CARDI’s Experiences in addressing information needs for food and nutrition security in the Caribbean Agricultural and Rural Development Sector

Claudette de Freitas
Information Resources Manager
Presentation will include:

- CARDI’s Mandate, Food Security and Information and Communication
- Mechanisms, clients and programmes used in information & communications
- Challenges
- Lessons Learnt
- Some Recommendations
CARDI’s Mandate

- Provide for the Research and Development (R&D) needs of agriculture of the region
- Provide for coordination and integration of R&D efforts of Member states
- Provide and extend the application of new technologies in production, processing, storage, distribution of agricultural products
CARDI’s Mandate

- It addresses the improvement of production systems in support of FNS
- It is essentially an information institution
  - raw data and information are collected and analysed to identify and adapt technologies
  - new technologies validated, transformed into knowledge for improving agricultural products and transferred to producers
Information and Communications

- Research and development department
- CTA Regional Branch Office for the Caribbean
- PROCICARIBE - System for coordinating science and technology
- Caribbean Agricultural Development Service (CAIS)
I&C Mechanism
Research and Development

✦ Technical
  - Scientific Report and Technical publications (print, electronic)
  - Demonstration/training (on farm, demonstration station)
  - Conference presentation

✦ Corporate
  - Annual report
  - Press releases
  - CARDI Update
I&C Mechanism
CTA RBOC

CARDI is CTA’s Regional Branch Office of the Caribbean (RBOC)

- CARDI/CTA partnership - 1987
- Common goal of agricultural and rural development:
  - CARDI - Technology generation and transfer
  - CTA - improved access to information; building capacity in ICM
I&C Mechanisms
Role of RBOC

- Liaison with Caribbean clients
- Intelligence service to CTA
- Promotion of CTA services
- Support programme implementation and evaluation
I&C Mechanism
CAIS

- a mechanism to support development of the capacity of stakeholders in the agricultural sector to manage information and communications for sustainable development/competitiveness
I&C Mechanism
PROCICARIBE

- An integrated science and technology networking system in support the attainment of international competitiveness by agriculturally based industries
  - Thematic and commodity networks (market intelligence; fruits, small ruminants; root crops; integrated pest management; vegetables; information)
Client Groups

- Public sector
  - Policy makers
  - Researchers/Extension
- Private sector
  - Exporters; processors; distributors
- NGOs and Producer associations
  - Women
  - Youth
- Staff
Caribbean ACP Member States

- Antigua and Barbuda
- Barbados
- Belize
- The Bahamas
- Cuba*
- Dominica
- Dominican Republic
- Guyana
Caribbean ACP Member States

- Grenada
- Haiti
- Jamaica
- Montserrat
- St Vincent and the Grenadines
- St Kitts and Nevis
- St Lucia
- Trinidad and Tobago
- Suriname
Approach & Objectives

🤝 A two-pronged approach

- To build capacity to support improved information and communication management
- To provide access to selected information products and services
I&C Strategies

- Ongoing information needs assessment
- Facilitating increased collaboration and linkages between and among institutions and stakeholders at local, regional and international level
I&C Strategies cont’d

- Ongoing evaluation and revision of programmes
- Integration of information and communication programmes and projects with wider CARDI programme
- Improving in-house capacity in information and communications management
Programme areas

- **Capacity Building** - to improve capability to manage information and communication
- **Information Products & Services** - design and development of selected tools to provide access to information
- **Network development** – concerned with facilitating communication, exchange and management of knowledge and information to meet the goals of groups/institutions
- **Advocacy and Sensitisation** - promote information and communications for development to key stakeholders
Capacity Building

✿ Building capacity to manage information and communication and technology for development

- Technical assistance & situation analysis
- Identifying training gaps, needs and courses to fill gaps
- Project identification and resource mobilisation
- Developing strategies and systems for Information and communications management (ICM)
Selected Projects

✦ Training and sensitisation

✦ Management of Question and Answer Services
✦ Information and communications management and information and communications technologies (ICTs) sensitisation & strategies
✦ Web design & development
✦ Public awareness
✦ Network management
✦ Scientific data management
✦ Technical writing and editing
✦ Presentation skills
Information Products and Services

- Identifying mechanisms, products and services to collect and provide direct information to different users to:
  - fill information gaps identified
  - provide better access to available information
Selected Projects

- Question and Answer Service (QAS)
  Devolution - Information Services
- Preparation/identification of publications for packaging (print and electronic)
  - PROCICARIE News; CAIS News, Websites; CDROMs; photographs
  - Technical Publications - CDROM, print, video
Networking

- Support for establishment of working linkages between public sector, NGOs and private sector
- Develop and use networks to facilitate exchange of ideas and information
- Formation and moderation of electronic forums (E-groups/E Forums)
Selected Projects

- Caribbean Marketing and Intelligence Development (CAMID) Network
- CariPestNet- to facilitate pest identification
- Caribbean Network of Fisher Folk Associations
- Regional Agricultural Policy Network (RAPN)
- Caribbean Farmers and NGO Network (CaFANN)
Advocacy & Sensitisation

- Encouraging the integration of information and communication into existing programmes and projects
- Sensitising of policy makers, users, specialists, that
  - Information is a key resource
  - Need to create an enabling environment for ICM: policies, staff, systems, finance, communication
Major challenges

- Absence of strategic focus on information and communication in organisations
- Limited policy framework for ICM
- Lack of integrated approach to ICM
- Limited human & financial resources
- Hardware and software not always within direct access of technical staff
- Relatively high costs for using ICTs (Internet, skills, equipment purchase and maintenance)
Major Challenges

- Absence of counterpart staff in various organisations
- Culture of ‘information insensitivity’ and limited view of networking
- Very limited success with sustainable network development including E-forum
- A fascination with technology and hence a focus on technology as an end and not on its application as a tool/means to solve problems
Lessons learnt

- An information and communication strategy should be an essential part of any programme or project
- There should be ongoing needs analysis - explicit and implicit needs have to be taken into account
- Projects should include funds to source information and disseminate information
Lessons learnt

✎ Sustainable information systems require an enabling environment - institutional and national

✎ Multi stakeholder and multi-disciplinary approach is necessary

✎ Integrate ‘old’ and ‘new’ technology to reach all users (e.g. radio, TV, telephone, Internet, cellular)

✎ Biggest challenges in implementing information and communication projects is managing change, people and culture - not technology
Lessons Learnt

- Human resource development is necessary for practitioners and stakeholders
  - Education and literacy (basic literacy, information literacy, computer literacy)
  - Increase information & communication skills in the sector - train subject specialists
- Invest in hardware and software
Lessons Learnt

🔹 Advocacy and sensitisation

- Develop a culture of research, providing and using information for decision making
- Develop a culture of networking and collaboration between and among stakeholder groups; increase ‘information sensitivity’
- Recognition of the need to protect intellectual property rights for Caribbean materials
Ultimate outcome

- Empower the actors involved in implementing food and nutrition security plans to manage and use information to:
  - solve problems
  - achieve goals and objectives
THANK YOU