



Communications Research Strategy Design

**Communication and Information Management
Report for ICARDA**

24th November 2009

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1. Executive summary

ICARDA, as a member of CGIAR, is poised for rapid change as the Group moves towards a consortium of shared services as part of the change management process.

To ensure ICARDA's continued growth and viability, it is essential it positions itself to maximum effect. ICARDA has many strengths but needs to promote itself more effectively. Improved communication is therefore critical, and ICARDA needs to ensure it dedicates adequate resources for this task.

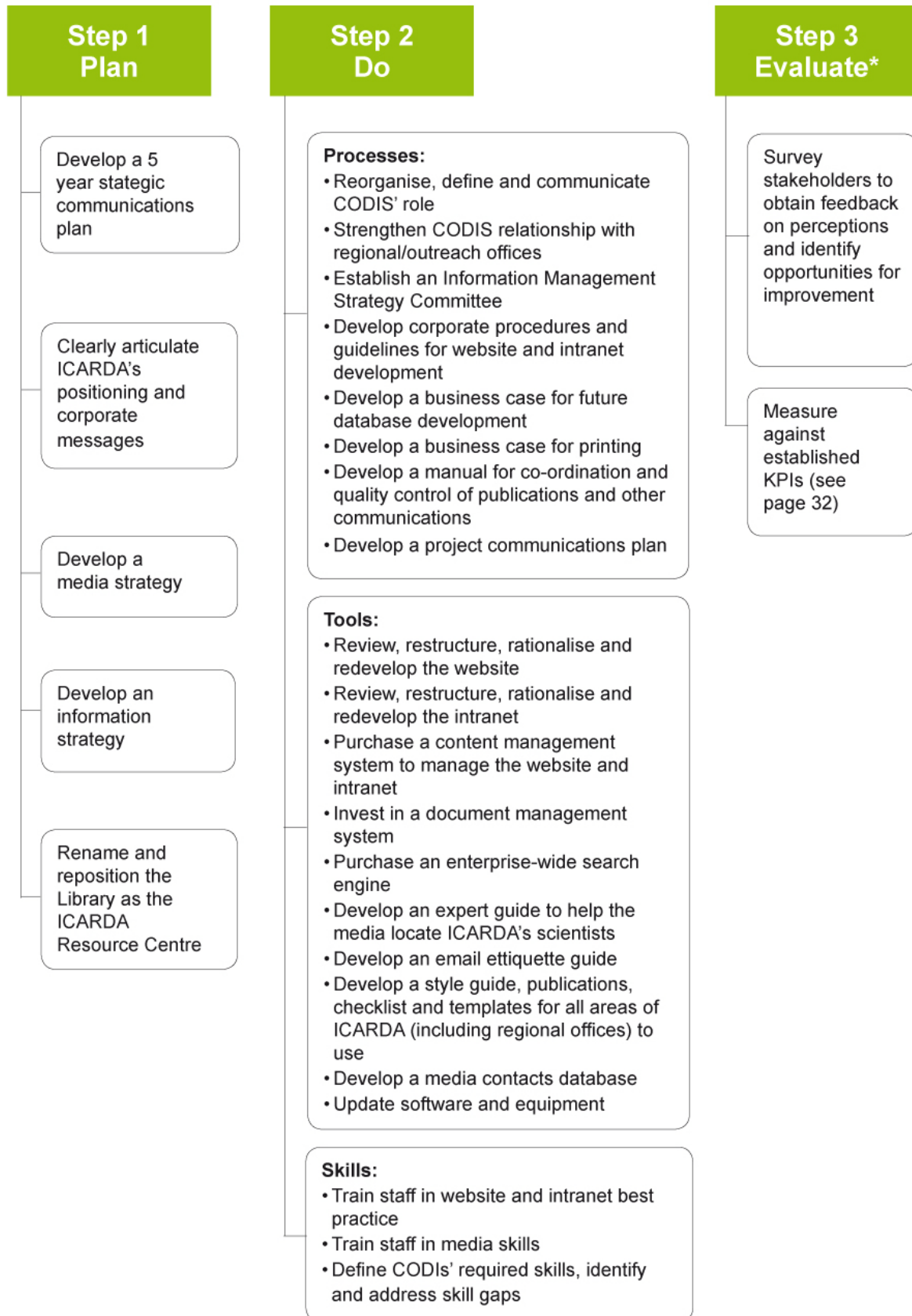
Funders are a critical stakeholder for ICARDA, and they expect an improvement in how the organisation demonstrates the translation of research outputs into impacts – expressed as measurable outcomes for the poor. ICARDA's board and executive recognise this is a priority, and the Communication and Document Information Services (CODIS) unit at ICARDA should play a key role in communicating impacts and results to stakeholders. For example, climate change and food security are key issues in the media – there are ongoing and major opportunities for ICARDA to position itself in this global debate, using this opportunity to profile its significant expertise, experience and physical presence in the world's dry region.

Communication in general is a challenge for the agricultural research sector. In the past decade, competition for funding has increased and there has been a shift away from the core program funding model. This has put increased pressure on scientists who are required to spend more time on funding proposals, communicating with stakeholders, and convincing funders of the value and potential benefits their investment might deliver.

Resources at ICARDA are limited, and the challenge is to improve the effectiveness of CODIS by ensuring it has a well-resourced, strong team that is supported by senior management. There has been an absence of a dedicated communications manager at CODIS in recent years, and a great deal of building and development is required.

1. Urgent communication and information management priorities are to:
 - Develop communication and information management strategies
 - Clarify ICARDA's positioning and messages, and ensure CODIS exercises greater control of the brand
 - Develop an effective media strategy
2. Address processes
 - Reorganise, define and communicate CODIS' role
 - Develop guidelines and improve communication (e.g. develop targeted communications with key stakeholders including funders and policymakers, strengthen CODIS relationship with regional/outreach offices)
3. Address tools
 - Improve the website
 - Improve the intranet.

The graphic on the next page outlines the way forward.



*Evaluation should occur on an annual basis.

2. Overview

Niche Consultants was engaged by ICARDA's Communication Documentation & Information Services (CODIS) in October 2009 for a one month period to perform a needs analysis for ICARDA's Communication and Information Management Plan 2010-2012.

The purpose of the needs analysis (see Appendix A) was to:

4. Inform the development of an external and internal communication strategy for ICARDA
5. Provide an assessment of current external and internal communication practice and effectiveness for ICARDA
6. Provide benchmarking or baseline information for ongoing performance measurement
7. Identify key risks to the organisation (in communication and information management) and areas of high impact
8. Identify resources and facilities needed for implementation of effective communication and information management for ICARDA.

This involved examining:

- ICARDA's communication practice and activities in the context of the ICARDA strategic plan and the Medium Term Plan
- Organisational aspects of CODIS including staffing needs and skills, team structure and process effectiveness (e.g. responsiveness, cost, timeliness, and user feedback)
- CODIS training and skills gaps and needs
- Communication practices and capabilities at ICARDA outreach offices
- ICARDA's information materials (particularly the website, and corporate publications)
- Communication activities both within and outside of CODIS (e.g., in research areas and outreach offices)
- Internal and external messages about ICARDA's goals and activities
- ICARDA's brand and reputation management and external perceptions of ICARDA
- ICARDA's design standards.

At subsequent meetings with ICARDA management it was stated that this work would be seen as a "peer review", rather than a needs analysis, and the reviewers were asked to provide strategy recommendations for three-five years.

To obtain a better understanding of the context within which ICARDA operates and inform the needs analysis process, a wide range of ICARDA's internal and external documents were read or reviewed (see Appendices B and C), and a diverse range of ICARDA's stakeholders were interviewed (see Appendix D). Sample interview questions are attached as Appendix E.

Documents were provided to Niche by CODIS, and CODIS selected and organised the stakeholder interviews.

3. Methodology

One month was allowed for the needs analysis. This included two consultants spending 10 days on site in ICARDA's Syrian headquarters in Aleppo.

A wide range of ICARDA's internal and external documents were reviewed. The following types of external communication materials were reviewed:

- Website
- Newsletters
- Corporate brochures
- Fact sheets/flyers/short brochures
- Reports, plans and longer publications
- Series
- Media
- Books
- Miscellaneous.

Key internal communication materials reviewed were the *Inside ICARDA* newsletter and several miscellaneous documents. (Appendices B and C detail the material reviewed.)

A diverse range of ICARDA's stakeholders were interviewed. These included the following stakeholder groups:

- ICARDA funders
- ICARDA board members
- ICARDA executive staff
- NARS representatives
- Research program leaders
- Regional and Outreach Office directors/representatives
- CODIS staff
- Other ICARDA staff
- Other stakeholders.

In total, 71 stakeholders were interviewed.

Appendix D details the stakeholders consulted while Appendix E provides sample interview questions.

CODIS provided the internal and external documents, and CODIS selected and organised the stakeholder interviews.

4. Findings

Overview of stakeholder feedback

ICARDA funders

Funders recognise:

- ICARDA as an international research centre working to improve agricultural resources by improving productivity of crops and management of soil and water
- ICARDA is strengthening capacity in arid countries through research, training and collaborative research projects
- ICARDA is well known in the region
- ICARDA plays an important role in the CG system
- ICARDA communicates well at a high level, in particular with regard to face-to-face visits and meetings
- ICARDA has critical mass in key aspects of dry areas research, and funders realise they can get good results working with ICARDA

Funders are looking for:

- Compatibility with their particular strategic priorities, programs and projects
- Measurable return on investment – they value impact assessments, benefits to poor, addressing strategic global issues
- Mutually beneficial partnerships
- Greater responsiveness and flexibility from ICARDA in responding to their priorities
- Well-written, clear and current information about ICARDA and outcomes of its research and development
- Targeted, relevant, impact-based reporting
- Quality of impact assessment reporting by ICARDA, like the other CG centres, needs improvement
- There is a need for “results” – good quality research and development outcomes at value for money transaction costs
- Specifically want prompt, brief, non-scientific reports which specify outcomes of research and development impacts
- At conclusion of a project, a final report that succinctly synthesises all relevant outcomes
- There is appreciation for the Annual Report, but because it’s annual, it’s almost immediately out-of-date – so quicker, more digestible reports are also needed more frequently

External communication and promotion:

- ICARDA needs greater public awareness
- The website should play an important role in providing current information

CG change management process:

- With CG change management process, funders want to ensure general agreement across funders that the reform is real, workable and an improvement before changes are made
- Once the CG changes are in place, it will be even more important for centres like ICARDA to have good branding, positioning and messages so funders can appreciate its role in the overall agricultural research sector

ICARDA research focus:

- Some funders (IFAD) specifically mentioned they want research aligned more closely to development outcomes where the target group is the rural poor
- ICARDA should do more work in capacity building – extension funding should be sought to link research to capacity building outcomes
- Some funders (IFAD) said that ICARDA should stick to its core competency – technology for the dry areas, rather than “branch out”, e.g., socio-economic program
- ICARDA should keep abreast with funders’ operational plans and ensure they look for opportunities where they can add value/offer help to meet funders’ priorities

ICARDA Board Directors

ICARDA Board Directors recognise:

- Leadership at ICARDA has improved in recent years
- ICARDA is effective in communicating with funders at a high level, through personal meetings, etc
- ICARDA’s international research strengths, strong links with National Agricultural Research Systems (NARS), and good relationship with the Syrian government
- ICARDA produces many good publications, reports and newsletters
- That scientific publication output has increased in the last three years, which is positive
- That good communication is essential to the wellbeing of ICARDA

ICARDA Board Directors are looking for:

- While the Board receives reports every three months, members would appreciate briefer communications, more often
- CODIS needs to play a greater leadership role in the level of extension communication
- Internal communication needs to be improved – and there is need for closer collaboration between the scientific programs and outreach officers
- Need for scientists to share more information
- Appreciate the ICARDA newsletters, but they could be a little less formal
- Would like to see examples of other communications that go to key stakeholders

Other comments from ICARDA Board Directors included:

- Communication of impacts and results are critical to funders – must show measurable impact of research into tangible improvements and benefits for the poor.
- Funders don’t expect 100 page glossy publications, just the facts, clearly stated
- All ICARDA publications need to be targeted to particular audiences
- We have come a long way, but we need to improve the strategy behind corporate communication
- “Science for science’s sake is not the answer in developing countries – what we do must have an ultimate impact that makes a difference in people’s lives”

External promotion and relationships:

- Visibility of ICARDA outside of the region needs to be increased beyond CGIAR and NARS
- ICARDA’s excellent relationship with the NARS needs to be extended further into greater linkages with the producers and farmers.
- ICARDA has a big job to do, but it can’t be expected to do it alone, it needs to collaborate with partners

Staff training:

- Science staff, including regional offices, need media skills training to make more of media opportunities

Website and information management:

- The website is a key communication tool and must be improved – the current website does not let you know about everything happening at ICARDA
- Intranet could be improved

Employment conditions:

- There is a need to standardise employment conditions – as per the corporate review underway – this will help address complaints and lead to improved internal morale and communication

