

NATURAL RESOURCES SYSTEMS PROGRAMME
FINAL TECHNICAL REPORT¹

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Project Title

A synthesis of communication products and practices

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Organisation

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

ASARECA	Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in Eastern and Central Africa
CABI	Commonwealth Bureau International
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
COSOFAP	Consortium for Scaling Up Options for Increased Productivity (Western Kenya)
CPHP	Crop Post Harvest Programme
CPP	Crop Protection Programme
CRD	Central Research Department
DFID	Department for International Development
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FMSP	Fisheries Management Science Programme
FRP	Forestry Research Programme
FTR	Final technical report
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
KAP	Knowledge Attitude and Practice
LPP	Livestock Production Programme
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NRSP	Natural Resources Systems Programme
PR	Public Relations
RNR	Renewable Natural Resources
RNRR	Renewable Natural Resources Research
SEM	Socio-Economic Methodologies
STREAM	Support to Regional Aquatic Resource Management (Thailand)
NR International	Natural Resources International

1 Executive Summary

The purpose of the project was to enable DFID to institutionalise and manage communication for uptake promotion as an integrated component of its RNR research programmes. The project was to have two outputs for delivery to DFID CRD (communication section):

- Evidence based good practice in planning and implementing communication plans for DFID RNR Research Strategy projects established
- Evidence based framework for the management, monitoring and evaluation of communication for uptake promotion of DFID RNR research strategy, its programme and projects, developed.

The research was carried out through: a desk study; a series of mini case studies in Bangladesh, the Caribbean and Uganda in which project teams, and stakeholders (including beneficiaries) were interviewed; interviews with programme managers and their UK and regional staff where appropriate; and interviews with a wider range of PLs and researchers who had been involved in various aspects of programme communication management strategies.

The two OVI's at the purpose level and the extent to which they have been achieved are set out below:

1. DFID has a clear and functioning communication strategy for uptake promotion for RNR research in place by 2007

The Central Research Department will have a communication strategy in place by 2007, which will include a section on the uptake promotion of RNR. DFID is currently commissioning a new agriculture programme for Research into Use; this is about putting in place strategies to enhance the uptake and use of proven RNRRS research outputs. The contracting organisation is expected to put in place a communication strategy and a monitoring and evaluation strategy. Lessons from this synthesis study should inform both these strategies. The DFID 'Getting Research Into Use' programme is about to start and the contractor for this programme will also be required to put in place and implement a communication strategy. CRD Communication Team will be involved in this process and will use the framework and examples of good practice to inform themselves and the contractor.

2. All researchers in DFID funded RNR projects include communication planning for uptake promotion from the start in NR research projects by 2007.

DFID now stipulates that all new research programmes must:

- Put in place a draft communication strategy during the first 6 months of the programme
- Allocated a minimum 10% of the overall programme budget to communication of research
- Have a team that includes a communication specialist.

Although this policy change cannot be attributed to this project it should be recognised that some RNR researchers, and latterly, guidelines developed under the DFID Socio Economic Methodologies Programme (no longer in existence), were consulted during this process. The outputs from this study are important for providing practical evidence of different approaches

used in the uptake promotion of NR research and for informing the new phase of DFID's support to agriculture, and in particular the Research into Use Programme

The CRD has produced a set of guidance notes for Research Programmes. However, these are rather complicated and therefore difficult to use by researchers new to planning communication of research. The outputs from this project should inform a revised version of the Guidance Notes.

NRSP's purpose 'To deliver new knowledge that enables poor people who are largely dependent on the NR base to improve their livelihoods' has a stronger chance of being achieved if good communication practices and products for uptake promotion are accessible to all stakeholders from policy makers and poor people. In this context accessible means in a language people understand, in a format they can use, and at a time and place which is suitable for them.

The findings from this project suggest that whilst programme managers and researchers are now committed to putting in place good communication practice, there is still some way to go before real accessibility of communication products is achieved. The framework and examples of good practice resulting from this study are aimed at helping managers and researchers to remedy this situation.

2 Background

Over the last 13 or so years there has been considerable concern in DFID about the impact of the Renewable Natural Resources Research (RNRR) Programme's work and its role in wider development goals. In response to these concerns, DFID and its RNRR Programmes commissioned research to examine dissemination, uptake and impact. Some of the studies were carried out for one programme only whilst others crosscut all programmes. The latter culminated in research (Norrish et al 1999), to investigate the extent to which communication strategies were being put in place and implemented and the feasibility of implementing a communication strategy across all DFID RNRR programmes.

The research, based on in-depth case studies and the integration of practice based communication theory found that approaches to communication for uptake promotion were piecemeal. However it also revealed many strengths which, if put in place in all projects, would provide a sound basis for improved communication for uptake. They included:

- an inception and design phase during which the communication context of different stakeholder groups can be investigated and a communication strategy which meets their needs and capacities can be negotiated
- good collaborative links, often built up over time, which provide the pathways for dissemination
- the use of local skills to help to build capacity and ensure sustainability
- the building up of local networks and activities to support them
- the attempts to match dissemination to different needs.
- attempts to adapt dissemination to suit different communication needs and contexts.

