

FINAL TECHNICAL REPORT / RAPPORT TECHNIQUE FINAL SCALING-UP IMPROVED LEGUME TECHNOLOGIES IN TANZANIA (SILT): FINAL TECHNICAL REPORT

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Communications Policy Meeting Report IITA Dar es Salaam

February 2018

Executive Summary

The SILT communication policy meeting was held at the IITA centre in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania on 22 February 2018. The meeting brought together implementing partners and collaborators as well as government representatives and other players in the policy and communication landscape in Tanzania including the regulator and representatives from the Ministry of Agriculture, and private sector organizations.

The sessions were co-facilitated by Audax Rukonge from the National Learning Alliance in Tanzania and Deogratias Rutatora in his capacity as a national partner for the Gender and Legume Alliance (GALA) project. A detailed attendance list is included as annex 1.

The meeting began with introductions by the attendees, with each person mentioning at least one communication/policy issue that was of interest to them/their organizations. Below is a summary of the issues highlighted:

Talking to farmers

- Do we really know what farmers want? Identify participatory methods of safeguarding farmers' voices in the policy environment
- Identify ways to make communication more farmer friendly
- How to increase access to information on markets, inputs, climate smart agriculture etc.

Talking to other stakeholders

- How to communicate science to policy makers
- How does the policy environment facilitate or hinder access to agricultural information?
- Understand information sharing between stakeholders – farmers, information providers, extension, scientists and policy makers

Coordinated approaches to information

- Farmers sometimes receive conflicting information – consistency of approach lacking
- Coordinated approach to support better fertilizer use and adoption
- Map of communication approaches that work/have worked in other regions

Learning and applying lessons

- What can we do differently? Learning from previous experience to inform future work
- Can we work out how to better use the communication technologies e.g. radio to make change happen?
- Understand how adoption of technologies takes place, identify “noise areas” that hinder technology transfer and improve on them
- Can we model economic costs of poor access to information to the farmer?
- How to package agricultural information as an entrepreneurship opportunity especially for young farmers

1 Objectives

The objectives of the meeting were to identify communications policy issues that affect farmers' access to information on agricultural technologies and propose ways to address challenges, if any, with a focus on the following aspects:

The heterogeneity of farmers: Information should be tailored and targeted to farmers based on profiling by gender, ability to pay etc.

Market opportunities: With the exception of household nutritional and food security, uptake of technologies is essentially driven by market opportunities and information disseminated must include marketing information.

Understanding farmers' behaviour: In which forums do farmers meet? What issues are discussed? What do they need?

Allocation of government resources and extension workers: Is it based on potentiality of the area?

Feedback loops between farmers and extension: Extension workers receive a lot of information from farmers but it is not known to what extent that information is then shared with policy makers, researchers and information providers as part of a cycle of continuous improvement.

2 Government investment in communication approaches to enhance access to information for farmers

Mr. Charles Mjema from the Ministry of Agriculture made a presentation on the status of agricultural extension advisory service in Tanzania that highlighted the following approaches used:

- Farmer-to-Farmer (F2F) approach:
- Extension workers (currently at 20, 474 nationwide)
- Demonstration plots
- Agricultural exhibition/shows dubbed "Nane Nane"
- Participatory focus farmer groups (e.g. processor groups)
- Mass media by broadcasting through TV, radio and cinema show

The presentation highlighted achievements such as the success of the F2F approach- 603, 830 farmers participate in F2F- which was deemed most effective because farmers learn more from each other than they do from extension workers.

The discussions from this presentation highlighted the following issues:

Capitalize on existing systems: There are many extension workers employed by private sector in different industries such as coffee and tobacco and the government needs to take advantage of these systems to fill in existing gaps in extension.

Effectiveness of extension: While the number of extension workers is important, whether these extension workers have the tools/capacity to do their work is more important. It is also important to have extension workers at the ward level.

Decentralization of extension: The regional levels of government lack the structures required to supervise lower levels on extension services and there is little/no information sharing among different government structures.

