers or farmers over their new release. This is a disconnect of information flow necessary for the dissemination of the varieties and for communication activities that would necessitate acceptance of the varieties. Because of lack of planned information exchange, this information was not shared with other WAAPP soon after the release and the official launching which involved top government personnel was not followed up with strategic communication or corporate activity. This is a handicap to meeting the regional integration objectives and the need to disseminate information about what each team is doing.

Ghana, Mali and Senegal have been implementing the project since 2007, although more than operationally since 2008. With different areas of specialization, their common goals in achieving their specific priority areas have not been linked in the regional focus due to information and communication gaps. Their priority areas of focus are: Ghana, root and tubers, Mali, rice and Senegal, cereals. As such, not enough peer engagement between scientists and researchers has taken place. This is denying stakeholders the opportunity to relate and engage from the regional perspective and the public at large.
2. Lack of Functional Structures

Indications from the findings also show that there is inadequate capacity due to un-updated or lack of functional structure that supports free flow of information and exchange within organizations and between one stakeholder. Some have dysfunctional Internet systems or inadequate communication structure so that there is an irregular means of communication and stakeholders rely mainly on the regional forums or national meetings to understand the workings and needs of their peers. This denied the stakeholders the opportunity to relate, engage, own and participate in the overall project at both at national and regional levels.

Both at the regional and national levels, there is limited use of ICTs for project purposes and what seems in common use across the board is the mobile phone which farmers in some isolated areas in these countries are already using for commodity pricing. Technology is critical in the project because it allows researchers to improve crop varieties and to work on new products. Use of Internet, websites and information systems will allow for free flow of information and interactive forums in which stakeholders can engage. This includes use of a web portal or information system at the regional level in which stakeholders from each country can have access either directly or through their coordinating units. It also involves web portals at the national level with access to its specific members and interactional access with peers or other members. This will reinforce linkages with each other but be also very useful for farmers who can access through the system to their mobile phone.

3. Attitudes, Values and Beliefs

Values, attitudes and beliefs of stakeholders, vary at all levels. Given the broad spectrum of the project including different cultural and national backgrounds, levels of engagement and operation, the project brings together a wide range of difference.

Interviews with various representatives of stakeholders from different levels however show a general commonness of purpose in wanting to implement the WAAPP project and a willingness to participate at the different levels.

There is however a need for more appreciation for the regional integration concept at all levels since there are indications that stakeholders are working more from the national perspective than regional which somewhat denies the broad but common regional perspective it is intended to have. It means that stakeholders do not have the opportunity to appreciate challenges related to regional issues like different country regulations and statutes or standards that different countries use for scientific material in regard to property rights.

Stakeholders have to also adjust perceptions in regard to how they are used to working and relating with other stakeholders. The project gives elevation to participatory processes so that farmers’ interests and needs are priority and so that research work is guided by farmer’s needs.

“We have to work hard at changing this perception because scientists do research for their own sake or to publish papers that may not be closely related to what is happening on the ground.” One stakeholder said.
4. Training and Capacity

Necessary skills are required for generation and dissemination of improved technologies and use of ICTS, internet information systems all of which are necessary for communication flow and information exchange. Agricultural experts need training both to equip them with skills necessary for their own expert areas but also to improve on the flow of communication within WAAPP. New technologies need to be disseminated in ways that farmers and extension workers can find easy to understand.

In all the WAAPP countries, a structure through which extension service is used to link up with farmers through farming schools and demonstration farms has been in use for a long time. However, stakeholders in extension service across the WAAPP region lack adequate skills and resources and need reinforcement and commitment to work effectively with farmers. They will need new skills for use of ICTS to be able to work closely with farmers if the proposal to use the mobile phone system is installed and linked to a platform elsewhere from their locality. Equally essential, extension service needs to be updated and personnel trained to be able to use new technologies with ease so they can pass on the knowledge to farmers. In Cote d’Ivoire, for instance, gaps created by the political and economic disturbance have led to disruption of training programs for agricultural personnel including those in the extension service, farmers and senior agricultural personnel who need to replace those who have retired.

Farmers will also need familiarization and training for use of specific mobile phone applications necessary for agricultural information, new technologies and commodity processes.

Journalists are also not well trained to appreciate specializations like development journalism paradigm or economic and regional integration perspective. There is need to build capacity in the media so journalists can appreciate regional integration concept and development journalism.

WAAPP members also need some training to appreciate the regional integration perspective and on use of the media so they can know how to deal with corporate and media relations.

5. Media Landscape

There is a general limited coverage and attention given to issues in agriculture, environment or development. The driving force behind most media in West Africa is typically political so that news to do with agriculture or the related field often captures attention when there is food crisis, financial scandals related to food or when the news is perceived as being as a business issue. This means news on agriculture is never appreciated for what it is or given the attention it deserves.

Some media owners are politicians, e.g. in Nigeria, where some newspapers or media houses push for specific political agenda and influence. As such, agriculture and development which are issues that cut across take insignificant position in news coverage, unless they contribute to this agenda. TV and print media do limited coverage although there are slight differences from one country and the other.

Radio is very popular across the board, especially in the rural areas. It is in great use too for agriculture related programs in FM stations which air programs in both English and French and in local languages. Some stations located in the urban centers also have sister station in the rural
areas that air their similar programs and others in local languages. This is especially useful in that rural communities some of which are not literate can access information on farming or any other information.

Across the West African region, journalists are poorly paid and lean on making sure their stories are published by covering what is most in demand. As a result, many mainly focus on the coverage of politics to ensure their work is published, hence paid for the stories they write.

While the standard practice is for them to attend news functions, there is a tendency and pattern that indicates that those who invite them to pay for their attendance or transport to the function. This often compromises media ethics but is a practical reality whereby hosts of functions have to arrange to bring journalists to their functions if they want coverage.

6. **French-English Divide**
The English and French language difference is a reality known to WAAPP stakeholders. While the diversity gives them a great opportunity to interact and engage, some members feel the language issue is a barrier to free and meaningful engagement and to the achievement of the full purpose of regional information flow. So far, the CORAF website is in French which means English-speaking members have no access to information. There is definitely a need to procedurally have websites at national and institutional level in both languages so that members and the public can freely access information about the project.

7. **Conclusion**

The communication component is a great asset to the WAAPP in that it complements its regional goals of integrating member countries and make gains through economic growth. The project’s diversity requires that countries and stakeholders, regardless of their differences, align their national and institutional priorities and values with the regional ones.

The common thread that runs through this diversity is communication. It is an asset that can be used to create understanding and support of project objectives, build ownership, participation and commonness of purpose and create awareness among internal and external publics. This will create an environment that enables stakeholders to engage and feel part. It will create a sense of confidence and help stakeholders take ownership and work towards achieving the goals of the project. Research peers need to relate and challenge each other and coordination units need constantly communicate with each other to share knowledge and information regarding their respective chapters. Farmers, producers and extension service workers need to actively participate and feel the need to bring change through use of ICTs and new technologies.