Agricultural Research Centre

Central Lab for Agricultural Expert Systems

Rural and Agricultural Development Communication Network

UTF/EGY/021/EGY

مركز البحوث الزراعية
المعمل المركزى للنظم الزراعية الخبيرة
شبكة اتصال التنمية الزراعية والريفية

Rural and Agricultural Development Communication Network project

UTF/EGY/021/EGY

End of mission report

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1. BACKGROUND

There is no meaning of having a powerful tool like Information and Communication Technology (ICT) without utilizing it in the appropriate way. One way to utilize ICT was Communication for Development. The term emphasis the planned use of communication techniques, activities and media to enable people to experience change and gain more power to guide decisions that affect their lives. An intensified exchange of ideas among all sectors of society can lead to the greater involvement of people in a common cause which is a fundamental requirement for appropriate and sustainable development.

Although ICT focuses on electronic means for communication, COM4DEV depends on all communication methods and participatory approach to sustain development in a community. In this sense, modern media and traditional media should be weaved in the context of participatory approach. Moreover, utilizing communication tools, including Internet, should follow the content demands raised in the community.

Building on the successful experience of VERCON to turn from an "Institution-based Information and Communication System" to be a "Community-based Information and Communication System" followed this base for expansion.

Hence, the Information and Communication for Rural Development Unit (ICRD) in AERDRI was formed to takeover the developmental activities in the field. The ICRD is responsible for building a multi disciplinary team of governmental and voluntary personnel, train them, and put them into action to develop the 50 poor villages targeted by the project. The ICT team and ICRD unit are working in a delicate harmony under RADCON project management.

RADCON goal is for farm families and their communities to benefit from an information system, which is operated by agricultural extension in collaboration with the national agricultural research system. In order to achieve this objective three specific objectives have been identified. These objectives were rephrased to reflect better the expected outputs.

1. A sustainable operational dynamic information and communication system is to be developed that responds to the stakeholders requirements including resource poor communities.
2. Fifty resource poor communities are to be identified and enabled to participate in the RADCON activities and benefit of its knowledge and information resources.
3. An innovative media communication program is developed to increase the benefit of RADCON.

The project is led by the Central Laboratory of Agricultural Expert Systems (CLAES), in collaboration with the Agricultural Extension and Rural Development Research Institute (AERDRI) to integrate the ICT and ICD approaches. In the project coordination meeting held on 16/2/2006 to speed up the development of the tasks related to the participatory communication for rural development; establishment of a special unit under AERDRI was suggested to take over the field work of Information and Communication for Rural Development.

The main objective to establish the Unit as recommended in meeting is to assign a core team of information and communication for development specialists and trainers to carry out and coordinate project participatory communication activities at central and governorate level. The Unit would complement CLAES Team, which is in charge of developing the RADCON system, its modules and related training on system use and

maintenance, and act as an outreach organ to enhance involvement and benefits of rural communities and engagement of all stakeholders. The consultant was nominated to be the head of the ICRD Unit in AERDRI. Nomination with a summarized proposal was endorsed to the Steering Committee.

2. THE MISSION

In June 4, 2006, the consultant was contracted by FAO for a total of 6 months during the period of one year on a WAE basis. He was to work under the general supervision of the FAO Representative for Egypt and under the technical direction of Senior Officer of the FAO technical unit (SDRE) and RNE technical backstopping officers. In close collaboration with the International Consultant and the Project National Coordinator, national consultants, project staff and relevant officials of the Ministry of Agriculture and Land Reclamation and other agencies. The following responsibilities were assigned to the consultant:

2.1 ICD Unit

1. Organize and put into action a special core team that will deal with activities and actions related to participatory communication for development under the framework of the FAO-RADCON project. The special team must be settled at central level as well as at field level.
2. Determine the overall development objective, specific objectives and strategies to be followed during FAO-RADCON project duration and the strategies that will lead the special core team after FAO-RADCON project termination.
3. Define the goals and achievements to be reached according to implementation phases and at the end of FAO-RADCON project.
4. Plan the major activities to be developed during FAO-RADCON project period regarding the core team function and responsibilities, including field based personnel's main training events. Finalize and get the agreement and approval of the institutional framework already devised.
5. prepare the budget required to start the special core team activities with emphasis on training courses and workshops and resources necessary to implement and sustain the field level action.
6. Overall management of the ICRD-Unit and the ICD-groups. Includes activities ranging from selection of staff up to the final report after FAO-RADCON termination.
7. Monitor, follow up and evaluate the pace and achievements of the RADCON Unit for Participatory Communication. Make necessary arrangements, changes and coordination in order to accomplish the team objectives.

2.2 Participatory Rural Communication Appraisal (PRCA)

In collaboration with the ICD groups and national consultants, the incumbent will:

8. Lead the preparation and development of a participatory communication assessment, incorporating participatory and bottom-up approaches in the study framework to be use used especially but not exclusively, for working with men and women in rural communities.