Lack of a coordinated approach: Proper coordination among different stakeholders sometimes resulting in stakeholders providing conflicting information to farmers.

By-laws: Need for by-laws to reinforce extension guidelines was suggested.

In his presentation, Mr. Semu Mwakyanjala from the Tanzania Communication Regulatory Authority (TCRA) reiterated the importance of the meeting and requested for a copy of the policy brief as it would enable them better address the needs of farmers. He pointed out that while TCRA was committed to ensuring that farmers have access to information through the media, it does not regulate retail prices. He also observed that in the dissemination of information, content produced needs to be interesting for TV- should be a balance between what both broadcasters and the audience need. He felt that TCA could support further exploitation of media opportunities to get information to farmers.

3 How does government policy/regulatory framework facilitate/hinder access to high quality agricultural messages through various media?

This session attempted to assess the policy situation in Tanzania and how it affects/hinders farmers' access to information in the media and resulted in the following observations:

Facilitating Factors

Policy

- Use of ICTS is highlighted in the current national 5 year agricultural plan
- Media considered key player by government in national and international agricultural events such as Agricultural Exhibition/Shows ("NaneNane")

Opportunities

- There has been a recent increase in number of community radio stations
- Minimal charges on community radios which address issues of agricultural sector
- Free airtime available on some radio and TV stations for agricultural content
- Tanzania has a wide mobile phone coverage and easy access to internet
- Availability of Agricultural Resource Centres at district/ward level

Hindrances

Access to media data

- Mandate of data validation lies with the Tanzania National Bureau of Statistics (TNBS)- it is not easy/practical for other communication actors to get clearance to share findings
- Information dissemination both by TNBS and other institutions is not timely - limits the validity and sometimes usefulness of the information disseminated. Information dissemination needs to be scheduled to correspond to the cropping calendars of the different agro-ecological zones

Investment

- Low government investment in communication media and methods
- Annual licensing fee on publications e.g. recent directive requiring publications to pay annual fees limits amount of agricultural content that can be included and instead shifts focus to adverts in order to raise these fees.
- There needs to be investment in other communication channels that can reach farmers without access to TVs, phones, magazines, radio etc.
- Existing extension officers are not used in demonstrations shown in the media to elaborate/address local messages to farmers
- Little involvement of non-government stakeholders in the policy issues

Ideas put forward

- Utilize available Agricultural Resource Centres by providing equipment, staff and information materials
- Hold regular policy briefings between CSOs and government to foster collaboration
- Advocate for increase government allocation to communication media and methods
- Waive licence fees on communication media especially those targeted to farmers
- Offer incentives to community TVs, radios etc. that serve the specific needs of farmers
- Regulatory frameworks should be clear to all stakeholders
- Delivery of free unsolicited messages to educate farmers on agricultural issues through mobile phones
- Advocate for the government to cushion farmers against losses caused by export bans by purchasing the produce at market rates.

4 What do we know about how information travels to and within the communities of farming households? How does the choice of channel and format impact on the reach of the message?

This session aimed to highlight reasons as to why different communication channels are deemed more effective in promoting different technologies among farmers and to identify policy issues around these channels:

Farmer to farmer (F2F) approach (promoters)

- Builds confidence in the technology being promoted and enhances social trust among farmers
- It was suggested that this approach was not resource intensive compared to other communication channels
- Demonstrates the practicality of technologies since it is based on farmers' experiences
- Provides room for local innovation
- Works with value chain promotion and aggregating markets

Policy issue(s): Lack of clearly defined support systems e.g. recognition to farmer promoters

Demo plots

- All tools of communication can be combined into a demo plot
- Properly set up they can be interactive and give farmers a sense of ownership in the process
- Very practical to farmers
- Farmers have an opportunity to make comparison between different technologies

Farmer Field Schools (FFS)

- Farmers test and verify the research techniques
- They are farmer-led and context-specific
- Farmers learn from each other
- It was suggested they require lower costs compared to extension systems
- Use locally available resources
- Can be easily monitored
- Ability to reach many farmers in a short time

Policy issue(s): Include budgeting for FFS in Local Government Authority (LGA) budgets. For farmer-managed FFS to be as good as the mother plot – they require facilitation with inputs and technical backstopping. They can be more effective if targeted to particular value chains e.g. rice in Morogoro (which may be at odds with the suggested lower costs outlined above).