These findings led to a set of recommendations for improved communication strategies at three levels, DFID RNRR Strategy, Programmes and Projects (Norrish et al 1999) and to a set of Guidelines (Norrish et al 2000). The Guidelines were intended to inform all

programmes and be supplied to all project leaders.

In 1999 a second piece of research (Norrish 2000) was commissioned by NRSP for the purpose of informing what NRSP might require of project leaders in order for communication for uptake promotion to be effective. This research was also based on a series of case studies designed to evaluate the communication activities and media products which were intended by the projects to help in uptake promotion. The main findings were that although in most projects some kind of materials (leaflets, posters, manuals, videos) had been produced their impact was slight due to a lack of understanding of the:

- role and importance of materials in relation to activities during a project and their role in wider dissemination need
- need to involve those for whom materials are intended in their production
- communication context within which those with whom the project wishes to communicate live and work
- real costs (time, skills and money) of producing and distributing appropriate materials in sufficient numbers.

Participatory research activities, farm and research station visits, opportunities to interact regularly with extension etc, (for research teams, their collaborators and farmers) on the other hand, were successful in achieving uptake during the life of a project. However, their continuation once the project was over was often uncertain. These findings led to recommendations at NRSP programme and project level which were related to planning and implementing uptake promotion communication activities during the project cycle.

Between them, these two pieces of research carried out 14 in-depth case studies interviewing a range of stakeholders from programme managers to end users. The overall findings from all the research were that for communication which enables learning and uptake to happen there has to be:

- engagement which means something to all actors at all levels: PMs with researchers, researchers with their collaborators, collaborators with intermediaries and end users, intermediaries with end users and so on
- activities and communication products tailored to the needs of different groups
- and involvement of those groups in the activities and product development.

Based on this research the assumption was made that, by putting in place an active communication strategy, uptake promotion would be improved through better, more targeted communication activities and media products; and that researchers would develop a better understanding of the importance of communication and put it into practice in all their research. In the process, the researchers would affect the way in which their organisations think about communication for uptake promotion. The trick was to find management tools that would enable this to happen and would also provide ways in which what happened could be monitored.

Since the research was carried out there has been concerted work in relation to communication for the uptake promotion of natural resources research outputs by the RNRRS programmes. This has resulted in active and diverse approaches to communication. As the programmes approach the end of the current round of funding, with its focus on uptake promotion, NRSP wanted to assess what lessons could be learnt from the strategies and activities that had been put in place to assist projects to improve the effectiveness of their

uptake communication. Accordingly, it commissioned the synthesis study presented here.

3 Project Purpose

The project purpose is to enable DFID to institutionalise and manage communication for uptake promotion as an integrated component of its RNR research programmes. As the DFID RNRR Programmes come to the end of the present round of funding and DFID starts to move towards a different structure for the management and implementation of research programmes there is a need to capture the lessons from the RNRR programmes

The current emphasis on the need to put research findings into use focuses attention on communication activities and products which are an essential component of uptake promotion. In the final phases of its life the RNRR Programmes have focused on uptake promotion (the marketing phase as some have called it) and it is vital to take on board the lessons from the programmes in all their richness and diversity before it is lost. Research into use is a new field for DFID and these lessons need to be fed in as soon as practicable.

It is unfortunate that by the time this project started DFID had already put in place communication strategies and guidelines for some of its new research programmes. Although there was consultation during the process the extent of the RNRR programme managers contribution is unclear. This, in spite of exhortations from Surr (2002) on the experience of the RNRR programmes and the need for DFID to learn from them. The record of DFID learning from its own research programmes is not a good one (Surr, 2002), but it is to be hoped that the presence of a champion in the person of a communication specialist in the Communication Team of DFID CRD, will help to ensure that some learning from the communication synthesis project will happen. This hope is strengthened by the fact that the Communication Specialist originally seconded for one year has now been seconded for a second year. The two outputs from the project have been developed with the Communication Specialist to try and ensure that what is produced is most likely to meet the needs of the DFID CRD Communication Team and make a contribution to their work.

4 Outputs

The project outputs are: evidence based best practice case studies and a conceptual framework for research communication into use, this will be backed up by details of management tools which already exist as well as recommendations for research to develop further tools, and recommendations for M&E and the tracking of research communication activities and products as a basis for uptake at a future date as well as for the M&E during the lifetime of a project.

Achieving project outputs

The research process was beset with what can only be called a run of bad luck which, combined with the way in which the management was structured, has resulted in a less than satisfactory project. Various members of the team were sick from August 2005 until early January 2006 and the research team in Uganda were involved in a serious traffic accident. This had detrimental effects on their morale and ability to complete all the necessary interviews and carry out the analysis and writing up into country case studies.

The longer term effects of this accident were to be seen in the Bangladesh studies in which one of researchers who had worked in Uganda and been involved in the car accident was

paired with a researcher from Bangladesh who also suffered illness. This resulted in loss of interviews and also of case study analysis and writing up. Most of the work was completed to some degree, but only the mini case studies from the Caribbean (not beset by problems) are fully written up and in a state for public consumption (a selection from all the case studies are annexed (Annex D3)). However the interviews, the draft case studies, and the analysis documents, although incomplete, have proved useful as working documents for the project.