ICARDA challenges:

- The Western media bias against Syria is a challenge for ICARDA
- Changes to CGIAR system will be a challenge for the CG centres, and ICARDA needs to be ready for this challenge
- Science staff appear to be working hard and are stretched thin, trying to perform a number of important functions, including a great deal of project-based research, liaising with funders and partners and communicating their results

Other comments:

- There must be a focus on quality science
- Need to target specific countries/zones in communications

ICARDA executive staff

ICARDA executive staff recognise:

- Priorities for ICARDA are to decrease poverty, increase food security and boost environmental sustainability
- Research and development, with capacity building results, is at the core of what ICARDA does
- ICARDA's good relationship with NARS, good regional presence while many other centres seem aloof
- Outstanding collaboration within region
- ICARDA has good, dedicated staff, and this is a strength

Other comments from ICARDA executive staff included:

- Need for targeted, impact-based reporting
- With two thirds of ICARDA's funding now reliant on project funding, funders expect relevant, targeted reports – there is a need for customisation
- Funders have different requirements – e.g., there is a need to produce impact assessments for World Bank
- Communication needs to focus on results because this is linked to resource mobilisation
- R and D focus should be moving research output to end user, stressing changes/impacts
- Publications produced by ICARDA need to have a sharper focus aimed at specific stakeholders

Views on CODIS:

- CODIS should be the clearing house for communication at ICARDA
- Scientists need to be encouraged to share information, work closer with CODIS
- CODIS needs better organisation of its charge-back arrangements – this is underway
- CODIS needs to take charge of quality control – some publications are not well written
- CODIS has been too widely spread
- CODIS is currently being reorganised following the appointment of a new communication manager
- With regard to CODIS, senior management does not necessarily want to see the creation of a large department because the focus and resources should be on research and supporting the scientists

External promotion and communication:

- ICARDA should be viewed as the “go-to centre” for dry land research – urgent need to sell ICARDA globally
- ICARDA should improve its profile in Aleppo – local people are well disposed to ICARDA but don’t know what it does
- ICARDA’s strong in the region, but has a challenge to be seen as global centre
- Regarding identity, we need to clarify whether we have a regional or a global mandate
- Communication needs to improve to ensure recruitment of good local and international staff

Media relations:

- Media skills are needed in the CODIS team – media staff need to work effectively at the international and local levels
- When we take funders to outreach centres, we should ensure that media opportunities are planned in advance
- ICARDA’s biannual presentation day is well attended and usually attracts media interest

Publications:

- Publications being done independently in the regions is not acceptable – requires central co-ordination

External collaborators:

- Some funders want collaboration, especially with universities
- We should be working more with collaborators rather than doing everything ourselves

ICARDA/CODIS challenges:

- We have a broad mandate and so it is not easy to communicate
- Being located in this part of the world carries burdens
- There is a language divide (English-Arabic) that has an impact on communication – needs to be considered as an issue for internal communication

Website and information management:

- Website needs improvement.
- Intranet needs improvement and is underutilised
- Have adequate IT, but low utilisation – the system is not bad, provided it is used
- Scientists often leave without sharing their knowledge – need to make it easier to share knowledge

- With information management, there are many duplicated databases
- Library is a bit out of sight – needs to have a broader function and more resources
- Need for overall systems, not for people to build their own systems

Internal communication:

- Email – need better system so that people get less and only what they need to know or reply to
- Should use Microsoft Outlook calendar for meetings to ensure they are planned better
- Internal communication needs to have better structure – people do share information, but there is a need for greater planning to encourage sharing of information
- Informal communication works - you can walk into anyone's office, however decision making is centralised
- Need more regular internal communication from management
- Need to use intranet, discussion boards for improved communication – make it easy for people to use technology

Regional/Outreach offices

- Need to include the regional offices more in overall communication at ICARDA

Staff skill development

- Need a smaller, better trained workforce and greater efficiency at ICARDA
- Need more training for staff

Graphic design and images

- With regard to corporate images, we tend to use official images a great deal rather than more newsworthy images
- Need improvement in graphics and posters
- Need corporate style guide, visual standards

General comments

- Research agenda has to be regionally focused and relevant to each region
- ICARDA has very centralised structure – but is moving towards greater strategy and planning as focus
- ICARDA is slow to change
- Need to be careful with outsourcing communication/printing – ensure alternatives are cost-effective

Program staff - ICARDA scientists based at Aleppo

ICARDA staff provided many suggestions on how external and internal communication could be improved, but in spite of their concerns, they believed ICARDA is a good organisation with a crucial role to play in dry areas agricultural research, and has several unique capabilities, including an excellent relationship with NARS.

ICARDA scientists recognise:

- Almost all scientists mentioned that the editors who are available at CODIS are very good and helpful

- Better planning for communication by the scientists themselves is needed – they often allocate money meant for communication to other priorities and then “rush the communication at the end just to get it done”

ICARDAs’ scientists are looking for:

- Support from CODIS – many of the scientists feel they do most of the communication themselves
- They would like more help with, and better quality, posters for conferences
- They would appreciate more templates from CODIS to provide the information required for improved communication
- They would appreciate a standard PowerPoint template

Funders’ needs:

- They recognise the need for better communication with funders, such as succinct reports, policy briefs

Collaboration:

- They are aware that there should be greater collaboration and information sharing between scientists on different programs, and say this is often due to shortage of time rather than an unwillingness to share
- More communication and co-ordination is needed both ways - from scientists and CODIS

CODIS client services:

- CODIS is perceived by scientists as not having enough resources to provide effective communication services
- They appreciate that CODIS is very short staffed
- Many scientists send their publications directly to Scriptoria because CODIS is short staffed
- Scientists feel that they are always having to “catch up” on producing publications
- Scientists often communicate directly with funders even though they realise a communications professional could make a difference if there were more resources and time
- Scientific articles are sent directly to journals – it would be useful to get some input/support from CODIS

Media relations:

- ICARDA misses many opportunities to promote their work to the media – some scientists, such as Ken Street, have to do media liaison directly because of the lack of skills at CODIS in the past

Internal communication:

- On internal communication, they feel their workload is made more difficult by excessive emails
- On internal communication, they believe there is room to improve how meetings are run to make them more efficient
- The intranet is regarded as poor - it should be made easier for scientists to provide their information in consistent ways
- Internal newsletter “Inside ICARDA” not rated as very effective by many people

Website:

- View the ICARDA website as weak, and not taking advantage of Web 2 tools, such as blogs, Facebook, Twitter, etc

Need for strategic planning:

- Feel that ICARDA is often reactive – given the nature of project funding – and needs to plan more instead of always responding to emergencies
- Different programs respond to funders in different ways, depending on requirements of funders – but often the communication need is only considered by scientists at the end.
- Some units do seminars with funders/policy makers – there is room to do more of this across ICARDA, in a more targeted and planned manner with more help in future from CODIS

Information management:

- On information management, a key source of frustration is finding correct documents because there are so many documents on different servers/databases

Other issues:

- Some scientists think the Annual Report should be done in-house or with greater management by CODIS, rather than just outsourcing “because Scriptoria does not necessarily understand the issues like we do”
- When ICARDA is at events like agricultural shows, there should be knowledgeable, scientific representatives in attendance so that they can answer questions about research and technology

NARS representatives

NARS representatives recognised:

- ICARDA stands out in the CG system and that “we feel at home” with ICARDA
- ICARDA has better relationships with NARS compared with CGIAR centres elsewhere
- NARS and ICARDA have strong relationships forged through common interests, a common region and good communication

NARS representatives are looking for:

- As a priority, they want the ICARDA website improved and links to NARS sites
- They would value more e-communication
- They need brief, targeted, timely information
- Contact details must be kept up to date as positions/responsibilities change often

Other comments made by NARS representatives included:

- While some communication should go through the NARS, there should also be direct communication with policy makers
- ICARDA has a role to play as an information clearinghouse to facilitate the sharing of ICARDA and NARS information
- ICARDA needs a proactive media strategy that reminds the world of its relevance, e.g. the many opportunities around the upcoming Copenhagen meeting on climate change

Regional and Outreach Office directors/representatives

Regional and Outreach Office directors/representatives repeated many comments made by scientists based in Aleppo. They would like more help from CODIS, and if this is not forthcoming, will continue to operate independently.

On coping with communications/publications:

- Scriptoria is used extensively and found to be of good value
- CODIS does not have the resources to provide a fast turnaround of material and the language skills to translate materials

Regional and Outreach Office directors/representatives are looking for:

- Faster response and more cost-effective services – CODIS response is too slow and their charge-out rates are not competitive compared to local options for editing and printing
- They need assistance from CODIS with quality control of English-language publications
- They would like to develop a closer relationship with CODIS, to be able to turn to CODIS for support and advice
- They suggested that CODIS recognise that it is more cost-effective for them to use local providers, but that CODIS can add value by providing them with and templates, guidelines and lists of recommended service providers

On media relations:

- Believe that ICARDA misses many opportunities to promote their work to the media
- Many managers arrange their own media opportunities and ensure they are known to journalists
- Would appreciate a system to feed in stories to CODIS
- Would appreciate the help of CODIS in liaising with the media, increasing their profile

Other comments from Regional and Outreach Office directors/representatives included:

- There are many mistakes on the ICARDA website (such as contact details)
- Regional representation on the website is inadequate and needs to be improved
- Internal communication is problematic and getting a response from ICARDA scientists based at Aleppo and CODIS is often slow

CODIS staff

CODIS staff recognised:

- CODIS staff feel they do a good job under the circumstances and that there is a good team, and good rapport among members of CODIS
- They appreciate that internal communication has improved within their unit
- They appreciate that more broadly at ICARDA staff can express their opinion to management, but say that this has so far not resulted in material change at ICARDA
- Appreciate recent appointment of a new communication manager at CODIS, and say the new structure is “less of a barrier than before”

Other CODIS staff comments included:

Media relations:

- There is too much of a time delay in communicating outcomes to the media
- There are delays in translating releases into Arabic when promoting events to media in the region
- They agree there is a need for specialist media skills within the unit which currently are lacking
- They feel there is a lack of recognition and appreciation for the specialist skills involved in effective communication at ICARDA

Skill development and resources:

- Many members of staff requested skills training, e.g. photographers would like training on new technology and programs, the translator would like professional development opportunities, the graphic designers would like more training and professional development using programs such as InDesign, Photoshop, etc
- Video editing is likely to move to photography unit after resignation of a senior multimedia staff member – the photographic unit require video editing training
- There is a need for more up-to-date equipment and software: photography and printery staff requested updated equipment, such as new image setter, software, new printers; translator would like up-to-date software to do his job more effectively

Website and information management:

- They view the current website as inadequate and say there has been no proactive strategy for the web development officer to be provided with the information he needs to keep the site up-to-date
- Require content management system to manage the website and intranet
- The distribution unit has substantially reorganised mailing lists, but staff require a new more effective software solution for mailouts
- CODIS staff generally save data on their own computers, not necessarily on shared drives
- Photographs appear to be sent to the photo library consistently after they have appeared in publications
- Copies of publications printed by regional offices are sent to the library but there is no specific procedure for this

Publications:

- Believe that at least two editors are needed to cope with the workload for publications
- Believe there is a need for an overall editorial management system (recently some improvements were introduced like new publication request form, job tracking and allocation system, greater management of graphic design team)
- With publications, believe there is a need for scheduling, budgeting and prioritising
- With publications for scientists, they believe many scientists do communication as an after-thought, and just want a quick job done to satisfy a funder's requirements
- With publications, printing at ICARDA is of a reasonable standard but is very slow because of old machinery, and so outsourcing is often done as a faster, cheaper alternative

Employment conditions:

- Some local staff said they feel conditions for locally hired staff are unfair and that salaries need urgent review – dissatisfaction expressed about different salary levels for local/international staff

Internal communication:

- Official channels of communication are slow, but unofficial communication happens very quickly “through the grapevine”
- Even though there are blockages to communication, there is a view that “if you really need to get something done, it's done”
- Because many people have worked at ICARDA a long time, people know what other people do, even if it's only unofficially
- Some staff feel there is resistance to change in the culture of ICARDA and that this hampers communication

- There needs to be improved “filtering down” of information from management so that staff are better informed of strategies and decisions
- Some staff said they are not sure that the internal newsletter “Inside ICARDA” is effective and they do not read it

Working with the regional/outreach offices:

- CODIS needs to co-ordinate and work far more closely with the centres which are “semi-autonomous”
- To work with the regional offices adequately, there needs to be adequate resourcing
- There is little or no control on what the regional offices publish

Other ICARDA staff (e.g. DG Executive Officer, IT Director, Farm Manager, Acting Projects Office Manager, CBSU, Projects Office)

Other ICARDA staff recognised that:

- ICARDA works well within the CG system and has good relationships with NARS

Other comments provided by ICARDA staff included:

Internal communication:

- On internal communication, meetings with local staff committees have resulted in some improvements in communication
- Coping with daily email is time-consuming and could be streamlined
- The way meetings are organised could be improved
- The intranet is under-utilised because it is over-complex and contains out-of-date information

External promotion of ICARDA:

- ICARDA needs to promote itself more effectively to funders
- There is a low understanding at ICARDA about the importance of awareness raising and promoting ICARDA in the media

Website and information management:

- The website is very important as an external communication tool and it needs to be improved
- Technical reports associated with grants sent to the projects office and filed, but not always more broadly shared unless scientists uploads these on the ICARDA website
- On information management: difficult to find information quickly – needs to be far better organised
- With information management, there is overlap between CBSU and Library, eg Library provides IT training
- Library and CBSU both recognise there is a culture of not sharing data
- CBSU has developed useful tools, e.g., data research repository to help people share data, but this does not get used because there is no policy or procedure about using the repository
- CODIS needs to focus on information management and CBSU on management of IT
- There needs to be a holistic approach to information management
- There needs to be an enterprise-wide search engine across all the data sources

CODIS services:

- CODIS needs to communicate what it can produce – there is an impression that it is a production house: publications, printing, posters - but it should be about managing the reputation of ICARDA
- Regional offices need to be better linked to funders and CODIS can help them by assisting with better quality publications

- Scientists need help from CODIS with editing journal articles.

