

Communications Strategy
CGIAR Research Program on Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security (CCAFS)
PROPOSED STRATEGY for Phase II (2017-2022)

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Background

Strategic communications offers a set of powerful tools and approaches that can contribute to CCAFS outcomes and CGIAR's SRF, and generate positive change. The CCAFS communications strategy for Phase II builds on more than five years of successful communications in Phase I. In Phase II, communications activities continue to strongly align with the program's impact pathways, and employ a suite of well-established tools and approaches to deliver tailored messages to program partners and next users. A systematic effort to monitor and evaluate communications activities will continue, to ensure that Phase II communications benefits from previous successes and lessons learned, and continues to learn and adjust as the program evolves.

Overall program objective

The overall goal of CCAFS is to catalyse positive change towards climate-smart agriculture, food systems and landscapes, and thereby contribute to CGIAR's System Level Objectives (SLOs) on poverty alleviation, food and nutritional security, and natural resources.

Communications objectives

These overall objectives will guide all program communications, and are designed to be measurable, to facilitate monitoring and evaluation.

- Increase uptake of CCAFS outputs by next users and expedite impacts
- Promote CCAFS science and build awareness and understanding of current knowledge on climate change, agriculture and food security among key next user groups
- Inform global and national policies and initiatives on climate change, agriculture and food security
- Secure commitment of donors, investors and partners to delivering climate-smart agriculture (CSA) using CCAFS knowledge
- Strengthen relationships with strategic partners and funders
- Encourage learning and sharing of information to improve impact of communications and collaboration among CCAFS FPs, the program's researchers, the wider CGIAR community, and other program partners
- Contribute to closing gender gaps through gender-sensitive communication and strong communication about the program's gender and social inclusion activities
- Position CCAFS as a key player in global agriculture and climate change
- Demonstrate accountability by building awareness of the program's progress, results and successes, including achievement of the SRF 2022 targets
- Make all CCAFS knowledge available and accessible, in line with CGIAR frameworks on Open Access (see Annex 3.0.8 on Open Access Management) and Intellectual Assets (Annex 3.0.9 on Intellectual Asset Management)

Target audiences / Next users

CCAFS strategic communication targets an audience that can be referred to as next users, i.e. individuals or groups who access and use CCAFS knowledge products directly, who can create an environment that produces subsequent impact for the program's beneficiaries. This also includes decision makers who make necessary changes to achieve outcomes. Next users help to bring ideas

and tools to scale and into new arenas,¹ and are fully aligned with program partners (see Partnership Strategy for a complete list). This includes linkages with alliances and networks that can help achieve outcome targets. Where appropriate, some communications are targeted at end users, such as farmers.

- **Research partners:** Researchers from CGIAR Centres and other CRPs, and partner institutes, working within CCAFS or on CCAFS-related topics (e.g. CSIRO, Oxford, Colombia IRI, CIRAD, CORAF)
- **Public sector, inter-governmental and policy makers:** Global, regional, national and local policy makers and agencies working on climate change, agriculture and food security (e.g. FAO, IFAD, World Bank, governments of Cambodia, Colombia, Kenya, Nigeria, Uganda).
- **Non-governmental development organizations:** Including international organizations, NGOs and farmers' organizations that work on the ground to scale out climate-smart technologies in practices (e.g. CTA, CARE and PAFO).
- **Private sector:** Companies and advocacy associations that seek to implement and scale up initiatives that improve resilience and reduce climate impacts in agri-food supply chains (e.g. Agriculture Insurance Company of India, World Business Council on Sustainable Development).
- **Program donors and investors:** including current and potential funders, from multilateral and bilateral aid agencies and foundations. (e.g. DFID, EU, USAID).

In addition **press and media** are seen as an important intermediary that can help CCAFS knowledge reach many of the above target groups, at the national and international levels. Engagement with media is further outlined in the 'Main activities' section below.