In addition, although the project has greatly benefited, and will continue to benefit, from having the Communication Specialist, Communication Team, Central Research Department as a champion within DFID, her extremely heavy workload in a new post this year made work as project manager almost impossible.

In May it looked as if the project might founder, because of the amount of time already lost. However, after a team meeting it was decided to go ahead and try to make up the lost time. The events in Uganda put paid to this plan and after the less than satisfactory completion of work in Bangladesh the project leader had a meeting with the Programme Manager to put in place a rescue package. This was based on the acceptance by ITAD and NRSP that the Project Leader alone would be responsible for the delivery of the considerable amount of the research which remained to be done. Other members of the UK team would only be minimally involved. An experienced researcher known to the PL was taken on for 25 days to support the PL in the analysis of the mini case studies. The lack of fully completed and analysed and written up mini case studies meant that all the interviews completed to date had to be re-read and re-analysed by the new researcher and PL and an assessment made on how to fill in the gaps. The deadline was extended to January 2006. The rescue worked to the extent that the project will be able to deliver the two outputs. However, it has put enormous stress on the project leader (and the programme manager) for whom it has been a bitter and deeply depressing experience.

Because the mini case study interviews were not fully completed their reports could not be used as the basis for Output 1: Evidence based good practice in planning and implementing communication plans for DFID RNR Research Strategy projects established. Luckily for the project the extension granted by NRSP has meant it has been able to take advantage of a set of recently completed uptake projects in which communication has been treated as a researchable component. These have served to confirm findings and fill in some of the gaps in the mini case studies. Turning them into case studies was not part of the original project design and therefore there has been no time or budget to do more than read them. A list of them will be provided to DFID for Output 1. DFID will need to determine whether people will be happy to download and read the project documents available on the web, or whether these will need to be re-written into case studies for easier consumption.

The fact that the mini case studies were not fully completed (particularly the programme specific sections) meant that additional research, both desk based and based on interviews had to be used to triangulate the findings. The research work which was needed to complete the project and which would now be carried out by the PL with assistance from the new researcher was set out in the rescue package and included:

- Read and check all interviews, or interview summaries, mini case study synthesis reports and relevant project and programme documents for Uganda, Bangladesh and the Caribbean.
- Re- analyse as needed in relation to each of the co-operating programmes (NRSP, FMSP, LPP, CPP, FRP, CPHP) and the programme communication strategy models

drawn up by this project.

- Devise and carry out programme specific interviews/send email questionnaires to:
FRP communication skills courses participants
IMA who set up and ran the course
CPHP, LPP, CPP regional co-ordinators and mentors
FMSP projects leaders (9) who have had to complete a communication matrix (not those included in the mini case studies)
NRSP Interviews with a further selection of PLs who have had to complete communication plans (not those included in case studies).
- Analyse data from the above in relation to the main research question and the programme models drawn up by this project.
- Review literature with a focus on the apparent lack of literature which refers to NR research communication or to the wealth of communication literature, theoretical and practical.
- Read and integrate any programme documents into findings
- Check and revise programme communication strategy models.
- Bring together all analysis from the above and look at the implications of this for a framework and examples of best practice for DFID.
- Develop and write up framework for DFID
- Put together examples of best practice for DFID.

The main findings

The main findings from the project are that:

- There has been a significant change in attitude towards communication from research managers and researchers which now needs to be built on to ensure a good understanding of what is needed to make communication activities and products useful, usable and accessible to users.
- Uptake projects with a strong focus on communication which is treated as something to be researched and written up in its own right can provide the basis for learning by donors, programmes and projects. Ways need to be found to promote such learning as a regular part of research activity.
- These projects demonstrate clearly the wide range of communication skills needed in uptake projects and the need for a driver to oversee what is happening. The wide range of skills needed in any one project may not all be present in one person. Understanding what kinds of skills are needed is one of the keys to effective communication.
- Effective engagement with stakeholders is central to communication for uptake promotion. Sufficient time and resources are needed for effective engagement.
- Management tools in the form of mandatory requirements in relation to the planning and implementing of communication plans, even when supported by guidelines are not sufficient to ensure that project teams engage with stakeholders at all levels, and have the range of skills needed to carry out communication activities and work through the processes of design and pre-testing necessary to deliver usable materials.
- Short training courses in communication planning are useful if the content is practical

and relevant, and they are carried out at the beginning of a project.

- However, the content of training needs to be carefully considered in the light of the range of skills needed for successful communication. Questions need to be asked about whether it is reasonable or feasible for all researchers to be trained in all the necessary skills or whether they need to be trained in awareness of what is needed and how to work with communication professionals to achieve that.
- Communication products are often of poor quality. Effective pre-testing of materials in the early stages of their development can improve quality and ensure materials are both useful and usable. Employing a specialist with skills in pre-testing and usability studies should be considered. Questions are often asked about the cost effectiveness of such measures, but if products are unusable then all money spent on them is wasted.
- Prolonged contact through linked projects funded by one programme can help individuals, and through them the organizations they are working in, effect changes in their communication work.