Other external interviewees - Crawford Fund, Burness Communications

- There are many media opportunities for ICARDA
- ICARDA needs to let the right people know when there are visits to a particular country, eg Crawford Fund provides free media promotion for ICARDA in Australia where there are links to Australian scientists and common research areas.
- ICARDA needs to improve its website and provide short reports to funders and policymakers – no-one has time to read long publications
- CODIS should employ at least one local media officer at Aleppo who can work with the local media, help identify stories, and then tie in with communication professionals who have international contacts to gain international coverage
- CODIS needs to develop a story list – and this should include up-coming peer-reviewed articles in scientific publications - these journal articles can be leveraged to gain general media coverage
- While media campaigns will help raise the profile of ICARDA, it's important to leverage on the coverage by providing regular reports to funders and policy makers about media coverage received

FINDINGS – EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION

ICARDA is recognised for strengthening capacity in dry countries through its research and development, training and collaborative research projects, and has an excellent relationship with the National Agricultural Research Systems (NARS).

- There is good personal engagement with funders at a senior level, program management and regional level
- ICARDA has a sound relationship and good communication with the Syrian government/policy makers
- CODIS has done its best to provide professional publication output, but there is a need for greater professional management of publications at ICARDA. (Currently the two editors who work at CODIS do a very good job in difficult circumstances)
- Funders would like clear, succinct and non-technical reports, which clearly show how funding of ICARDA research has provided benefits to poor farmers
- Different funders have different priorities and ICARDA must meet their needs by ensuring they are provided with targeted, short and clear information
- Funders would like ICARDA to do more work at an extension, level, communicating with farmers
- The Board believes ICARDA should communicate how research connects to the beneficiary community, including farmers
- A key communication tool for ICARDA is the website. It is not well structured, has broken links, and out-of-date information. Improvement in a redeveloped website, underpinned by a new information management strategy and content management system, should be a priority
- Publications have in the past been produced without overall co-ordination, and CODIS has not had an efficient publication management strategy or charge-out policy
- CODIS, with limited staff, has barely kept pace responding to requests from scientists for publications, and managing news publications, as well as the internet
- CODIS does not have a corporate identity guide (logo, corporate fonts, print standards, etc), and style guide (these are currently under development)
- There must be improved management of the ICARDA brand
- ICARDA's printery is operating using obsolete and old single colour printers and therefore cannot operate efficiently. (Dedicated and long-serving staff do very well within these limitations.) Printing internally at ICARDA is more expensive than outsourcing
- CODIS' internal distribution service is well-organised and there is a proactive member of staff running this area, but the contacts management database he uses needs upgrading
- ICARDA requires communication strategies to attract high-calibre staff, both local staff and international scientists

Key findings

ICARDA is well known in the region for its research strengths, but it needs to communicate these strengths more effectively to key stakeholder groups, in particular with:

- Funders and policy-makers, using targeted, well-written, concise and regular publications/e-newsletters
- Media coverage – regional and international – is needed to increase awareness of ICARDA
- The website is a key external communication tool and needs urgent review and improvement
- CODIS' role within ICARDA needs to be spelled out clearly - as manager of external communication, and guardian of the quality of communication and the ICARDA brand

Table 1 : Communication – current activities - external communication - overview of effectiveness

Communication outputs	Audiences	Key communication tool/channels/format	Effectiveness
Meetings Forums/workshops Briefings Seminars Major themed events, eg Presentation Day, Science Week Training	Board Funders Scientific community CG System and Science Council Governments and policymakers NARS Extension specialists Smallholder producers Media ICARDA scientists and Outreach/regional staff	Face-to-face and personal contact	The general feedback received was that ICARDA handles personal contact, visits, tours, training, etc effectively on many levels.
ICARDA website	Board Funders Scientific community CG System and Science Council Governments and policymakers NARS Extension specialists Smallholder producers Media General Public	Website	Not effective – see detailed findings under Information Management
Press releases	Media Board Funders Scientific community CG System and Science Council Governments and policymakers NARS Extension specialists Smallholder producers General Public	Via email transmission Website	Releases are generally not written in a style that will attract media – the language is formal and information is detailed There is no individual contact person and phone number listed for journalists to contact Releases on the web are labelled as ‘in the news’, implying coverage, rather than releases, which implies an announcement of news. For a busy centre like ICARDA, there is not enough news about scientists activities sent to the media

Videos and CDs (training videos, CDs and documentaries)	Board Funders Scientific community CG System and Science Council Governments and policymakers NARS Extension specialists Smallholder producers Media General Public	DVD/CD format Links on website to purchase DVDs, CDs. Youtube.com	Good collection of multimedia products The way that multimedia products are distributed to media needs reviewing – no central contacts list appears to exist Use of YouTube, including link from homepage. demonstrates the potential of using Web 2 technologies.
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Table 2 : Communication – publications - external communication - overview of effectiveness

1. Publications

- Most publications are long and are not designed for quick, easy reading
- Branding varies in consistency - sometimes ICARDA name used in full, sometimes not
- Some publications dated, some not
- Many, but not all, publications are in the Library.
- For detailed listing of sample of publications consulted and analysis, see Appendix C.

Communication outputs	Audiences	Key communication tool/channels/format	Effectiveness
Annual Report	Board Funders Scientific community CG System and Science Council Governments and policymakers NARS Extension specialists Smallholder producers Media General Public	Print publication PDF on website	Well designed and stories provide good overview of ICARDA activities A “long read” rather than a quick snapshot The 2007 Annual Report was on website, but the most recent 2008 Annual Report had not been uploaded to the link from the home page. It was found on the Publications Page after some searching
Strategic Plan	Board Funders Scientific community CG System and Science Council Governments and policymakers NARS	Print publication PDF on website	The 1998 Strategic Plan was on website, but the most recent 2007-2016 Strategic Plan had not been uploaded

Research Reports (Refereed scientific publications, non-refereed scientific publications)	Board Funders Scientific community CG System and Science Council Governments and policymakers NARS Extension specialists	Print publications Links on website to purchase publications	Design and writing varies in quality from very good to satisfactory. Complex writing for non-technical audiences.
Manuals	NARS Extension specialists Smallholder producers	Print publications PDFs on website	Most recent series on Milk Quality control well designed and user-friendly for target audience
Donor Series (Ties that Bind)	Board Funders Scientific community CG System and Science Council Governments and policymakers NARS	Print publications PDFs on website	Concise format – design and writing generally satisfactory. Potentially review the title “Ties that Bind” as this may also have negative connotations and doesn’t communicate the responsiveness and flexibility funders in research commented on Long-established series, somewhat dated in look/feel/approach.
Publications: general books and reports	Board Funders Scientific community CG System and Science Council Governments and policymakers NARS Extension specialists Smallholder producers Media General Public	Print publications Links on website to purchase publications	Design and writing varies in quality from very good to satisfactory. Complex writing for non-technical audiences.
Caravan – review of ICARDA activities	Board Funders Scientific community CG System and Science Council Governments and policymakers NARS Extension specialists Smallholder producers Media General Public	Print publication PDF on website	Basic design. Provides fair snapshot of ICARDA activities and priorities Good use of issues-based format (i.e. global warming), which could be useful in establishing ICARDA expertise with media. This publication is a flagship corporate document for ICARDA and should be written in a newsy, less technical way.

<p>Fact sheets, e.g., ICARDA Impact Brief series, including Fighting Poverty, impact of improved faba bean technologies in Africa</p>	<p>Board Funders Scientific community CG System and Science Council Governments and policymakers NARS Extension specialists Smallholder producers Media General Public</p>		<p>Not easily found on the website, not found using search tool.</p> <p>Clear, consistent branding, name of ICARDA not written in full, layout could be improved, long sentences, lack of white space, require template for consistency</p> <p>NB: These fact sheets, if developed, could become a very useful new way for ICARDA to communicate with multiple audiences</p>
<p><i>What's new at ICARDA</i> (fortnightly, in English and Arabic)</p>	<p>Board Funders Scientific community CG System and Science Council Governments and policymakers NARS</p>	<p>PDF publication – emailed to subscribers.</p>	<p>Not easily found on the website, not found using search too</p> <p>Content is often formal in language rather than “newsy”.</p> <p>This publication could be improved to be more newsworthy and less forma.</p>

FINDINGS – INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

- There is a need for more communication, collaboration and information sharing at all levels
- There is need for more regular communication from management
- Meetings at ICARDA are seen by staff, especially scientists, as needing to be better run with adequate notice being given when meetings are to be held
- The intranet is a key internal communication tool and needs urgent attention – see further detail in Findings – Information Management and Recommendations – Information Management, **Recommendation 12**
- There is a general perception that scientists don't "share enough" – and this appears to be related to time pressures rather than any unwillingness to share
- There is a divide between international staff and local staff – there is a view that local staff are not as well paid and therefore valued. The ICARDA management team and a new HR Director are addressing corporate change at ICARDA. As part of this change, a new HR policy manual is being developed and greater focus is being made on professionalising the working environment
- Email is heavily used and people struggle to keep up with the volume of emails. Several interviewees said that much of the email they received was not relevant to them
- Outreach offices "do their own thing" regarding publications having found that CODIS is too expensive and too slow to meet their publication needs. Many also liaise directly with the media rather than work through CODIS
- Informal communication works efficiently and people often know what is happening before decisions are formally announced by management

Table 3 : Communication matrix – current activities - internal communication

Communication mechanisms	Audiences	Effectiveness
Meetings Forums/workshops Briefings Major themed events, eg Presentation Day, Science Week	Board ICARDA scientists, general staff and Outreach/regional staff	The general feedback received was that ICARDA handles personal contact, visits, tours, training, etc very effectively on many levels.
Email	Board ICARDA scientists, general staff and Outreach/regional staff	Email is heavily used and many staff members said that they find the volume of email onerous.
Intranet	Board ICARDA scientists, general staff and Outreach/regional staff	The intranet is not heavily used due to its complexity, dead links and out-of-date content. See Findings – Information Management
<i>Inside ICARDA</i> (fortnightly, in English and Arabic)	Board ICARDA scientists, general staff and Outreach/regional staff	This publication contains some interesting information but many staff commented that they do not read it.

FINDINGS – INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

Information management is an umbrella term that encompasses all the systems and processes within an organisation for the creation and use of corporate information.

While it includes technology and systems such as website and intranet content management, it is more than just technology. It includes the business processes and practices that underpin the creation and use of information, the information itself, including the structure of information ('information architecture'), metadata, content quality, and more.

Several senior stakeholders (including Board members) commented on a perceived internal culture where information is not shared. This was indicated in comments such as the following, '*There is tendency to consider information as an individual's own property, a fear of sharing too much*'. There was concern that this lack of sharing of information meant that ICARDA might miss opportunities to capitalise on its information.

Stakeholders suggested that there was a need for an information management system that all scientists feed into, and where '*if a person does not feed their information into the information management system, they should be told to change their ways*'.

ICARDA's Research Data Repository attempts to address this issue. However, because there is no policy that states it is compulsory for research material to be entered into the repository, and there is no incentive or assistance for time poor scientists to do so, it is rarely used.

The Research Data Repository does not address ICARDA's other need, which is for a document management system that helps ICARDA manage its internal communication, its email, Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, Excel spreadsheets, PDFs, and other file formats. A document management system will help ICARDA digitise and archive files, and track and manage new documents throughout their lifecycle, as they are written, revised, and updated (**see Recommendation 15**).

ICARDA has a diverse range of information tools but there appears to be no Information Management Strategy that provides a framework for managing information and using these information tools to optimal effect across the organisation (**see Recommendation 9**).