Strategic approach

Communication for behavior change

CCAFS communications goes beyond information dissemination. Rather, the aim is that knowledge from CCAFS information can help shape attitudes, and thus contribute to the behavioural changes needed to deliver impact. Many intervening variables play a role in whether messages bring about intended behaviour changes, such as the level to which recipients recognize a problem situation, perceive constraints to behavioural change, as well as the extent to which they feel 'involved' personally in the issues and decision-making processes. An important component of this work is listening to and understanding the knowledge needs of next users in order to shape appropriate communications interventions. Phase II will build on lessons learned in Phase I regarding the best approaches for engaging with next users in different contexts. For example, in CCAFS target countries, face-to-face meetings and learning events have proven to be essential approaches to reach national level decision makers.

Key messages

Research results will be repackaged for different audiences, and key messages tailored for relevant target next user groups as a means to promote specific information products and inform actions that can lead to outcomes. This will be achieved through messages that address the intended changes in knowledge, skills, attitudes and practices that will help the next user deliver program outcomes. Key messages will be formulated jointly by communications specialists and scientists, in consultation with partners, to ensure they are relevant, appropriate, and compelling.

¹ Adapted from Jost C, Alvarez S and T Schuetz. 2014. CCAFS Theory of Change Facilitation Guide. Copenhagen, Denmark: CGIAR Research Program on Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security (CCAFS). <http://hdl.handle.net/10568/41674>

Delivering communications

Experience in Phase I showed the benefits of strong program-level communication, coupled with Flagship-level communication contextualized in the regions. Both program level and Flagship level communications will be organized under the LP on Partnerships. Together, CCAFS communicators will form a community of practice to share knowledge and approaches, plan and deliver joint activities, and monitor and evaluate said activities.

At the **program level**, communications will contribute to engagement with global climate partnerships and policy processes with a goal of scaling up Climate-Smart Agriculture. Program level communications will also focus on marketing, synthesis and dissemination of results, and facilitating learning, sharing, monitoring and evaluation of communications across the program. A small team at the Global Office on Partnerships for Scaling Up CSA will lead program communication, under the leadership of a Global Communications and Knowledge Manager.

At the **Flagship level**, communications activities will be primarily designed to contribute to delivery of outcomes through engagement with key stakeholders in sites, regions, at the national level, as well as in relevant communities of practice (for example related to low-emissions agriculture, or index-based insurance). A key outcome is scaling out climate-smart policies and approaches in CCAFS countries. Flagship level communications will be delivered through the Regional Program Offices, led by a regional communications specialist.

Communications in the CCAFS program is a shared responsibility among communication specialists, scientists and research partners working in the FPs, regions, and projects. This includes staff in all CGIAR Centres that participate in the program. Where possible, the program and FP teams will continue to work closely with partners to deliver joint communications and outreach activities where appropriate, in order to leverage networks, skills, and other expertise. Strong coordination with the lead Centre (CIAT) communications units, the CGIAR Consortium Office, other CRPs and CGIAR networks (e.g., gender network) will continue. Phase II will also see strengthened use of cross-CGIAR Centre tools and platforms such as CGspace, the [Thrive blog](#), and collaboration at strategic events.

Main activities

At the **program level**, the main activities to continue in Phase II include

- (1) Support **global policy engagement** through high-level outreach and dialogue, including policy briefings, major events with partners², learning events and webinars, discussion blogs and media engagement.
- (2) Make **CCAFS solutions and resources openly and prominently accessible** through online platforms and portals, including: [global website](#) and [blog](#);³ web portals such as [Big Facts](#)⁴ and the [CSA guide](#); open access publications repository ([CGSpace](#)⁵), social media channels⁶; e-bulletins and newsletters⁷; photo sharing via [Flickr](#)⁸; and presentation sharing via [slideshare](#)⁹

² Linked to global fora (e.g. UNFCCC, GFIA, GACSA meetings)

³ CCAFS website receives over 750,000 unique pageviews per year

⁴ The site receives 55,000 unique pageviews per year

⁵ More than half a million publications have been downloaded from the CCAFS CGSpace collection in CCAFS Phase I.

⁶ CCAFS Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Google+, Youtube channels collectively have over 50,000 followers and annually generate about 35,000 visits to the website.

⁷ CCAFS e-bulletins have 20,000 subscribers

⁸ CCAFS shares more than 7500 photos from research sites and activities, all licensed for public use under creative commons, increasing program visibility

⁹ CCAFS shares more than 700 presentations, viewed over 160,000 times per year.