Evidence based best practice case studies

It had been hoped that the good practice case studies would emerge from the interviews with managers and the following through of their communication strategies in the mini case studies. However, as the research progressed and the findings emerged it became clear that the kinds of things donors, research managers and researchers needed to know were not all going to emerge in this way. In order to find examples of good practice it was necessary to look at other projects, particularly communication research projects where ample evidence based work in planning, implementing communication plans and doing some kind of M&E to assess success could be found. Because the project was extended it was possible to see the FTRs from a number of these projects, in some cases talk to the project leaders, and see the materials produced. The projects selected provided detailed and concrete examples of:

- the planning and implementation of communication plans
- the extent of stakeholder engagement needed for any kind of uptake to occur; the differences in approach to stakeholders and their communication needs which have to be put in place in each country and even regions of countries.
- the length of time needed to negotiate with stakeholders, even when there is a functioning network which can be plugged into
- the need for the right kind of pre-testing to ensure that materials are usable by different groups before large scale printing and distribution is thought of.
- how to go about identifying uptake pathways and develop communication strategies through iterative processes of consultation and pre-testing with the different groups to be reached by those pathways
- carrying out feasibility studies for uptake, including an assessment of communication context and needs
- how to work with communication professionals
- how to work across language and cultural barriers.

As previously stated a list of these with their executive summaries will be provided to DFID

for Output 1. They may need to be written up in a form which makes them suitable for a non-specialist audience.

The conceptual framework for research communication into use

The original plan was for Output 2 to emerge from the interviews with the programme managers supported by the mini case-studies carried out overseas in the Caribbean, Bangladesh and Uganda for each of the 6 programmes. The assumption was that the mini-case studies would provide evidence of the implementation of programme and project communication strategies which in themselves would be examples of good practice. This has not proved to be the case. None of the six RNRR programmes reviewed in this synthesis study have a real framework although they do have various strategies in place. What seems to be coming through from the research is that there are certain conditions which need to be met for communication to have a chance of succeeding and therefore for any kind of wider uptake to happen. The uptake projects in which communication research has played a significant role have helped the project to put the mini case study work into context and provide a framework which will be delivered in draft to DFID CRD Communication Team by the end of June 2006. These projects all have team members with extensive knowledge, experience and/or qualifications in communication. They are the only projects in which we can trace the setting up, implementation, role of communication specialists, and initial M&E of a communication plan through the various project documents and reports as required by the programme.

Donors need to ensure that research managers understand the importance of communication and what is needed to help it have a chance of succeeding so that they (research managers) can put in place calls for bids for research programmes, management tools and support for research teams which will enable them to do the best they can in planning and implementing communication strategies.

How can donors ensure this, what mechanisms and donor management tools should they be putting in place? Whilst it appears on the surface that requiring research managers to put in place communication plans may be the answer the communication synthesis study shows that this may not in fact lead to good, complete and usable communication at the point of use. The Communication Specialist attached to the communication team DFID CRD has been helping new consortia with their communication plans and this would seem to be a good solution if the person doing the supporting understands about communication right through the chain. However, it is imperative that donors and research managers fully understand the importance of communication, the kinds of resources (time and skills), as well of understanding of the contexts (political, economic, social), within which communication is expected to work. If this is not the case then there is little hope that the implementers of research (especially research into use) will be able to do it as research managers will not understand how to set up research 'calls' or to make proper judgments on responses.

Everyone involved needs also to understand that stakeholders will all have different priorities, you may not be able to get your work as a number one priority even during the lifetime of the project. And even where it is top of peoples list during that project it may well slip into being just one of number of things to be taken account of when the funding comes to an end.

Adaptation of a projects research outputs to different contexts (political, social, economic etc) is vital for uptake promotion and scaling up. Understanding that it has to happen is not always taken on board (and it has to be said that the easy accessibility of the web can make it seem as if provision of information is all that is needed for scaling up). It is not just that

methods of work or new crops have to be adapted but the communication around them has to be developed anew for different groups, as do the communication products.

Delivery of the products

The products remain to be written and delivered (13.6.06). Discussions of the main findings are continuing between the project Leader and the DFID CRD Communication Specialist who will use the products. Both Products will be used to inform the rewriting of the DFID CRD Communication of Research: Guidelines for Research Programme Consortia and the first use of the framework will be the member of the consortium for Research into Use who is going to lead on communication. The framework will be used in discussion on how communication in the consortium will be managed.

The CRD Communication Specialist has had a heavy schedule this year and discussions on the outputs have only recently started. In accordance with the findings of this and other research it is important to discuss the way in which the findings are packaged and delivered to DFID so that best use can be made of them.

5 Research Activities

Research activities: Output 1

Literature review

Activity 1 - planned: An analysis of literature and programme documents relevant to good practice in planning and implementing communication plans for natural resources research. The review will look at international literature and practice, but focus heavily on work from the NRSP programme and other DFID research programmes.

Activity 1 – actual: This was carried out throughout the project. The nature of the review changed during the course of the project as it became increasingly obvious that there was little literature on RNRR communication and that two significant literature reviews had been completed (references here).

Mini-case study development

Activity 2 - planned: Develop criteria for selecting sites and projects for mini-case studies in consultation with NRSP and collaborating DFID RNRR Programmes. Due to time constraints we plan to carry out mini-case studies in one country in each of three regions (East Africa, South Asia and Caribbean) wherever possible. A minimum of 15 mini-case studies is planned covering the regions as equally as possible

Activity 2 – actual: Criteria were developed and 19 case studies chosen, but the spread was uneven across the countries and across the programmes. This is largely because the expected support from programmes did not materialise (FMSP is the exception to this).