ICARDA's information tools can be grouped into three categories - the website, the intranet and ICARDA's databases. Broadly speaking ICARDA's information tools suffer from a reactive, operational response to the information needs of individual organisational units and projects within ICARDA. This has resulted in a plethora of individual databases, built with a diverse range of software tools, using different descriptive models, poorly maintained and unable to be easily connected with other information tools to facilitate ease of access to information. These will become increasingly difficult to maintain and represent major organisational risk.

Access to information is made more problematic by network low bandwidth which urgently needs upgrading.

Discussions with stakeholders reveal a lack of clarity around information management roles. These roles have evolved over time and best contemporary practice has the IT department responsible for the management and provision of IT infrastructure, the development of software solutions on standard

Key findings

- ICARDA has a wealth of exceptional resources that cannot easily be shared.
- There appears to be no strategic, whole-of-organisation approach to information management.
- Material is not consistently described, organised, stored, shared.
- Databases appear to be created on demand and in isolation. They do not interlink.
- The website and intranet are ICARDA's key external and internal communication tools and need urgent attention.

software platforms, and the provision of advice and support on technical issues. This would mean that:

- Databases should not be developed in isolation by Research Programs and other organisational units (**see Recommendation 18**);
- CBSU should not be the owner or maintainer of content (endorsed by the CCER on Information Technology and Systems, Information Services and Knowledge Management, Key Recommendation 22);
- CODIS with their editing and the Library's information management skills, is well positioned to be the owner and manager of both the website and intranet and their information (**see Recommendation 11**);
- Roles need to be clarified and defined in the proposed Information Management Strategy (**see Recommendation 9**).

Many of these observations are reinforced by the recent CCER on Information Technology and Systems, Information Services and Knowledge Management in ICARDA which identified a number of issues that need to be addressed by ICARDA. Those of key relevance to CODIS' communication and information management needs analysis, are the need to:

- Increase bandwidth as soon as possible to enable faster access to information resources (CCER Key Recommendation 1);
- Have consistent practices for the management of information to optimise its accessibility (CCER Key Recommendation 2);
- Develop a disaster management plan and systems maintenance plan to ensure ongoing access to information resources (CCER Key Recommendation 5 and 18);
- Improve the interface to and connections between existing information resources (CCER Key Recommendations 6 and 9);
- Adopt centre wide standards for the description of information to enable search, integration, exchange and sharing of information (CCER Key Recommendation 10);
- Consistently capture, organise and make accessible information to enable information to be shared and reused regardless of its technical platform (CCER KEY Recommendation 14);
- Develop and implement an ICARDA document management policy and introduce a document management system (CCER Key Recommendation 16);
- Develop and implement an ICARDA information management strategy and policy (CCER Key Recommendation 17);
- Separate content curation and management from technical hosting and software development and support (CCER Key Recommendation 22).

A further observation is that CODIS through ICARDA's Library, has a key role to play in information management and sharing. With the Library's information management skills and the rest of CODIS' design, writing, editing and publishing skills, CODIS is ideally placed to act as ICARDA's information repository where a deposit copy of every item published is placed¹, and clearing house (**see Recommendation 11**).

With their skills and knowledge, CODIS are able to:

- Define and oversee 'centre wide standards for the description of information to enable search, integration, exchange and sharing of information' (CCER Key Recommendation 10);
- 'Consistently capture, organise and make accessible information to enable information to be shared and reused regardless of its technical platform' (CCER KEY Recommendation 14);
- Curate and manage content (CCER Key Recommendation 22).

¹ In theory a copy of every ICARDA item published is already being placed in the Library and recorded in the Document repository. Of the publications reviewed (see Appendix C) at least ¼ of these could not be located in that repository.

Website

Most of the stakeholders interviewed (including Funders and the Board) specifically raised the subject of ICARDA's website, expressing frustration and dissatisfaction. The website was seen as a key internal and external communication tool that did not effectively communicate ICARDA's research strengths and research outcomes to the world. Fixing the website was seen as a key, urgent priority (**see Recommendation 12**).

The success of any website rests on whether it is regularly maintained. For a variety of historical reasons, many organisations' websites have been poorly maintained and appear to follow a decentralised autonomous model where web publishing is undertaken primarily by staff without formal qualifications in web publishing. Few standards, guidelines, corporate style or templates appear to be available or if they are, they are rarely followed.

The ICARDA website follows such a model, its lack of a formal authority system resulting in ad hoc development and maintenance, and a highly fragmented site. To ensure that this does not continue to occur a system of Information Custodians (**see Recommendation 16**) and the development of Corporate Procedures and Guidelines for Website and Intranet Development and Maintenance (**see Recommendation 17**), are proposed. Developing Corporate Procedures and Guidelines for Website and Intranet Development is critical to providing information on the required standards for ICARDA web publishing.

The ICARDA website has evolved over time in response to the demands of various stakeholders. While it contains a wealth of material it does nothing to facilitate access to and share this information.

The site shows a clear lack of planning and management, as well as a lack of knowledge regarding good interface design. For example, website best practice is characterised by practices such as:

- The home page displaying on a single screen i.e. no scrolling (ICARDA's home page scrolls over two pages)
- No more than 6-8 major navigation headings (ICARDA's website has more than double this number and the website structure is too complex to facilitate quick access)
- Consistent branding and navigation on all web pages (this does not occur on some ICARDA web pages such as the Dryland Agrobiodiversity Research Program home page and the Library home page)
- No dead links (ICARDA's website has many dead links, for example, Library – general information, library – services, library – useful links)
- Content is written specifically for the web e.g. headings, dot points, short sentences, skimmable
- Content is current (ICARDA's website does not include a date of last update on each page, and some publications listed do not have a publication date e.g. the NARS publications)

Provision of training in web usability, website and intranet best practice is critical to enhance staff skills and ensure the effectiveness of the website and intranet (**see Recommendation 8**).

Staff responsible for the website struggle with maintenance and do the best job they can given their lack of training in web usability or website best practice, and the lack of access to tools that enable efficient maintenance of the site. Maintenance of the site is currently very labour intensive and cumbersome because it is not underpinned by a content management system that allows easy updating of all related information (**see Recommendation 14**).

A content management system is needed to:

- Manage and control ICARDA'S large, changing collection of pages;
- Improve web publishing processes and systems;
- Streamline the management of the website's information architecture;
- Improve the effectiveness of the site search functionality;
- Enable two-way communication channels with ICARDA's online audience;
- Increase the website's ability to be a powerful marketing tool to promote ICARDA to the world.

Intranet

ICARDA's intranet is a key internal communication tool that is currently not being heavily used (23,316 views since 2003) due to its complexity and out-of-date content. It is perceived by stakeholders as 'a complete mess', 'too complex', 'too hard to use' and 'not accurate'. Fixing the intranet was seen as a key organisational priority (**see Recommendation 13**).

Like the ICARDA website, the intranet also suffers from the lack of good interface design. The intranet too, has evolved over time in response to the demands of various stakeholders without the guidance of an intranet strategy. Its site structure is too complex to facilitate quick access, and much of its content is no longer maintained (exemplified by dead links such as the Library and Information Services link) or is out of date (for example, staff of the year awards are 2007, the latest Week at ICARDA is August 2008). Navigation is made more problematic by inconsistent design throughout the intranet. This highlights the need to provide templates to facilitate decentralised content creation, and the need for basic training in interface design.

The intranet provides access to some very useful and frequently used tools such as the Telephone Directory and the Photolibrary. Both of these would benefit greatly through some simple enhancements. The Telephone Directory needs to provide a link to the person's email address.

The Photolibrary is an excellent resource which is let down by minimalistic and inconsistent descriptive standards. Best practice in image description would see date, country, region, owner, file size, research program fields added to the description, and internationally recognised standards to maximise access to the material and minimise maintenance problems. The value of provided additional descriptive fields that help the user find the image cannot be underestimated. The figure below provides an example of best practice in architectural image description.

	Description	MIMEType	Size	Downloads
		image/tiff	27.21MB	411
Mt_Morgan_295.tif				
Title	Stamping battery, copper mine, Mount Morgan			
Date photo taken	1986			
Date scanned	2006-07-18			
Publisher	The University of Queensland Library			
Photographer(s)	Keniger, Michael, 1947-			
Location	Mount Morgan, Queensland, Australia			
Category	Mines, Machinery			
Condition	Abandoned buildings			
Structural Systems & Elements	Timber construction, Steel construction, Single skinned			
Building Materials	Timber, Steel, Corrugated metal sheeting			
Architectural Features	Four-storey, Gable roofs			
Rights	Research and private study only. Not to be reproduced without prior written permission. Rights holder: Michael Keniger.			
Additional Notes	Located approximately 38km west of Rockhampton, Mount Morgan has been a gold mining town since 1882. Both the town itself and the old mine site have retained a number of significant heritage buildings. These include timber-framed houses and hotels, as well as Classical masonry structures such as the Courthouse and State School.			

Databases

Currently ICARDA has over 10 different database products serving approximately 30 database applications. A complete list of these databases can be found in CBSU's ICARDA Databases and Systems 2008 document. Comparison of the 2006 and 2008 documents indicates that for nearly half of these databases there has been no increase in the number of records contained since 2006. This suggests that some of these databases may no longer be active and maintained.

It appears that many databases have been built in response to the needs of individual research projects. Hence the diversity of products used. Many of the database applications appear to act as information silos that cannot interact with each other. Thus there is no ability to search across multiple databases e.g. to find all information easily. What this means from a research perspective is that a scientist looking for all material on the Faba Bean would need to search multiple individual databases, each of which describes its content in slightly different ways.

Ideally a data warehouse would be established to facilitate efficient management and reporting on data from a variety of non-uniform sources (e.g., databases) scattered throughout an organisation but it is unlikely that ICARDA will have the funding to undertake such a large, ongoing project¹.

It is recommended that ICARDA purchase and install an enterprise wide search engine (**see Recommendation 19**) such as the Google search appliance as a low cost means of facilitating access to ICARDA's diverse range of information resources. The Google search appliance would allow a user to search all of ICARDA's content sources even though they are located in different locations (such as on a corporate network, on a desktop, or on the internet) and present the search results as a single, integrated set of search results.

The costing model used for some information projects such as RAIN is questionable. No detail is provided on the technical solution proposed for the development of the 'information repositories with digital systems platforms', and its cost is 1/6th of the total project with the majority of funding being linked to training. Experience suggests that the technical component would be a higher proportion of the budget.

There are some examples of best practice in interface design and usability, notably the Research Data Repository. The Repository aims to capture all research information regardless of its format, and to provide access to that in a highly structure, consistent manner. Sadly this resource is not heavily used, there is no ICARDA policy that makes its usage compulsory, and it does not appear to have been built in such a way that it can easily interface to other databases such as the Library's publications database. Thus much research information will remain stored on local computers, unable to be shared by the broader ICARDA group.

¹ Comparable data warehousing projects that may be worth investigating include the Indian National Electronics and Computer Technology Center and the Indian Ministry of Agriculture's Integrated National Agriculture Resources Information System (<http://agdw.iasri.res.in/index.htm>).

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

COMMUNICATION RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1: Develop a three-year strategic communications plan

Develop a three-year strategic communications and marketing plan (review annually), which aligns with ICARDA's strategic goals and positions ICARDA as the international research centre of excellence in dry lands research (Guiding documents: ICARDA's Strategic Plan 2007–2016, the Medium Term Plan 2008–2010 and with reference to CGIAR Change Management Strategy). The plan should be developed by the CODIS Communication Manager, with support from the ICARDA executive. The Plan should have measurable KPIs.

In developing the communications strategy, consideration should be given to target audiences (Funders, board, scientific community, CG System and Science Council, governments and policymakers, National Agricultural Research Systems, extension specialists, smallholder producers, media, ICARDA scientists and outreach/regional staff, general public).

ICARDA has excellent working relationships with the NARS – this is a strategic competitive advantage and it needs to be fully leveraged and proactively managed by sharing communication resources where possible (e.g., through joint press releases, presentations and publications where relevant); by providing collegial links on the website).

ICARDA should take advantage of the opportunity to share resources with its partners, for example universities, which find it strategically advantageous to promote their international links. By working with university PR staff, for example, ICARDA can boost its profile in particular regions and markets without a great deal of investment.

Recommendation 2: Develop communication and information management plans for science projects

CODIS, working with scientists in the programs and in the regional/outreach offices, should develop specific communication and information management plans for projects to ensure communication needs are embedded in each project plan. This would ensure that communication activities are not an after-thought, but are integrated into overall scientific project plans. These plans should have measurable KPIs.

Recommendation 3: Clearly articulate ICARDA's positioning and corporate messages

Positioning

CODIS needs to articulate a clear corporate positioning statement for ICARDA, as well as corporate messages which promote the ICARDA brand and image. It is suggested that a positioning workshop be held to ensure engagement and support from ICARDA scientists and outreach/regional staff – using phone hook-ups if needed. Involving the scientists in articulating ICARDA's positioning will ensure support and understanding for the need for centrally-co-ordinated branding and quality control.