Agricultural Exhibition/Shows “Nane Nane”

- Create awareness on technologies and have capacity to reach a wider audience more rapidly
- Provide market linkages/opportunities for farmers

Extension services

- Extension workers opinions are respected by farmers
- They are closer to the farmers – have easier access and better understanding of farmers' issues
- Have the right knowledge to be able to provide the right information to farmers
- Easy to use the already existing extension system as opposed to starting something totally new

Policy issue(s): Extension workers are few and not sufficiently motivated. Need to increase funds allocated to extension workers and invest in regular training to keep them updated on research trends

Video screening

- Shows practical demonstration of farming techniques
- Ability to reach more farmers at a wider scale especially if short clips are shared via social media such as WhatsApp
- Attractive to learners – pictures have a lasting memory impact

Policy issue(s): Allocate funds to video screenings, preferably at Ward Agricultural Research Centres (WARC)

5 Summary of Key Issues suggested for inclusion in a policy brief

Accessing information requirements and supply

- Need to map out farmers' information needs
- Packaging information – should be tailor-made and targeted to specific farmer categories
- Farmers education and information services should be strengthened
- Need to assess what worked well and replicate that – is it the agro-dealer? or specific extension worker and what did they do differently that can be replicated to have the same results?
- Proper coordination among stakeholders critical to avoid confusion and overlap

Information priorities

- Integrate indigenous vegetables in government plans
- Environmentally sustainable/smart agriculture should be promoted

Alignment to input and output markets

- Need to ensure timely access to affordable farm inputs as well as access to information
- Enhance access to markets as this is crucial to adoption
- Farmers are a diverse group and a participatory approach and gender inclusive approaches should be promoted

Building capacity

- Extension workers need to be trained

- Communication strategy should be based on understanding of communication behaviour including the socio cultural and political environment
- Low government investment in communication development and dissemination
- Need to support community radio and other media targeted for the farmers

ANNEXES

Annex 1: Attendance List – Communications Policy Meeting - Feb 22 2018

No.	Name	Designation	Organization	Mobile	Email
1.	Deogratias Rutatora	Professor	Sokoine University of Agriculture (SUA)	+255754276899	d_rutatira@yahoo.com
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Annex 2: Agenda: Communications Policy Meeting

22 February 2018 at ITTA in Dar es Salaam

09:00 Welcome and introductions

Clarifications of aims and objectives of the meetings

09:30 Activity 1: Map of direct government investment in information channels for supporting farmers with information – directly or through intermediaries

09:45 Activity 2: Map out how the policy and regulatory environment

10:00 Feedback from activity 1 & 2

10:15 Key note: Presentation: How is the government of Tanzania currently investing in communication approaches to reach farmers?

10:45 COFFEE

11:15 Activity 3: Table discussion

What would help the Government optimise their decision-making and investment decision?

11:45 Feedback from table sessions

12:00 Panel 1: Regulation and quality

How does government policy and regulation support the development of high quality agricultural messages within traditional media and telecoms and new media area?

13:15 LUNCH

14:15 Activity 4: Table discussion

What changes to the policy environment will benefit communication at scale to farmers?

14:45 Feedback from activity 4

15:00 TEA

15:30 Activity 5: Table discussion

What do we know about how information travels to and within the communities of farming households? Or, how does the choice of channel and format impact on the reach of the message?

16:15 Feedback from activity 5

16:45 Summary of key points raised during the day and next steps

17:00 Close and thank yous