Hire and brief in-country researchers

Activity 3 - Planned: Hire and brief in-country researchers.

Activity 3 – Actual: Three researchers were hired, One in the Caribbean who was well known to NRSP and the project leader and who was also a communication specialist of some years standing. He was able to work independently producing

what was required in the ToR.

The researcher in Uganda was well known to the programme manager and familiar with the projects and had experience of working on communication research. Had the work not been upset by a car accident described (see Section 4) all would have been well as the initial analysis and rough drafts of case-studies showed. Unfortunately the follow up work and finished case studies were unable to be fully delivered.

The researcher in Bangladesh was well known to ITAD, but was, for reasons which have never been entirely clear, but may be related to lack of experience in communication research, unable to deliver on the case studies or on the follow up activities needed after the first round of interviews and after the UK researcher had returned to the UK. The PL and ITAD pursued this work many times over with no success.

Develop mini-case study tools and research question checklists

Activity 4 - planned: Develop mini-case study tools and research question checklists in e-consultations with in-country researchers and make decisions on who will do which mini-case studies. The case-studies were designed to look at the communication for uptake promotion pathways and will include interviews with a range of stakeholders from project leaders through to end users. Tools were to be tested and adapted to local contexts as appropriate.

Activity 4 – Actual: Tools need skills to put into practice and participatory tools in particular take a long time to carry out. Because of time constraints it was decided use semi-structured interviews with small groups and individuals without additional tools. This enabled a larger number of people to be interviewed.

Implement mini-case studies

Activity 5 – Planned: Conduct mini-case studies. There will be at least one member of the research team working with the in-country research partner.

Activity 5 – Actual: Unfortunately, organisational duties intervened and the support of the project manager was only possible for one week at the start of the work in Uganda. The UK researcher went to work with an in-country researcher in Uganda and Bangladesh, but for reasons given above the research was never fully completed (including interviews not completed, follow-up not carried out and case studies not written up).

The Caribbean researcher was well known to, and has worked on project MTRs, for NRSP. His capabilities were well known to the PL and he is also a communication specialist. He was briefed by email by the project leader and carried out the case studies alone. All the work was completed and the case studies were all delivered.

Analysis of mini-case study data

Activity 6 - Planned: Initial analysis will be carried out in-country to enable validation and feedback to project teams/information sources where appropriate. The mini-case studies will be analysed for common and specific themes and lessons learned (Note: information from the case studies relating to what has and has not worked in terms of the framework(s) will feed into the framework modification activity).

Activity 6 – Actual: To date none of the case study interviews and analysis has been validated with anyone other than project leaders. This is a great regret as project staff

gave willingly of their time as did groups of beneficiaries. A second analysis had to be carried out in the UK as explained above.

Development of good practice for planning and implementing communication plans

Activity 7 - Planned: Development of good practice for planning and implementing communication plans for DFID RNR Research Strategy projects. This will be carried out in consultation with an organisational management consultant to help ensure that recommendations will work within the environment of DFID.

Activity 7 – Actual: The presence of the communication specialist in the Communication Team of the DFID CRD has obviated the need for working with a management consultant.

Initial communication of analysis

Activity 8 – Planned: Each mini-case study will be produced as an independent report and made available as pages on a web site (decisions on which website will be made as part of the communication plan developed during the inception phase).

Activity 8 – Actual: This has not been done for reasons explained in section 4.

Final workshop

Activity 9 – Planned: Lessons of good practice, with the Framework will be presented at a final Communication Synthesis Workshop for review and final modification. The workshop will be for relevant DFID personnel and other stakeholders (to be identified during the inception phase) with an interest in lessons of good practice.

Activity 9 – Actual: The Final workshop was replaced in favour of personal communication by the project manager and/or project leader with relevant DFID personnel and other stakeholders nominated in the project communication plan (see appendix?)

Research activities: Output 2

Literature review

Activity 1 - Planned: An analysis of literature and current practice in the research area to develop a better conceptual understanding of the issues and document lessons that are already available. The review will look at international literature and practice, but focus heavily on work from NRSP programme and other DFID research programmes.

Activity 1 – Actual: The literature turned out to be both vast and narrow: vast in covering of communication for health, poverty, for project managers and so on, but very small indeed in relation to natural resources. The array of manuals developed over the last few years is amazing. However, carrying out a comprehensive review of all this material seemed superfluous as two others had recently been written (one funded by DFID) instead the general literature and the manuals were scanned to see what new thinking was around.

Research into current practice in NRSP and collaborating RNRR Programmes

Activity 2 Interviews will be conducted with programme managers and selected researchers to understand how and why communication for uptake promotion is

included in programme strategies.

Activity 2 – Actual: Good relations were established with the managers and face-to-face initial interviews were held. Contact after this was by email and phone call.

Other relevant stakeholders identified

Activity 3 – Planned: Other relevant stakeholders will be identified who have an interest in, or have already developed, frameworks and strategies for managing, monitoring and evaluating communication for uptake promotion. Interviews will be held with a sample of these stakeholders to understand how and why communication for uptake promotion is included in their frameworks and strategies.