The positioning statement and messages will be the starting point for the development of the strategic communications and marketing plan. ICARDA should also consider a brand refresh as part of its positioning work.

Messages

Key messages will focus on:

- ICARDA is working to improve livelihoods of the rural poor in dry areas of the world.
- ICARDA is working to create food security and alleviate poverty through scientific agricultural research and partnerships.

- ICARDA is working to achieve sustainable increases in agricultural productivity and income, while ensuring the efficient and more equitable use and conservation of natural resources.
- ICARDA research supports development outcomes and delivers tangible benefits to the poor, thus making a real impact
- ICARDA has the track record, expertise and local contacts which make it unique in global agricultural research and development

These messages support the ICARDA mandate which is: *ICARDA has a global mandate for the improvement of barley, lentil and faba bean and serves the non-tropical dry areas for the improvement of on-farm water-use efficiency, rangeland and small-ruminant production. In the Central and West Asia and North Africa region, ICARDA contributes to the improvement of bread and durum wheats, kabuli chickpea, pasture and forage legumes and associated farming systems. It also works on improved land management, diversification of production systems, and value-added crop and livestock products. Social, economic and policy research is an integral component of ICARDA's research to better target poverty and to enhance the uptake and maximise impact of the research outputs.*

ICARDA's positioning as the world leader in dry areas research must be demonstrated through success stories – research outcomes, personal testimonials and impact assessment statistics and results detailed in clear, targeted communications.

Branding

ICARDA's branding is not consistent on publications because of the lack of central co-ordination. More effective quality control of ICARDA's brand is needed, particularly in distinguishing it from other CG centres and NARS. By having consistent messages, summaries and clear corporate identity and branding guidelines, anyone at ICARDA who is publishing or presenting information will be doing so in a format that reinforces ICARDA's brand and strengths. By providing a suite of publication design and presentation templates (incorporating flagship statements/messages), ICARDA will not only demonstrate consistent branding but will make the process more efficient for scientists and other staff packaging information.

Images are an important part of managing the ICARDA brand, and so care should be used at all times to use professional, high-resolution images in all publications – this should be managed through a Printing Quality Control Checklist. All images should also be filed appropriately in the Photo Library to support ICARDA's information management needs.

CODIS must ensure the messages and branding are used consistently across the organisation — this requires a policy or mandate from ICARDA's executive and will involve establishing formal protocols and a Corporate Identity Guide (example provided in Appendix F) for incorporating branding into all communication streams. All staff involved in publications management, web content management and printing should become familiar with these guidelines and play a role in reinforcing them.

Key corporate publications and internal communications

The Annual Report, *Caravan*, *ICARDA in the News* (external) and *Inside ICARDA* (internal) are important current communication tools. These media should be improved. In particular, *Caravan* is a flagship corporate publication and requires redesign and content that will appeal to a non-scientific audience. It is suggested that stories be made shorter, and be easier to read (less technical). CODIS should develop a series of targeted key publications – short fact sheets and policy briefs developed for specific audiences, such as funders, policymakers and the media which convey research and development impacts.

Recommendation 4: Reorganise, define and communicate CODIS' role

Co-ordination and quality control of all communication

CODIS's strategic role in managing ICARDA's brand and facilitating communication and information management should be communicated to other areas of the organisation.

CODIS must spell out its central co-ordinating and quality assurance role and its responsibilities, services, procedures and protocols, and promote them internally to ICARDA, particularly to the program areas and regional/outreach offices. The procedures should include a recommended workflow map of how publications should be planned and managed, and the approval process. These procedures need the support of the executive so that CODIS has the authority to act as ICARDA's brand guardian.

Co-ordination and quality control of publications

Scientists in Aleppo and the other regions appreciate that CODIS is a small team that cannot handle every aspect of every publication. CODIS should therefore develop the Corporate Identity Guide, an updated Style Manual, and Manual of Services spelling out the continuum of support it provides, and list a Panel of Preferred Providers should outsourcing be the chosen option.

The Manual of Services should include a Checklist of what programs and regions should do before sending material to CODIS, if indeed CODIS is handling the publication. The manual should also contain recommended:

- Templates for publications like impact assessment and policy brief fact sheets
- Guidelines for employing outside providers from the Panel of Preferred Suppliers

Some ICARDA scientists specifically mentioned during the review that they would like assistance with editing of journal articles; CODIS currently does not have the resources to manage editing of such publications. The Manual of Services should provide clear recommendations on which specialist editors to use.

The Corporate Identity Guide should be developed along with a suite of publication management documents by CODIS (discussed in detail below).

Printing

ICARDA has a long and proud history of publishing at Aleppo but insufficient investment in equipment and training over a number of years means that this area has come to the crossroads in terms of its future.

A separate business case is needed to examine the alternatives for the future of printing at ICARDA, and one that provides **retraining** for the dedicated and diligent staff who have worked at ICARDA for many years.

The options are:

1. Invest in updated offset printing equipment to ensure efficient printing of most publications in-house
2. Invest in modern, high-volume variable data digital printers, e.g., Fuji-Xerox, Canon to ensure efficient printing of a large number of publications in-house
3. Continue to operate the printery as-is, compensating for the slowness of delivery by continuing to outsource larger publications
4. Move to more outsourcing – providing a cost-analysis is done to determine whether outsourcing will not end up being a more expensive option

In summary, there is the opportunity for a great deal of printing to continue to be done in-house using modern high-volume, full colour, variable data digital printers – provided the technical back-up is available in Aleppo or Damascus to service these sophisticated machines. It should be noted that should ICARDA decide to pursue the in-house digital printing route, the machines will require less

space than the current printery. Another option is to purchase a modern four-colour printing press for the printery and new image setter, or to outsource most printing. Before any decision is made about the future direction of printing, all the alternatives, and costs, need to be carefully examined.

Charge-out rates

CODIS' charge-out rates, e.g., printing charges, have not changed for some years – an updated charge out rate needs to be developed for all production functions so that all ICARDA stakeholders know what CODIS is able to provide, and at what cost. It is important to communicate to scientists that they need to budget realistically for the design and printing of publications.

Panel of preferred providers

CODIS needs to identify and develop a panel of preferred providers, including writers, designers, editors, illustrators and printers, available in Aleppo, Damascus, Beirut and the other countries in which ICARDA works. Once a panel of preferred providers has been established, CODIS can then impose quality control standards to this panel, and monitor and communicate with members of the panel as part of their ongoing quality-control role. The panel needs to understand their role in complying with branding and corporate identity guidelines.

Distribution

CODIS' internal distribution service of print publications is well organised but an improved database is needed to ensure mailouts are handled efficiently. ICARDA should consider whether instead of long print-runs, it moves to a digital "print on demand" service as part of the move to digital printing in-house in the future. When an inquiry is received for a publication, the stakeholder can opt for electronic delivery of a PDF document, or purpose-printing and mailout of a publication.

CODIS internal communication

CODIS needs to promote its services and role by developing an induction process for all new scientific staff and by visiting or regularly communicating with regional/outreach offices.

In developing the strategic communications plan, the following activities should be included, and objectives measured by agreed KPIs. The table below is a suggested approach.

Table 4 : CODIS's role, functions, activities, skills required and KPIs

CODIS's role defined	Core function	Key activities	Skills required	KPIs
CODIS manages ICARDA's brand and facilitates its communication and information management	Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan communications strategy Plan Information management strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic planning High level comms and marketing expertise High level knowledge management expertise 	Strategic Plans developed with measurable outcomes
	Promote	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positioning Key messages Brand strategy Public relations Media training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communications and marketing skills Writing Media skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Higher awareness and satisfaction among key audiences, eg funders TV coverage Radio coverage Newspaper coverage Journal coverage Internet news coverage
	Advise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify opportunities Identify priorities Refer on to specialist services Proactive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communications strategy Information management strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved stakeholder satisfaction

		planning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct training 		
	Manage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish, manage and monitor standards • Establish, manage and monitor processes • Establish, manage and monitor templates • Manage stakeholder relationships • Liaise and support Programs and Regional offices • Website • Intranet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication skills • Web expertise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standards adhered to • Processes adhered to • Templates used • Intranet user-friendly & up-to-date • Website user-friendly & up-to-date
	Produce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Edit • Synthesise • Translate • Quality control • Publish 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing • Editing • Translation • Design skills • Publishing skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The right message to the right audience
	Store and share information i.e the ICARDA clearing house	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capture • Describe • Digitise • Quality control • Store • Distribute 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cataloguing • Preservation • Knowledge management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All ICARDA material is available via the website and intranet, up to date and easily accessed by common terminology

Currently the key skills that need to be developed by the team are marketing, media and web skills.

Recommendation 5: Develop a media strategy for ICARDA and invest in the required resources

A key tactic in the strategic communications plan should be the development of a media strategy.

Internal media resources

It is recommended CODIS employ at least one media officer to be based at Aleppo. This person needs to have a proven track record as a journalist, experience as a public relations professional, and be able to work with regional media, including with wire services in Damascus and Beirut, and to liaise with external consultants to place key stories with international media.

The internal media officer will source story ideas and information, write targeted media releases that appeal to journalists, and co-ordinate photography, interviews and handle local media calls and interactions. This media officer needs to work very effectively with ICARDA scientists in the programs and outreach/regional offices, with other ICARDA stakeholders, communications staff and with external communications consultants. Internet-based news is increasingly important and this media officer therefore needs to be web-savvy and able to make the most of online news coverage.

External media resources

External communications consultants could be contracted to promote particular events/findings of international significance. ICARDA should prioritise two to three major media opportunities a year and set a clear budget for these activities. The external consultants can also assist with arranging meetings with journalists when ICARDA executives and scientists travel to overseas destinations/attend conferences. (Recently ICARDA has been working with Burness Communications – and this firm has delivered an effective media outcome. (See Appendix I).

ICARDA should also consider subscribing to an international news distribution services – e.g., EurekaAlert!– an online science news service, featuring a range of science categories including agriculture (www.eurekaalert.org). This paid subscription service is an effective way of distributing science stories around the world.

Media strategy considerations

The media strategy tactics should include:

- Let funders and policy makers know when there is coverage by providing regular communications reports including clippings and links to coverage they can access online.
- Develop a list of story ideas or milestones linked to the ICARDA calendar of events for the year and significant international events (i.e., UN Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen or World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought) where ICARDA's expertise and research outcomes may gain traction.
- Survey issues that come up in the media, e.g., food security, animal health, global warming, developing a list of expertise that can be called on by journalists. CODIS should develop an expert guide on the website for contacting experts in particular fields.
- Create a timeline of peer-reviewed journal articles being published by ICARDA researchers and identify which of these are newsworthy, using publications in scientific journals as a hook for a media release. Even though the material needs to be rewritten for a lay audience, general journalists regard scientific articles as highly credible sources of news.
- Identify the media hot button issues. Media always prominently feature human interest stories and organisations often have a particular person or issue which will attract regular, ongoing media interest. One such example for ICARDA is Ken Street's work on plant gene collection. There has already been considerable interest and coverage, including the "Seed Hunter" video. This story should remain an ongoing priority for media promotion because it is the "hook" which will gain ICARDA world-wide, ongoing media attention.

- Develop a media contacts database and log media activity.
- ICARDA needs to tap into the communications resources of its existing networks, collaborating with communications staff from universities and the Crawford Foundation in Australia. It is crucial for CODIS to work closely with these groups to ensure ICARDA and its messaging is communicated in the media release.
- There should be a clear protocol for approval of press releases and releases should include a standard short description of ICARDA that communicates its key messages.
- Media releases should be repackaged as articles to appear in Caravan - a resource that could provide useful background information to journalists and a possible springboard to future stories.
- Images – have a gallery of good high res images that can be accessed by the media to illustrate issues like drought, food security – this can be done using websites such as Ficker or ICARDA’s website.
- Ensure the website has a category for the media: news releases, expert guide (mentioned above), images (mentioned above) and *ICARDA in the News* section to show coverage.
- Develop list of targeted countries – invite international news team to a region or Aleppo, or a news agency for greater coverage.

Recommendation 6: Strengthen CODIS’ relationship with regional/outreach offices

Outreach offices “do their own thing” regarding publications, saying CODIS is too expensive and too slow to meet their publication needs.

It is recommended that CODIS recognise that it will be more cost effective and efficient for outreach offices to use local suppliers, and that CODIS provide outreach offices with:

- Design templates (for newsletters, fact sheets, etc)
- Corporate Identity, Branding and Style Guide
- Feedback on branding and corporate identity

Apart from working more closely with the regional/outreach offices on an operational level, there is a clear need for greater liaison and communication with these scientists to ensure they receive assistance with media opportunities, or when there is an opportunity to profile achievements internationally as major success stories for ICARDA.