- (3) **Demonstrate program results** through regular monitoring and evaluation of communications activities, development of outcome cases and annual reports, and media outreach
- (4) Ensure **consistent program visibility** and help key partners do the same, using the CCAFS branding toolkit
- (5) Facilitate **knowledge sharing and collaboration** within the program, with CGIAR Centres, and with external partners. Facilitate a network of communications specialists working in FPs and projects to ensure learning and sharing of best practices, strategic planning and collaboration; and effective use of CCAFS communications tools and processes. This will be supported through tools such as Sharepoint 365, video conferencing, webinars, and face-to-face workshops.
- (6) Contribute to **Flagship level** communications through joint initiatives and strategic advice, where an activity can contribute to global and Flagship outcomes. For example in 2015, a media field trip to CCAFS sites in Kaffrine Senegal helped share a successful climate services program via national and international media, in the lead up to the UN climate talks in Paris.

At the **Flagship level** the main activities to continue in Phase II include

- (1) Facilitate **engagement activities, dialogue, and outreach campaigns** tailored for stakeholders in regions, in collaboration with project partners. This can include organizing field visits to CSVs, to share climate-smart agriculture technologies and practices and participatory approaches in action;¹⁰ trainings for local journalists to effectively report on CCAFS issues; and partnering with TV or rural radio stations to disseminate knowledge to farmers
- (2) Produce **knowledge products relevant to next users**, including briefing notes, materials in local languages, training manuals, decision-making tools, and media materials
- (3) Support country **Site Integration** through sharing knowledge, tools and resources, and collaborative efforts with CGIAR Centres and partners working in sites.
- (4) **Contribute to program communications** through campaigns based on globally relevant messages and cases; and contribution to program-level visibility through outcome and donor reporting.
- (5) Support **learning and sharing** within CCAFS and with partners. Participate actively in the network of CCAFS communicators to ensure maximum impact through collaboration, knowledge sharing, and regular monitoring and evaluation of communications activities

Monitoring, evaluating and learning

Systematic MEL goes hand in hand with an impact pathways approach to planning communications. In Phase I, CCAFS communicators committed to undertake more systematic monitoring and evaluation of communications activities, to support internal learning, improve strategic communication, and contribute to overall program MEL. In Phase II, communicators will continue to produce regular reports back from campaigns and activities, to measure success based on quantitative and qualitative indicators determined during the planning phase. These shall be regularly shared with the wider CCAFS network, as well as with external groups (such as evaluators) where appropriate.

Budget

As communications is a shared responsibility by all program partners, budgets and staff time will be allocated from a variety of sources:

Program communication will be led by a Global Communications and Knowledge Manager based at the Global Office on Partnerships for Scaling Up CSA. To deliver the outlined activities, the annual

¹⁰ CCAFS has successful experience bringing farmers, scientists, government officials, business leaders and journalists to learn about CSVs. See for example Meadu V, Zougmore R, Touré SF. 2015. Climate Services in Senegal: Media training and field trip report. Copenhagen, Denmark: CGIAR Research Program on Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security (CCAFS). <http://hdl.handle.net/10568/72418>

budget for program communication will be funded through equal contributions from the management and governance allocation to CIAT and from each of the four FPs. This may be supplemented by an uplift budget from partners for specific activities, for example a big event with intergovernmental partners such as World Bank, IFAD, FAO and major Window 2 donors. This budget also covers salaries for staff in the Global Office on Partnerships for Scaling Up CSA to deliver on broader engagement and partnership activities, as outlined in other parts of the full proposal. As well, options will be considered to engage staff whose positions are externally supported, for example through international development volunteer programs.

At the **Flagship level**, Regional Program Leaders will engage a communications specialist to deliver activities in the region, and allocate funds for delivery of communications products and initiatives.

Ultimately, **collective action and collaboration** will be essential to deliver impactful communications in Phase II. Therefore, it is expected that CCAFS project leaders designate staff with responsibility for communications, and earmark funds for communications products and initiatives as part of their overall budgeting. Project funds may be allocated to a CGIAR Centre's central communications team, or a scientist working on the project can act as a designated focal point for communications. In all cases, it is expected that project staff collaborate with a communications specialist from CCAFS or from a Centre to deliver coordinated and strategic activities.