Activity 3 – Actual: Communication Specialist, Communication team, Central Research Department DFID was able to carry these out as part of her normal DFID duties (see Annex B1 The project communication plan)

Develop draft framework

Activity 4 - Planned: Based on the initial findings from the literature, the interviews, and the previous experience and work of the researchers a draft framework(s) will be produced. This work will be carried out in consultation with an organisational management consultant to help ensure that recommendations will work within the environment of DFID.

Activity 4 – Actual: As mentioned previously the presence of the communication specialist in DFID CRD Communication Team has meant that the services of a management consultant were not needed. The framework has been developed in consultation with the DFID CRD Communication Team, Communication Specialist.

Inception Workshop

Activity 5 – Planned: An inception workshop will be held with programme managers, the DFID CRD Communication team, and the CRD consultant communications specialists to discuss the draft framework and carry out initial modifications.

Activity 5 – Actual: It was difficult to get the relevant people to a workshop so instead a series of small, often one- to one- meetings was planned (Annex B1).

Modify the framework(s)

Activity 6 – Planned: Modify framework(s) taking into account the analysis of the mini-case studies.

Activity 6 – Actual: The assumption of the project was that more than one framework would appear from the programmes, possibly even one per programme). However, this proved not to be the case as no one programme had in place a comprehensive strategy which would ensure that communication activities and products were usable by the target groups. The one framework being developed has taken into account the findings from the mini case studies.

Final workshop

Activity 7 – Planned: Lessons of good practice, with the Framework will be presented at a final Communication Synthesis Workshop for review and final modification. The workshop will be for relevant DFID personnel and other

stakeholders (to be identified during the inception phase) with an interest in lessons of good practice.

Activity 7 – Actual: Once again the project decided against a specific workshop to end the project. Communication Specialist, Communication team, Central Research Department DFID and the project leader will have one-to-one meetings with relevant people instead and the findings will be fed into relevant DFID workshops.

Outputs 1&2

In discussion with programme managers and other relevant stakeholders a strategy will be devised to maintain contact and share information with these organisations.

It is fortunate for the project to have Communication Specialist, Communication team, Central Research Department DFID as the communication advisor to CRD DFID. Part of the role of the communication specialist is to work with those being awarded contracts under DFID's new research strategy and the results of this project will be fed into that work as appropriate.

6 Environmental assessment

6.1 What significant environmental impacts resulted from the research activities (both positive and negative)?

N/A

6.2 What will be the potentially significant environmental impacts (both positive and negative) of widespread dissemination and application of research findings?

N/A

6.3 Has there been evidence during the project's life of what is described in Section 6.2 and how were these impacts detected and monitored?

N/A

6.4 What follow up action, if any, is recommended?

N/A

7 Contribution of Outputs

7.1 NRSP Purpose and Production System Output

NRSP's purpose 'To deliver new knowledge that enables poor people who are largely dependent on the NR base to improve their livelihoods' has a stronger chance of being achieved if good communication practices and products for uptake promotion are accessible to all stakeholders from policy makers and poor people. In this context accessible means in a language people understand, in a format they can use, and at a time and place which is suitable for them.

The findings from this project suggest that whilst donors, research programme managers and researchers are now committed to putting in place good communication practice, there is still some way to go before real accessibility of communication products is achieved. Putting in place a communication strategy or plan is only going to be as good as the skills employed in its implementation and the amount of time which all players are able to give to building good collaborative relationships, and the resources (skills, finances) available to support organisations who will continue the work once the project is over. It remains to be seen whether the kinds of communication planning and M&E being required by DFID from the new research consortia will be able to ensure delivery of time, skills, and finances, for the implementation and sustainability of communication activities and products.

7.2 Impact of outputs

DFID has a clear and functioning communication strategy for uptake promotion for RNR research in place by 2007

The Central Research Department will have a communication strategy in place by 2007, which will include a section on the uptake promotion of RNR research along with other sectors (e.g. health, education). DFID is currently commissioning a new agriculture programme for Research into Use. This programme is all about putting in place strategies to enhance the uptake and use of proven research outputs from the RNRRS. The contracting organisation is expected to put in place a communication strategy and a monitoring and evaluation strategy. Lessons from this synthesis study should inform both of these strategies. A further programme of support to agriculture will be announced in March 2006. The contractor for this programme will also be required to put in place and implement a communication strategy.

All researchers in DFID funded RNR projects include communication planning for uptake promotion from the start in NR research projects by 2007.

DFID now stipulates that all new research programmes must:

- Put in place a draft communication strategy during the first 6 months of the programme
- Allocated a minimum 10% of the overall programme budget to communication of research
- Have a team that includes a communication specialist.

This policy change cannot be attributed to this project. The actual decision for the above came from recommendations out of a Communications Theme study (DFID, 2003) that informed the new DFID Research Funding Framework (2005-2007). However, it should be recognised that many RNR researchers and literature from the RNRRS programmes were consulted during this process. The outputs from this study are important for providing practical evidence of different approaches used in the uptake promotion of NR research. The main findings and the overall project recommendations, are very important for informing the new phase of DFID's support to agriculture.