Recommendation 7: Improve communication tools

Website and Intranet

The website and intranet are key communication tools which need to be improved – see Recommendations 11 and 12 under Information Management Recommendations

Email communication

Email is heavily used. To improve email efficiency, it is recommended that:

- The words “for action” or “for information” should be included at the beginning of the subject line
- A clear, brief ‘subject’ should be included in the subject line
- The content of the email should be comprehensive (i.e. should answer the who, what, when, where and why questions)
- Dot points should be used to help the reader skim the content
- All capitals should not be used

- Email is legally binding - never put in an email what you wouldn't want to see on the front page of a newspaper
- ICARDA may consider creating interest groups that people subscribe to, thereby ensuring they are receiving relevant communication (i.e. people interested in receiving news about upcoming seminars would join the 'seminars' group, etc.)
- Notifications about job vacancies needs to be better co-ordinated
- Run a workshop about email etiquette which reminds people not to needlessly send copies of emails they have received unless there is a specific reason. If emails are forwarded on, then the words, "for action" or "for information" should be included, as mentioned above.

Invest in updated software and equipment for CODIS staff

A range of updated software and equipment is needed for CODIS graphic designers, web developers, photographers, printers, distribution staff (contacts data base) and printery (printer, imager setter). A plan should be developed prioritising what is most urgently needed, budgeted for and purchased over a 2-3 year period.

Develop a policy that requires staff to use Microsoft Outlook Calendar to schedule all meetings held at ICARDA

Feedback from many members of staff included a mention of the need to improve scheduling of meetings. A new staff procedure requiring everyone to use Microsoft Outlook Calendar should be developed.

Recommendation 8: Invest in training

Train CODIS staff

The current structure of CODIS needs to be enhanced to create a strong foundation for its future development, with defined teams, generally well-defined roles and responsibilities, and greater interaction between strategy and issues staff. CODIS' position descriptions should specify the skills required to do a task and a skills audit should be undertaken to ensure that position holders have the skills to do the job. Where gaps are identified, training and mentoring should be provided to develop staff skills. E-training should be considered as well as in person training to maximise staff access to training opportunities.

Train staff in media skills

Scientists and executive staff would benefit from media skills training. This would increase understanding of how to work more effectively with the media and how to convey their message for lay people. Media skills training would help people identify story opportunities, communicate the value of media coverage to scientists (i.e. towards grant applications) and establish relationships between scientists and CODIS. Whether it is conducted in house or through an external consultancy, it would be extremely useful for CODIS staff to attend the training where possible.

Train staff in website and intranet best practice

It is recommended that staff involved in setting up and maintaining ICARDA's website and intranet receive training in website and intranet best practice. Many external organisations provide such training and one globally recognised for their work in this area is the Nielsen Norman Group (<http://www.nngroup.com/>).

RECOMMENDATIONS - INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

Recommendation 9: Develop and implement an Information Management Strategy

An Information Management Strategy is needed to help the organisation manage information from its creation or acquisition to its archiving or disposal. Effective information management ensures that relevant, accurate and timely information is available and reusable.

An Information Management Strategy must address how information is:

- Planned;
- Collected (collection, creation, receipt, capture);
- Organised (categorisation methods, data models, data standards, naming conventions);
- Used (search techniques, presentation, information dissemination);
- Maintained, protected and preserved (storage requirements, information preservation, access rights, audit trails);
- Disposed of (retention requirements, preservation, disposal);
- Evaluated (measuring impact via usage stats, user feedback).

The Information Management Strategy should be founded on principles such as:

- Information should be captured once and used many times thus reducing duplication of effort;
- Information should be described, registered and managed in accordance with agreed standards to facilitate easy access to information;
- Information should be accurate, kept up to date and periodically reviewed to ensure ongoing relevance.

ICARDA's Information Management Strategy should include information on how the website, the intranet, ICARDA's databases and their content will be managed. The Strategy should state the standards and processes for information collection, organisation, description, interface design, and information management, publishing and maintenance on the intranet and ICARDA's databases. Ideally it would require that a business case be provided for proposed database development (**see Recommendation 18**), and require all ICARDA material to be described by the library to ensure those standards are met (**see also Recommendation 11**).

Recommendation 10: Establish an Information Management Strategy Committee

Ideally an Information Management Strategy Committee (IMSC) would be established to ensure a whole of organisation approach to information management and facilitate a cooperative approach to decisions on standards, investment, security, infrastructure, intellectual property, and tools such as the internet and intranet.

Such a Committee would ideally include stakeholders such as CBSU, CODIS, a regional representative, a research program representative, and other executive stakeholders.

Recommendation 11: Rename and reposition the Library as the ICARDA Resource Centre

The Library is ideally placed to act as ICARDA's Resource Centre and support CODIS' role as information clearing house. ICARDA's library staff have the skills, knowledge and experience in collecting, categorising, describing, maintaining, archiving and sharing information in all of its formats, and is the only area within ICARDA that has these skills.

It is recommended that:

- The library be repositioned as the ICARDA Resources Centre;
- The Resource Centre be the physical information repository for all ICARDA material regardless of format i.e. multimedia, photos etc;

- The Resource Centre be the virtual information repository for all of ICARDA's internal and external publications and the custodians of the interface to that material;
- ICARDA's Information Management policy require all ICARDA material to be described by the library using globally recognised information description standards (such as those used by FAO).

Recommendation 12: Review, restructure, rationalise and redevelop the ICARDA website

Review, restructure, rationalise and redevelop the website and ensure that:

- No more than 6-8 major navigation headings are provided;
- There is clear, simple, consistent design and navigation;
- Content is written for the web – headings, dot points, white space, easy to scan;
- Content is correct, up-to-date, and authorised

For additional information on best practice in e-information see the Australian Government's series *Better Practice Checklists for e-information* (<http://www.finance.gov.au/e-government/better-practice-and-collaboration/better-practice-checklists/index.html>).

Recommendation 13: Review, restructure, rationalise and redevelop the current intranet

Review, restructure, rationalise and redevelop the intranet and ensure that:

- No more than 6-8 major navigation headings are provided;
- There is clear, simple, consistent design and navigation;
- Content is written for the intranet – headings, dot points, white space, easy to scan;
- Content is correct, up-to-date, and authorised.

Best practice¹ in intranet design indicates that:

- A usability evaluation study of the intranet should be conducted prior to changing the intranet to enable future benchmarking;
- The intranet should be structured in a user friendly way to help users find information quickly and easily;
- Forms should be located in one central area and cross linked with other related information. They should be searchable and browsable by topic or function;
- If multimedia is used it should be short (less than 3 minutes) and should display the date, length, a description, captioning (for accessibility compliance) and information about the presenter;
- The intranet should list all of the organisation's job vacancies (internal and external) and ideally allow intranet users to apply online;
- The intranet should list news on its homepage;
- An employee contact directory is usually the most popular feature of any intranet, thus should be comprehensive and kept up to date;
- An intranet search engine is critical;
- Intranet team members require a mix of skills such as IT, usability, design, writing, editing and management skills.

¹ Victoria Dept. of Human Services, 2008, *Intranet Information Architecture Best Practice Analysis*

Recommendation 14: Purchase a content management system to manage the ICARDA website and Intranet

A content management system (CMS) should be purchased to effectively and efficiently manage the website, the intranet and their work processes. The content management system purchased must address ICARDA's content, workflow, compliance, technical and support requirements, and facilitate a decentralized model of content creation.

Depending on ICARDA's budget, it is possible to purchase a single content management system that can serve the needs of both the website and the intranet (see Appendix G for an outline of CMS requirements).

Recommendation 15: Invest in a document management system

A document management system will help ICARDA manage its business and operating records effectively, and provide fast, easy access to these. It is recommended that CODIS establish a project to scope ICARDA's document management requirements from a business, functional and technical perspective, and investigate potential document management systems. The marketplace is seeing an increasing convergence between document management and records management systems. Hence any investigation into document management systems should also consider ICARDA's record management requirements. Records management tends to have more rigorous processes as an organisation's records are viewed as "*Information created, received and maintained as evidence and information by an organisation or person, in pursuance of legal obligations or in the transaction of business*" (ISO 15489-1, 2001)."

The recommendation to invest in a document management system also addresses that of the CCER on Information Technology and Systems, Information Services and Knowledge Management in ICARDA that ICARDA '*introduce a document management system*' (CCER Key Recommendation 16).

Recommendation 16: Establish a system of information custodians, web and intranet editors to manage content

Having a system of Information Custodians provides a mechanism of ensuring ownership of data in the revised ICARDA website and in the revised ICARDA intranet. Information Custodians would be responsible for the development and maintenance of information in their area of responsibility, its currency, accuracy and comprehensiveness and its compliance with corporate guidelines. Each information stream on the revised website and the revised intranet would have an Information Custodian and ultimate authority for web and intranet content would be vested in the Director General.

Recommendation 17: Develop corporate procedures and guidelines for website and intranet development

Developing corporate procedures and guidelines for website and intranet development is critical for providing information on the required standards for ICARDA's internal and external web publishing. Such guidelines would define:

- Standard features required of websites (e.g., FAQs, feedback and contact information);
- Hardware and software platforms supported;
- Browsers supported;
- Graphics standards;
- Metadata standards (e.g., FAO);
- Authentication standards;
- Navigation structure and features required (e.g., link to home page, forward, back buttons);
- Preferred typeface and font styles;

- Website and intranet management expectations (e.g. automatic link checking, accessibility conformance);
- Editorial conventions followed (in Australia the A.G.P.S. Style Manual for Authors, Editors and Printers and the Macquarie Dictionary are widely followed);
- Corporate policies on issues such as advertising, personal home pages and copyright.

Recommendation 18: Provide a business case for any future database development

Provide a business case for any future database development to ensure no duplication of effort and manage risk. Providing a business case for all future database development would ensure that a whole-of-organisation approach was taken to information resources. It would see no new software purchase or development without a business case that included data from CBSU on the most appropriate technical solution and how that data will be shared with other systems, and data from the Library/Resource Centre on the most appropriate descriptive standards to be used to optimise information accessibility.

Recommendation 19: Purchase an enterprise-wide search engine

An enterprise-wide search engine such as Google's is recommended for ICARDA as it will allow a user to search all of ICARDA's content sources even though they are located in different locations (such as on a corporate network, on a desktop, intranet or on the website) and present the search results as a single, integrated set of search results

Such a search engine would 'crawl' through ICARDA's diverse sources of content, create a master index of documents that can be retrieved when a user types in a search query. Search engines such as the Google Search Appliance can index millions of documents, and ensure that users can only access the information that they have permission to view.

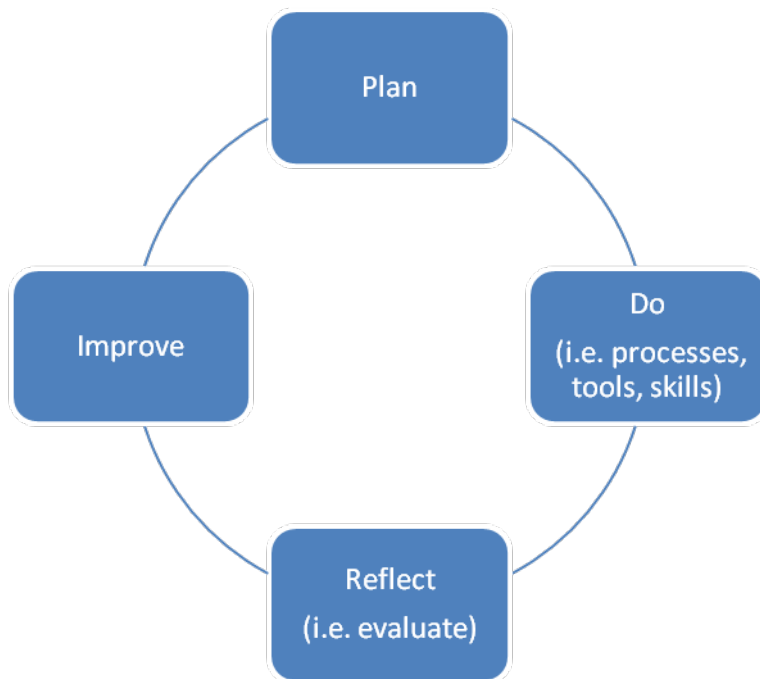
This recommendation also addresses that of the CCER's Information Technology and Systems, Information Services and Knowledge Management in ICARDA, that ICARDA '*improve the interface to and connections between existing information resources*' (CCER Key Recommendations 6 and 9).

6. The Way Forward

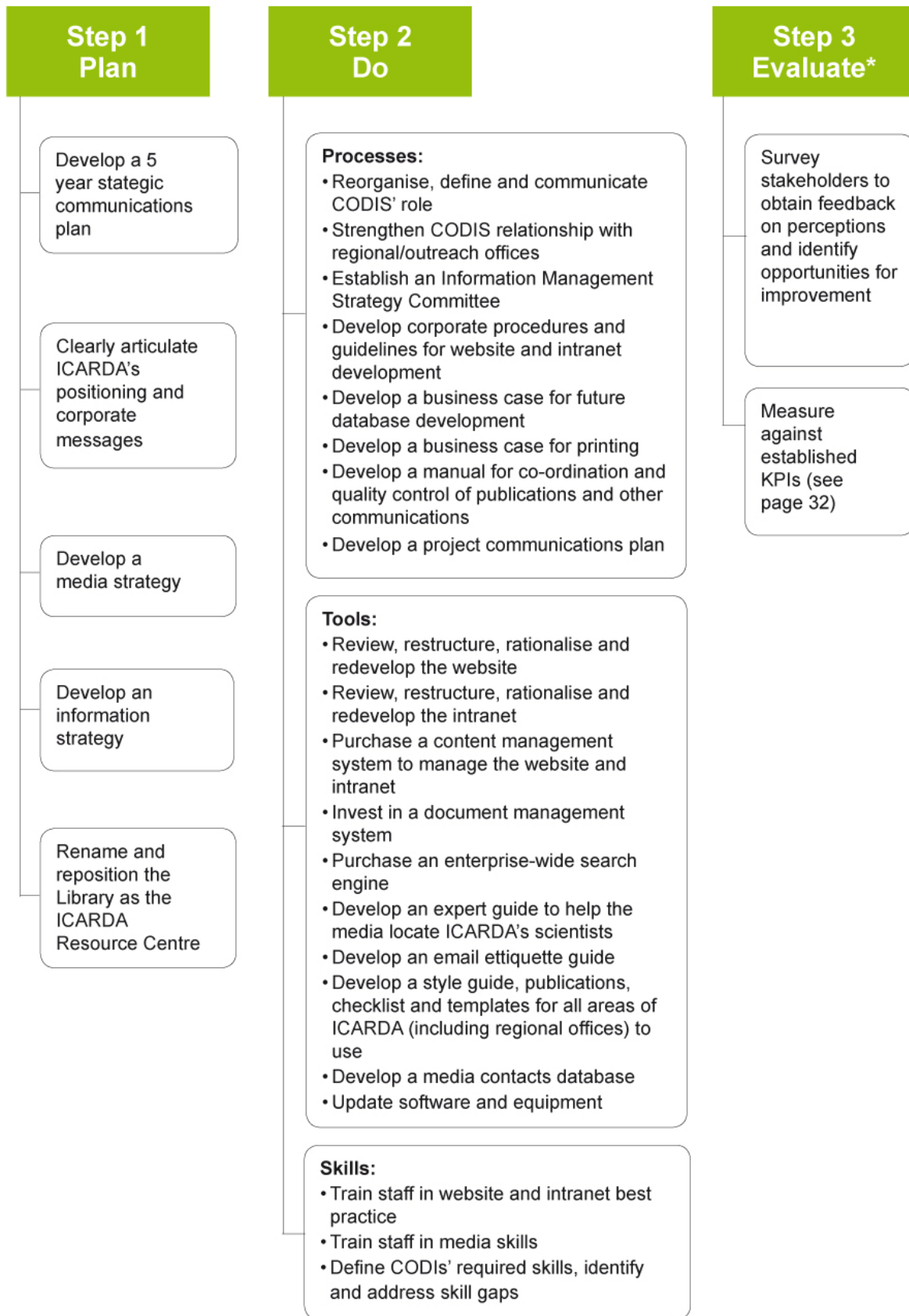
Improving communication and information management at ICARDA will be an ongoing, iterative process that involves:

1. Planning;
2. Implementing;
3. Evaluating;
4. Improving based on evaluation data.

This is outlined in the diagram below:



The diagram on the following page provides details on what is involved in each part of this improvement process.



*Evaluation should occur on an annual basis.

7. Appendices

Appendix A Terms of Reference

Purpose of the communication audit

1. Provide the basis for development of an external and internal communication strategy for ICARDA.
2. Identify key communication needs or gaps for ICARDA, particularly areas of high impact, and short and long term wins.
3. Provide an assessment of current external and internal communication practice and effectiveness for ICARDA and benchmark against best practice.
4. Provide benchmarking or baseline information for ongoing performance measurement.
5. Identify key risks to the organisation (in communication and information management) and areas of high impact.
6. Identify resources and facilities needed for implementation of effective communication and information management for ICARDA.
7. Provide a basis for review of capability and capacity and for mechanisms or systems for chargeback of services.

Key recommendations to be included

1. How should ICARDA position itself?
2. Who are ICARDA's key stakeholders, and what are their perceptions of ICARDA?
3. Who are ICARDA's key target audiences?
4. What are the top strategic priorities for CODIS?
5. What are the activities and functions (including staff and resources) needed to achieve this and what are the highest priorities among these?
6. What are the skills gaps and key capability and training needs for CODIS?
7. How should a monitoring and evaluation process be set up for these?
8. How should communication and information in outreach offices be linked with CODIS?

Task list

- Review ICARDA's communication practice and activities in the context of the ICARDA strategic plan and the Medium Term Plan.
- Review the organisational aspects of CODIS including staffing needs and skills, team structure and process effectiveness. (This should include responsiveness, cost, timeliness, and feedback from users.)
- Review and identify training and skills gaps and needs.
- Review communication practices and capabilities at ICARDA outreach offices.
- Audit ICARDA's information materials, with particular reference to the website, corporate publications
- Look at communication activities both within and outside of CODIS (eg in research areas and outreach offices)
 - Effectiveness of communication activities
 - Range of activities and gaps
 - Benchmark against best practice
 - Identify key areas of need
 - Particular reference to the website
- Review internal and external messages about ICARDA's goals and activities
- Review ICARDA's brand and reputation management and external perceptions of ICARDA
- Review ICARDA's design standards
- The review of communication and information management should cover all key areas of practice, including:
 - Brand and reputation management
 - Extension and outreach communication and communicating science
 - Online communication
 - Stakeholder communication and relationship management

- Marketing
- Publication production, marketing and distribution
- Enterprise-wide information management strategy
- Knowledge sharing and information systems
- Library and associated information systems including publications
- Project information systems
- Record keeping
- Business requirements and business process mapping around relevant information systems.

APPENDIX B

ICARDA documents consulted

CBSU, *ICARDA Databases and Systems 2006, 2008*

CBSU, *ICARDA Systems Model*, n.d.

CBSU, *Information Technology Facilities*, n.d.

CGIAR, *EMPR Report of the Fifth External Program and Management Review of ICARDA 2006*

CGIAR, *Consortium Shared Services: Preliminary Recommendations 2009*

ICARDA, *CCER For Management Including Finance and Corporate Services 2007*

ICARDA, *ICARDA's Response to the Recommendations of the CCER of Information Technology and Systems, Information Services and Knowledge Management in ICARDA*, n.d.

ICARDA, *ICARDA's Strategic Plan, 2007 – 2016*, n.d.

ICARDA, *ICARDA's Medium Term Plan – 2008-2010*, n.d.

ICARDA, *Research Information Sharing and Use Policy*, n.d.

LIMU, *List of Information Management Training Courses for NARS 2002-2008*

LIMU, *Concept Note: Regional Agricultural Information Network*, n.d.

LIMU, *Concept Note: ICARDA's Library and Information Services: Moving into Knowledge Spaces*, n.d.

Appendix C: ICARDA publications reviewed

Not all the publications surveyed were in the ICARDA Publications Database

External communications

Newsletters

Title	Comments	Dated/undated
<i>What's new at ICARDA</i> (fortnightly, in English and Arabic), eg July 2009, Issue no 22	Full branding not used on front page, conflict between issue number on actual publication and link from intranet, very text heavy, formal language used, not user friendly	publication dated

Media

Title	Comments	Dated/undated
<i>Ein Noah der Pflanzen – Geo</i> , 10/2006	effective	publicaton dated
<i>Seed Hunter - DVD, Film Victoria</i> , 2008	effective	dated
<i>Going against the Grain The Traveller</i> , June 2009	effective	dated

Books

Title	Comments	Dated/undated
<i>Adoption and Impact Assessment of Improved Technologies in Crop and Livestock Production Systems in the WANA region</i>	ICARDA branded on cover, key messages inside cover, detailed technical analysis, no overview in front	publication dated
<i>Adoption and Impacts of Improved Wheat Varieties in Turkey</i>	No full branding on cover, messages inside cover, good design, no overview in front	publication dated
<i>Characterization of Small Ruminant Breeds in West Asia and North Africa</i> , eg, volume 1	Branded in full on front cover, key messages on inside front cover, well laid out, densely written	publication dated
<i>Growing olives and other tree species in marginal dry environments</i>	ICARDA branded in full on cover, key messages inside front cover, good layout and images	publication dated
<i>Indigenous water harvesting systems in West Asia and North Africa</i>	Branded in full on cover, key messages inside front cover, fair layout, no references provided	publication dated

Corporate brochures

Title	Comments	Dated/undated
<i>This is ICARDA (2004)</i>	Contains key messages, needs design refresh, consider A4 layout	publication dated
<i>Biotechnology Laboratory</i>	Clear branding, dense text, no contact	no date of publication
<i>Hotspots of vulnerability to climate change</i>	Clearly branded, fair layout, clear, contact information provided, new template would help	no date of publication
<i>ICARDA's Research Stations</i>		consistent branding, poor layout
ICARDA's Tel Hadya Research Station	Consistent branding, poor layout	no date of publication

Fact sheets/flyers/short brochures

Title	Comments	Dated/undated
<i>Conservation agriculture brochures, eg Salt solution, Management of Disease and Insect Pests, etc</i>	Clear branding, fair layout, sometimes contact details given	no date of publication
<i>Developing research competence for food security in CAC</i>	CGIAR logo on front, ICARDA logo "buried", good mix of text/graphics – publication dated	
<i>Food security and climate change in dry areas: announcement of an international conference</i>	No corporate logo on front page, layout difficult to read, contact details provided	publication dated
<i>Horticulture research at ICARDA series</i>	Logo on cover, but name of ICARDA not used in full, cluttered layout	no date of publication
<i>ICARDA Impact Brief series, eg Fighting Poverty, impact of improved faba bean technologies in Africa</i>	Clear, consistent branding, name of ICARDA not written in full, layout could be improved, long sentences, lack of white space, require template for consistency	Publication dated
<i>ICARDA Policy Brief series eg Micro-Finance in the Dry Areas: a case study in Syria</i>	ICARDA logo, but not written in full, fair design and summary	no date of publication
<i>Turning Environmental Burdens into Economic Opportunities, ICARDA-IWMI Joint Program</i>	Co-branded, logo not in full on cover, no key messages, professional layout, contact details provided	publication dated

Reports, plans and longer publications

Title	Comments	Dated/undated
<i>Annual Report 2008</i>	Good information and good design; good human interest angle, appeals to stakeholders, improvement on 2007	publication dated
<i>Caravan series, annual eg Issue 25, December 2008</i>	Consistent branding, but name of ICARDA not written in full on cover, includes key messages, contents page not well laid out, diverse range of stories, readable content, easy to navigate, nice newsy feel, promotes other new publication	publication dated
<i>Healing Wounds: How the international research centres of the CGIAR help rebuild agriculture in countries affected by conflict and natural disasters</i>	CGIAR branded on cover, jointly published with ICARDA, ICARDA branding not clear, good design	publication dated
<i>Improving Livelihoods in DryAreas, Strategic Plan 2007-2016</i>		
<i>Medium Term Plan – 2008-2010</i>	Clearly branded, includes key messages	publication dated
<i>Spatial modeling of biophysical potential for supplemental irrigation: A case study in Syria</i>	Branded in full on front cover, key messages inside cover, good information and graphics, has DVD, an example of a publication not in database	publication dated
<i>Supplemental irrigation: A highly efficient water-use practice</i>	Well branded on cover, contains key messages	publication dated
<i>Water harvesting: indigenous knowledge for the future of the drier environments</i>	Logo on cover, contains key messages	publication dated

Series

Title	Comments	Dated/undated
<i>Research report series, On Farm Water Husbandry, eg Conjunctive use of rain and irrigation water from hill reservoirs for agriculture in Tunisia</i>	Not fully branded on front cover, messages inside front cover, dense layout, very basic but clear to read	publication dated
<i>Ties that Bind – long-standing series</i>	Consistent format, convenient format, consistently branded, needs design refresh, writing is dense	publication dated

<i>Water Benchmarks of CWANA project, eg Community-based management of scarce water resources</i>	Sub-brand representing various organisations, within which ICARDA is well-branded, good layout, has contact details	no date of publication
<i>Technical Bulletin series, eg Hygienic Milk Processing: clean environment, clean utensils</i>	Good branding, key messages on inside cover, well-targeted to audience, comes with multi-media support, contact details provided	publication dated

Miscellaneous

Title	Comments	Dated/undated
<i>Developing and Harmonising Biosafety. Regulations for Countries in West Africa and Asia</i>	Branded in full on front cover, key message internal front cover, clear layout	publication date
<i>ICARDA presentation folder</i>	Clearly branded on cover, contemporary look	no date of publication
<i>ICARDA Research Station map</i>	Contains logo	publication dated
<i>Small ruminant production: challenges and opportunities for poverty alleviation in West Asia and North Africa, report based on conference publication</i>	Branded in full, key messages on inside cover, basic design, unclear who audience is	publication dated
<i>Sustainable Management of Wastewater for Agriculture, proceedings of First Bridging Workshop</i>	Co-branded publication, well-branded, good layout, not in publications catalogue	publication dated
<i>Watershed Management in Dry Areas: Challenges and Opportunities, proceedings of Workshop</i>	Branded in full on cover, key messages on inside front cover, well laid out, use of colour to help you navigate	publication dated