The CRD has produced a set of guidance notes for Research Programmes, however, these are rather complicated and therefore difficult to use by researchers new to planning communication of research. The outputs from this project should inform a revised version of the Guidance Notes.

7.3 Uptake Promotion

The draft framework was sent to the Communication Specialist, who is currently seconded to DFID CRD (and whose contract has been renewed for a further year) Communication Division for comments. As Project Manager of this synthesis study the Communication Specialist is in a position to champion the framework within DFID and to other donors and development and research organisations. The communication plan for the project (Annex B) used one-on-one or one-to-small-group meetings rather than workshops and it is to be expected that this approach will continue would. In addition the work will be fed into e-discussion groups and networks such as Pelican and the Communication Initiative and will also be distributed to personal contacts of the PL and the organisations with which she works or is associated. The findings of the project will be the subject of an issue of FINDINGS (Findings is a regular output from Healthlink) later in the year (2006). In addition the work will be submitted to the pelican discussion group, and will be forwarded to Rick Davies, an independent M&E specialist, to inform communication work in Vietnam (already agreed).

Selected evidence based case studies of good practice in communication research will be fed into the latest DFID framework 'ICD Knowledge sharing and learning programme' which started in February 2006.

8 Publications and other communication materials

8.1 Books and book chapters: None

8.2 Journal articles: None

8.3 Institutional Report Series

NRSP, 2006. Communication for research uptake promotion: learning from research practice. NRSP Brief. Hemel Hempstead, UK: DFID-NRSP. 6 pp.

8.4 Symposium, conference and workshop papers and posters

Communication of Research, Abigail Mulhall Power point Presentation to DFID personnel, November, 2005

8.5 Newsletter articles: none

None.

8.6 Academic theses: None

None.

8.7 Extension leaflets, brochures, policy briefs and posters; None

None.

8.8 Manuals and guidelines: None

None.

8.9 Media presentations (videos, web sites, TV, radio, interviews etc): none

None.

8.10 Reports and data records:

Annex C1: Project question checklists

Annex D Documents arising from the research

Annex D 1 Models of programme communication strategies

Annex D 2 Tracking the use and influence of NRSP SEM52 R7037 and PD 93

Annex D 3 Selected Mini case study reports

9 References cited in the report, sections 1-7

Declaration of the Ninth UN Roundtable on Communication for Development held between 6-9th September 2004, Rome, Italy

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Ramirez R, and Quarry W. (2004). Communication for development in natural resource management, IDRC and FAO, Rome, Italy

Surr M. (2002). Research for poverty reduction: DFID research policy paper

10 Project logframe

Narrative summary	Objectively verifiable indicators	Means of verification	Important assumptions
Goal			
Contribute to realising improved integrated NR-management strategies for specific groups of the poor identified, tested and promoted with target institutions that are stakeholders in the various projects in NRSP's portfolio	Options and programmes for improving integrated NR management relevant to the poor in at least two target audiences or institutions enhanced as a result of engagement with study products	Project FTRs and peer-reviewed publications NRSP Annual Reports Target institution reports	
Purpose			
To enable DFID to institutionalise and manage communication for uptake promotion as an integrated component of its RNR research programmes	DFID has a clear and functioning communication strategy for uptake promotion for RNR research in place by 2007 All researchers in DFID funded RNR projects include communication planning for uptake promotion from the start in NR research projects by 2007	Programme level communication strategy Researchers communication plans in projects	The study results in a positive response from DFID with subsequent uptake and implementation of recommendations. The new DFID research strategy for RNR is programme based
Outputs			
1. Evidence based good practice in planning and implementing communication plans for DFID RNR Research Strategy projects established	A minimum of 15 mini-case studies produced by end of project. Case studies presented at a Final workshop at which 70% of the identified stakeholder representatives attend.	Case Study Reports Final Workshop Presentation and Attendance List	Able to identify good researchers in the case study countries RNR Researchers' organisations are willing to be used as case studies for this research.
2. Evidence based framework for the management,	At least one framework incorporating monitoring and	Framework Document	Willingness of Programme Managers and

monitoring and evaluation of communication for uptake promotion of DFID RNR research strategy, its programme and projects developed.	evaluation developed and agreed by representative stakeholders by end of project.		other stakeholders to participate in the research
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Activities	Milestones (and budget if budgeting by Activity)	
Output 1: Evidence based good practice in planning and implementing communication plans for DFID RNR Research Strategy projects established		
<p>Literature review:</p> <p>O1 Activity 01: An analysis of literature and programme documents relevant to good practice in planning and implementing communication plans for natural resources research. The review will look at international literature and practice, but focus heavily on work from the NRSP programme and other DFID research programmes.</p>	<p>First draft of literature review available by month 2.</p> <p>Revised literature review available by month 5</p> <p>Final literature review published on web site by end of month 6</p>	
<p>Mini-case study development</p> <p>O1 Activity 02 Develop criteria for selecting sites and projects for mini-case studied in consultation with NRSP and collaborating DFID RNRR Programmes. Due to time constraints we plan to carry out mini-case studies in one country in each of three regions (East Africa, South Asia and Caribbean) wherever possible. A minimum of 15 mini-case studies is planned covering the regions as equally as possible.</p> <p>O1 Activity 03 Hire and brief in-country researchers.</p> <p>O1 Activity 04 Develop mini-case study tools and research question checklists in e-consultations with in-country researchers and make decisions on who will do which mini-case studies. The case-studies will be designed to look at the communication for uptake promotion pathways and will include interviews with a range of stakeholders from project leaders through to end users. Tools will be tested and adapted to local contexts as appropriate.</p>	<p>Criteria for selecting sites/projects identified and agreed by month 1</p> <p>Plan of mini-case study sites, projects and partners will be agreed and put on the project web site by week 6 / 8</p> <p>In-country researchers in place by end of week 6</p> <p>Tools and research questions agreed and tested by in-country researchers by month 3</p>	