Internal communications

Newsletter

Title	Comments	Dated/undated
<i>Inside ICARDA, eg September 2009, Issue 24</i>	More informal design, photographs very formal, interesting stories, has news, events visitors, includes latest acquisitions from Library, no consistency in fonts used for <i>What's News at ICARDA</i>	publication dated

Miscellaneous

Title	Comments	Dated/undated
<i>ICARDA Style Guide</i>	Logo on cover, poorly designed publication, no table of contents	Marked as Draft 2002
<i>Scientific writing and presentations</i>	Logo on cover, contains useful guidelines, basic design	no date of publication/version
<i>Publication request form</i>	Clear design, no instruction where it should be returned, no email address for communication	No date of publication/version

APPENDIX D ICARDA STAKEHOLDERS CONSULTED

EXECUTIVE STAFF INTERVIEWS

Dr Mahmoud Solh, Director General
Dr Maarten van Ginkel, Deputy Director General (Research)
Mr Koen Geerts, Assistant Director General (Corporate Services)
Dr Kamil Shideed, Assistant Director General (International Cooperation and Communication)
Dr Majd Jamal, Assistant Director General (Government Liaison)
Dr Elizabeth Bailey, Executive Assistant to the Director General and Secretary to the Board of Trustees
Mr. Bruce Martin Fraser, CFO
Mr. NP Rajasekharan HR Director

BOARD MEMBER INTERVIEWS

Dr Guido Gryseels Belgium - outgoing
Dr Henri Carsalade – France, board chair - incoming
Dr David Sammons, USA
Dr Mohammed Zenhi Libya

FUNDERS INTERVIEWS

ACIAR - Nick Austin
ACIAR – Simon Hearn

Canadian International Development Agency – Catherine Coleman (pending)

GTZ - Michael Bosch

IFAD - Mylene Kerrallah
IFAD - Taysir Al-Ghanen

USAID - Meredith Soule William Hammink, Deputy Assistant Administrator, EGAT

RESEARCH AND SUPPORT STAFF

Project Development and Grants Management Unit

Ms. Ilona Kononenko, Grants Management Officer, Acting Head

Biodiversity and Integrated Gene Management Program

Dr Stefania Grando, Barley Breeder
Dr Michael Baum, Biotechnologist

Genetic Resources Section

Dr Ahmed Amri, Head, Genetic Resources Section / Deputy Director of BIGMP
Dr Kenneth Street, Legume Germplasm Curator

Seed Unit Section

Dr Zewdie Bishaw, Head of Seed Unit Section

Integrated Water and Land Management Program

Dr Theib Oweis, Director

Diversification and Sustainable Intensification of Production Systems Program

Dr Barbara Rischkowsky, Senior Livestock Scientist (Small Ruminants Management), Acting Director
CRITICAL

Dr Colin Piggan, Project Leader, ACIAR/AusAID Iraq Project

Social, Economic and Policy Research Program

Dr Aden Aw-Hassan, Agricultural Economist, Acting Director

Geographic Information Systems Unit

Dr Eddy De Pauw, Head

Computer and Biometrics Services Unit

Dr Zaid Abdul-Hadi, Head

Joanna Arab, Programmer

Capacity Development Unit

Dr Mohammed El-Habib Ibrahim Hassan, Consultant

Station Operations

Mr Colin Norwood, Farm Manager

Communication, Documentation and Information Services Unit

Ms Liz Clarke, Head

Dr Nihad Maliha, Library and Information Services Manager

Dr Moyomola Bolarin, Multimedia/Training Material Specialist

Mr Nicolas Martin Pasiecznik, Science Writer

Mr Ajay Varadachary, Communication Specialist

Mr. Majdi Kebbe, Translator

Mr. Manaf Hamam, Electronic Publishing Associate

Mr. George Chouha, Book Designer

Mr. Zakaria Etek, Supervisor of Graphic Unit

Ms. Nazly Poshayan, Assistant Publication Designer

Ms. Ghenwa Sryio, Assistant Designer

Mr. Majed Khatib, Senior Photographer

Mr. Razek Makdis, Assistant Photo Laboratory

Mr. Hazem Fattal, Assistant-Publications Distribution

Mr. Jaffar Al-Jouma, Assistant

Mr. Haytham Selk, Associate I Printing

Mr. Bassam Abdel Raouf, Assistant-Printer

Mr. Abdul Mouti Anadani, Operator II Printing

Mr. Khoshaba Sibbo, Plate Maker

Mahmoud El-Hamdo, Printshop

Ms Siba Darouzi, Assistant-Librarian

Ms. Faten Khodershah, Documentalist

Ms. Suha Khairallah, Assistant-Librarian

Regional programs and Outreach staff

North Africa Regional Program

Regional Coordinator: Dr. Mohammed El Mourid

Nile Valley and Sub-Saharan Africa Regional Program

Regional Coordinator: Dr Fawzi Karajeh

West Asia Regional Program, Agrobiodiversity Project

Coordinator: Dr Nasri Haddad

South Asia Regional Program

Dr Ashutosh Sarker

Arabian Peninsula Regional Program

Regional Coordinator: Dr Ahmed Moustafa

Central Asia and Caucasus Regional Program

Acting Regional Coordinator: Dr Christopher Martius

Highland Regional Network

Regional Coordinator: Dr. Mohammed Roozitalab

Afghanistan

Dr Syed Javed Hasan Rizvi, Country Manager

Er. Abdul Rahman Manan, Advisor and Government Liaison Officer

Pakistan

Abdul Majid, Country Representative

Yemen

GRI and NVRSRP National Coordinator: Dr. Abdulla Sailan

NARS

Prof. Mohamed Badraoui (DG, INRA, Morocco);

Dr. Mohamed Abu-Zeid El-Nahrawy (Director Field Crops Research Institute (FCRI),
Egypt ARC);

Dr. Mahmud Duwayri (President of Ajloun University, Ex-Minister of Agriculture in Jordan).

Other stakeholders

Crawford Fund – Cathy Reade

Burness Communications – Ellen Wilson

APPENDIX E Sample interview guide

Background

A needs analysis and review is being undertaken to inform the development of ICARDA'S Communication and Information Management Plan 2010-2012. The analysis and review is being undertaken by Niche Consultants.

The review will involve:

- Review of existing materials and processes
- Interviews with stakeholders
- Development of a report on findings with recommendations for action

Interview process

Interviews will take no more than 40 minutes and will focus on:

- Perceptions of ICARDA and CODIS
- Perceptions of ICARDA's internal and external communication
- Communication needs
- Perceptions of ICARDA's information management
- Information management needs

Before we start, have you any questions or concerns about the proposed process?

- Can you tell me about your role at ICARDA?
- How would you describe ICARDA to someone who did not know it?
- What do you think ICARDA's strengths are?
- What do you think ICARDA's weaknesses are?
- What do you think funding bodies such as FAO or the World Bank expect of an organisation like ICARDA?
- Thinking about ICARDA's internal communications, what do you think is working well?
- What do you think is not working so well?
- Thinking about ICARDA's external communications, what do you think is working well?
- What do you think is not working so well?
- Thinking about information management, what is working well?
- What is not working so well?
- Thinking about CODIS, what do you expect from CODIS?
- Have you any other feedback or observation

APPENDIX F - Sample Corporate Style Guide

A sample Corporate Style Guide has been provided to CODIS. Its contents include:

1. Vision and positioning statement
2. Mission
3. Key messages
4. Branding and use of logo
5. The logo
6. Corporate colours
7. Fonts
8. Typography examples
9. Corporate stationery
10. Photography
11. Keeping things together – ensure consistency to protect the brand.

APPENDIX G – Publication management guide and manual of services – suggested outline

Contents

1. Messages
2. Audiences
3. Approval processes
4. Workflow map of how communications should be planned and managed
5. Corporate Identity Branding Guidelines (See Corporate Identity Guide for further detail)
6. Style Manual Guidelines (See Style Guide for further detail)
7. CODIS editing services
8. CODIS design services
9. CODIS website services
10. CODIS publishing services
11. Panel of Preferred Providers
 - a. General guidelines
 - b. Editors
 - c. Designers
 - d. Printers
12. Publication request form (link to website)
13. Templates for providing information for fact sheets (link to website)
14. CODIS charge-out rates
15. Printing Quality Control Checklist
16. Image quality checklist

APPENDIX H – Content Management System - general requirements

From a **content** perspective, it is critical that the CMS provide:

- User-friendly and time efficient creation, editing (including spell-checking), and linking of content
- Secure, distributed content creation and management by authorised users; authorised users are managed by role (e.g. departmental editor, information custodian, administrator).
- Import, management (including version control) and display of files in multiple formats (e.g. DOC, XLS, PDF), of images (e.g. JPEG, GIF and PNG), and of multimedia in file formats such as MPEG, FLV, MOV, and multimedia 'bundles' (e.g. files produced by Adobe Presenter).
- Creation and management of customisable forms.
- Creation, editing, management and maintenance of links
- The ability to search, preview and replace text across the site or sites managed by the CMS.
- Publishing of a single content item in multiple delivery environments (e.g. intranet and internet) with the option of different delivery requirements/templates
- The mapping and management of hierarchies and inter-relationships of information
- A number of predefined and/or customisable templates and stylesheets (including a print stylesheet) to control the visual presentation of content.
- Facilitate generation/review/approval of metadata at the same time as the content item, as part of the one process/workflow.
- Enable automatic updating of navigation structures (e.g. the site structure) as content items are updated.
- Automatically generate and update a site map for each website.
- Provide navigation menus that support multiple levels of navigation (e.g. pages and sub-pages)
- Support the measurement of the use/effectiveness of each keyword search query entered by a user in searching the website.

From a **workflow** perspective, it is critical that the CMS provides:

- The management of all aspects of the writing, editing, approval, publication and management of content
- Assignment of roles and activities within a workflow to authorised individuals
- Assignment of workflow to classes of content (e.g. images, multimedia)
- A workflow approval process that supports sequential approval steps
- The ability to assign varying status (e.g. draft, pending approval etc) to a content item during the authoring process
- Different work processes for different types and frequencies of content (e.g. news items)
- Notification/alert when data entered in a template is incomplete (e.g. form field incomplete)
- Notification to the relevant person when they need to perform a task

From a **compliance** perspective, it is critical that the CMS provide:

- Provide or support standards-based development (eg XML, CSS, DHTML, XSLT and other open standards).
- Support current industry standard web programming frameworks (e.g. J2EE or Microsoft .NET, PHP).
- Support standard messaging protocols (e.g. SMTP, MIME).
- Support data exchange involving open standards and protocols for web services. This includes WSDL, UDDI, SOAP and REST
- Interface with external directory services for security and authentication, using industry standard protocols

From a **technical** requirements perspective, it is critical that the CMS can:

- Provide cross-platform (Mac, Windows, Linux) multi-browser capability, specifically, support for Internet Explorer 6 and above; support for W3C browsers such as Firefox, Safari, Opera; and graceful fallback for older browsers.
- Support development, testing / staging and production environments, and control of content movement between each.
- Support minimal response times in saving data, page load time and any workflow action, ideally less than 10 seconds.

- Provide reporting tools that give information and statistics on website usage by clients.

From a **support** requirements perspective, it is critical that the CMS provide:

- Soft and/or hard copy user and technical documentation.
- Technical and specialist training for staff in areas such as site management, template creation, business rules and workflows.

APPENDIX I – 2009 Media Campaign Report

Activities by Burness Communications on Outreach Activities and Media Coverage of BGRI Aleppo Declaration

As part of this promotion, Burness engaged in the following activities on behalf of ICARDA:

- Drafted, edited, and finalized the press release in collaboration with the BGRI and ICARDA;
- Developed a media list of science/agriculture reporters worldwide and several foreign correspondents based in Damascus;
- Contacted media outlets in Syria, Europe, and the United States to encourage coverage of the Aleppo Declaration;
- Coordinated interviews for Dr. Solh;
- Tracked media coverage;
- Identified future opportunities for news coverage based on upcoming events; and
- Developed media coverage report.

A full list of coverage tracked to date and clips from the original stories follows.

Wires

Agence France-Presse—Arabic
Agence France-Presse—French
Agencia Lusa (Portugal)
United Press International

Print

Midi Libre (France)

Online Pick-up

Alarabonline.org
Aleqt.com
Diário de Notícias Online (Portugal)
Elaph Online
L'Economiste (Morocco)
Le Monde Online (France)
Le Quotidien les Marches Online (France)
L'Orient Le Jour Online (Lebanon)