<p>Implement mini-case studies</p> <p>O1 Activity 05 Conduct mini-case studies. There will be at least one member of the research team working with the in-country research partner.</p>	<p>Mini-case studies and initial analysis completed in-country by end of Month5</p>	
<p>Analysis of mini-case study data</p> <p>O1 Activity 06: Initial analysis will be carried out in-country to enable validation and feedback to project teams/information sources where appropriate. The mini-case studies will be analysed for common and specific themes and lessons learned (Note: information from the case studies relating to what has and has not worked in terms of the framework(s) will feed into the framework modification activity)</p> <p>O1 Activity 07: Development of good practice for planning and implementing communication plans for DFID RNR Research Strategy projects. This will be carried out in consultation with an organisational management consultant to help ensure that recommendations will work within the environment of DFID.</p>	<p>Field work for case studies completed by the end of month 5</p> <p>Compilation of case studies and draft report on lessons learnt by end of month 6</p>	
<p>Initial communication of analysis</p> <p>O1 Activity 08: Each mini-case study will be produced as an independent report and made available as pages on a web site (decisions on which website will be made as part of the communication plan developed during the inception phase).</p>	<p>Website selected and case-studies available for downloading by end of Month 6</p>	
<p>Final workshop</p> <p>O1 Activity 09: Lessons of good practice, with the Framework will be presented at a final Communication Synthesis Workshop for review and final modification. The workshop will be for relevant DFID personnel and other stakeholders (to be identified during the inception phase) with an interest in lessons of good practice.</p>	<p>Workshop participants identified by end of Month 6</p> <p>Papers presented at workshop at the end of the project (during Month 7).</p>	

Output 2: Evidence based framework for the management, monitoring and evaluation of communication for uptake promotion of the DFID RNR Research Strategy, its programmes and projects developed		
<p>Literature review</p> <p>O2 Activity 01: An analysis of literature and current practice in the research area to develop a better conceptual understanding of the issues and document lessons that are already available. The review will look at international literature and practice, but focus heavily on work from NRSP programme and other DFID research programmes.</p>	<p>First draft of literature review available by month 2.</p> <p>Revised literature review available by month 5</p> <p>Final literature review published on web site by end of month 6</p>	
<p>Research into current practice in NRSP and collaborating RNR Programmes</p> <p>O2 Activity 02 Interviews will be conducted with programme managers and selected researchers to understand how and why communication for uptake promotion is included in programme strategies</p> <p>O2 Activity 03 Other relevant stakeholders will be identified who have an interest in, or have already developed, frameworks and strategies for managing, monitoring and evaluating communication for uptake promotion. Interviews will be held with a sample of these stakeholders to understand how and why communication for uptake promotion is included in their frameworks and strategies</p>	<p>Interviews conducted with programme managers by month 2</p> <p>Interviews conducted with identified stakeholders by month 3</p> <p>Report on stakeholder interests produced end of Month 2</p>	
<p>Develop draft framework</p> <p>O2 Activity 04: Based on the initial findings from the literature, the interviews, and the previous experience and work of the researchers a draft framework(s) will be produced. This work will be carried out in consultation with an organisational management consultant to help ensure that recommendations will work within the environment of DFID.</p> <p>O2 Activity 05 An inception workshop will be held with programme managers, the DFID CRD Communication team, and the CRD consultant communications specialists to discuss the draft framework and carry out initial modifications.</p>	<p>Draft framework available by the end of month 2, for presentation at the inception phase workshop.</p> <p>Workshop held and framework modified by end of Month 2</p>	
<p>Modify the framework(s)</p> <p>O2 Activity 06 Modify framework(s) taking into account the analysis of the mini-case studies.</p>	<p>Revised framework by end of month 5</p> <p>Draft framework available on web page by end of month 5</p>	

<p>Final workshop</p> <p>O2 Activity 07 Lessons of good practice, with the Framework will be presented at a final Communication Synthesis Workshop for review and final modification. The workshop will be for relevant DFID personnel and other stakeholders (to be identified during the inception phase) with an interest in lessons of good practice</p>		
<p>Outputs 1&2</p>		
<p>In discussion with programme managers and other relevant stakeholders a strategy will be devised to maintain contact and share information with these organisations</p>	<p>Strategy for sharing and communicating information to programme managers and other interested stakeholders by end of month 2</p>	
	<p>Pre-condition</p>	

11 Keywords

Communication, communication research, communication framework, communication best practice.