9. Prepare a report of the findings and conclusion and make recommendations to RADCON system to improve the quality of the services provided.
10. Document local rural indigenous knowledge and experiences to be processed and fed into the computerised system.
11. Participate and assist in the various training activities of the project. prepare materials for training male and female researches and extension workers.
12. Compile and review gender sensitive information sources and content (including indigenous knowledge) together with the staff of various institutions to be added to the RADCON system.
13. Collaborate in the design of the overall structure of the RADCON communication system in collaboration with the International Consultant.
14. Conduct monitoring and evaluation activities to assess the use and relevance of the RADCON system and identify areas of demand.
15. Evaluate and provided feedback on content development for the RADCON system.
16. Present progress and technical reports as required.

3. THE PROJECT SITUATION

The consultant was a part of RADCON team when the project started. He prepared the stakeholder analysis study for the project, which identified the network sub-systems, potential stakeholders, and draw a broad framework for field implementation. Premises of the mission were:

- An information needs assessment study report was available where the main features of the rural people's needs were identified.
- A needs analysis study was available including a suggested design for the network systems, stakeholders and information flow.
- Recommendation of the workshop on "Potential Development of RADCON Systems/Modules and Management - February 13, 2006".
- The report and recommendations of the first mission of Alberto R. Troilo, the international consultant of Information and Communication Systems for Rural Development.

4. ICD UNIT ACTIVITIES

4.1 Management of the unit

Based on the international consultant's suggestion, terms of reference for establishment of the unit were developed. A work plan was also developed for the expected activities (annex 1). The work plan was re-adjusted later to cope with the pace of the project

4.2 Human resource

4.2.1 Selection of ICD core Unit

According to the recommendation of the project coordination meeting held on 16/2/2006 in FAO; it was agreed that two full-time staff members would be designated to assist the Head of the Unit. In collaboration with the consultant, Dr. Shoukry M. Badran was

recruited by FAO as a National Consultant, Participatory Rural Communication Appraisal (PRCA) for 6 months. Dr. Zainab Ali was also contracted for 2 months to work as a National Consultant, Communication strategy and outreach. The two consultants were working for AERDRI and during their mission worked in close collaboration of the consultant. The National Consultant, Communication strategy and outreach was re-contracted for 4.5 months.

4.2.2 Selection of ICD sub-groups

Governorate staff was selected from the 7 governorate covered by the project. Three members were selected from each governorate as follows:

- A researcher from related research station in the governorate. The researcher is the head of AERDRI branch in the station. He should also be one of VERCON team, acquainted with computer and Internet, and have a computer and Internet facilities in the branch. All governorate researchers met these criteria except Behira governorate as Etai El-Baroud research station was not a part of VERCON. The governorate was served by El-Sabhia research station in Alexandria. The head of AERDRI branch in Etai El-Baroud research station was selected, attended the basic training in CLAES, and his site was supported by a computer.
- A representative from the agricultural directorate. The head of extension centres department in the seven governorate was selected. He is also a member of VERCON team and is familiar with all its sites in the governorate.
- The researcher and directorate members were selected by their position to have the authority to lead RADCON communication facilitators and their work in the village. This also guarantees the support of their superiors.
- A director of an extension Centre. The most active director of the governorate extension centres working for VERCON was selected. He also should be working close to the RADCON villages to be able to supervise communication facilitator's work. All governorates had this member except Daquahlia which was not a part of VERCON at that time.
- Representative from partner stakeholders. A representative from related stakeholders were nominated by his organization to participate in RADCON. These stakeholders showed their willingness to cooperate during the initial workshop of RADCON held in February 13, 2006. Stakeholders were:
  - Policy and Coordination Unit for Women in Agriculture (PCUWA)
  - Development Support Communication Centre (DSCC) in Daquahlia.

- Soil, Water and Environment Research Institute (SWERI), ARC.
- Central Administration for Agricultural Extension Services (CAAES).
- Agricultural Extension and Rural Development Research Institute.

Table 1: Details of staff affiliation of the ICD unit

ICD group in the governorate	RS	AD	EC	DSCC	AERDRI	CAAES	PCUWA	SWERI	Total
Central level	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	3
Kafr Al-Shiekh	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	3
Assuit	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	3
Noubaria	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	3
Fayoum	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	3
Ismailia	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	3
Beheira	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	3
Dakahlia	1	1	-	1	1	-	-	-	4
Total	7	7	6	1	1	1	1	1	25

RS Research Station
AD Agricultural Directorate
EC Extension Centers
DSCC Development Support Communication Centre, Dekerness
CAAES Central Administration for Agricultural Extension Services
PCUWA Policy and Coordination Unit for Women in Agriculture
SWERI Soil, Water and Environment Research Institute

4.2.3 Selection of villages and RADCON sites

The initial study to identify the 50 poor villages was based on some statistical criteria. The study ranked the 177 villages covered by VERCON (at that time) according to its relative poor. Selection needed to be re-adjusted according to the real situation in the field to suit RADCON activities. Selection committee for each governorate was formulated to include the consultant, PRCA consultant, the governorate group and one or more of the formal leaders in the concerned village (the mayor, political party member, coop or extension centre director…etc.). The selection took place in the village and was also coordinated by the under secretary of agriculture and the director of extension department in the governorate. Criteria for confirming the selected village or re-select new one were as follows:

- Existence of a popular local organization that deals with rural families within the village residence area.
- Selected place should be secured and have a stable electric current and telephone facilities
- Willingness of the selected organization to work as a RADCON site and work from 5:00 to 8:00 PM, for 5 days a week.
- Availability of a suitable place in the organization that can be prepared to host rural people's visits and conduct meetings.
- Commitment to assign a young man and a young woman to work as a communication facilitator in RADCON

In case of missing one or more of the above criteria in a certain village, it was replaced by the next poor village in the ranked villages identified by the study. Accordingly, 10 villages were replaced; 2 in Assuit, 3 in Behira, and 5 in Kafr El-Shiekh. RADCON sites were selected considering variation in serving organizations. Of the 50 sites selected; 56% were coops, 20% were youth clubs, 10% extension centres, 6% women associations, 6% local community development association and 2% veterinary unit.

Table 2: RADCON sites

	Agric. coops	Extension Centres	Youth clubs	Women society	Vet. unit	Local community association	Total sites
Assuit	10	١	2			1	14
Kafr El-Shiekh	٧	2	4		1		14
Behira	7	2					9
Nobaria				3		1	4
Ismaillia			3				3
Fayoum	3	1					4
Daquahlia	2						2
Total	**28**	**5**	**10**	**3**	**1**	**3**	**50**

3.5 Selection of communication facilitators at the village level

Communication facilitators were identified by the same field committee according to a pre-determined criteria. The candidate should:

- Live in the same village.
- Have a general or technical secondary level of education or higher.
- Active and enjoy an overt, sociable, and popular character as well as suitable appearance.
- Willing to be trained and join RADCON on voluntary bases at the mentioned hours.
- Have the support of the site's director.

During the selection process, the steering committee agreed upon nominating 3 candidates in the village as a communication facilitators. This design was applicable for Behira, Fayoum and Daquahlia. Total number of facilitators amounted to 115 (57 male and 58 female) illustrated in details in table 3.

Table 3: RADCON village staff/communication facilitators

Governorate	Male	Female	Total
Kafr Al-Shiekh	**14**	**14**	**28**
Assuit	**14**	**14**	**28**
Beheira	**15**	**12**	**27**
Noubaria	**4**	**4**	**8**
Fayoum	**4**	**8**	**12**
Ismailia	**3**	**3**	**6**
Dakahlia	**3**	**3**	**6**
Total	**57**	**58**	**115**

4.3 Unit Organisation

4.3.1 Organisational structure

A hierarchy structure for the unit and its relation to RADCON management was developed by the consultant to regulate the field work in the project villages. The structure is shown in the annex 2.

4.3.2 Roles and responsibilities of ICD core unit

Roles and responsibilities of the ICD director and other consultants were developed by FAO as terms of reference for recruitment. The TOR of the consultant as a director of the unit was mentioned earlier in this report (item 2), while other consultants' TORs are in annex 3 and 4. The TOR for re-contracting the outreach consultant was developed in coordination with the consultant and attached under annex 4.

4.3.3 Roles and responsibilities of ICD groups on the governorate level

In coordination with the PRCA consultant; the consultant assigned the following roles and responsibilities to the ICD sub-groups:

- Participate in preparing, implementation and evaluation of mass media programme
- Participate in determining useful information and experiences to target audience
- Supervise preparing and documenting endogenous knowledge from the local community
- Prepare, conduct and evaluate training activities for communication facilitators in their area as trainers.
- Conduct monthly monitoring meetings to follow up communication activities, and participate in staff evaluation and RADCON content evaluation
- Attend the central monthly monitoring meetings to follow up communication activities, staff evaluation and RADCON content evaluation
- Support and encourage women facilitators to document success stories on RADCON and train village women on related activities
- Hold a monthly performance appraisal meeting to follow up their activities and refresh their capabilities
- Report implemented activities monthly and review online evaluation reports of related villages.

4.3.4 Roles and responsibilities of communication facilitators at the village level

In coordination with the PRCA consultant; the consultant assigned the following roles and responsibilities to the communication facilitators at the village level:

- Create public awareness in the village community about RADCON and its services through public meetings, face-to-face, printed materials, posters and announcement boards.
- Help rural people, farmers, youth, and women to access RADCON and fulfill their information needs in RADCON sites in the village.
- Use participatory communication to identify information needs of target groups, to avail related information on RADCON and in the village, and support group

implementation. Personal, group and mass communication methods are to be used through this approach.

- Prepare a monthly work plan for to implement and evaluate communication activities.
- Attend the governorate monthly monitoring meetings to follow up communication activities and RADCON content evaluation
- Prepare and implement activities of relevance to rural women in the village using RADCON information.
- Identify ideas, suggestions, experiences and endogenous knowledge and upload it in its related sites of RADCON.
- Report implemented activities and fill online evaluation reports weekly or as required.

4.4 Facilities and location

The unit is located within the premises of AERDRI. The space is suitable for the core unit work, yet all meetings with other unit staff are held in CLAES. The unit is equipped with a telephone line with a long distance facility, 3 computers connected to the LAN of ARC, 2 printers, and a video camera. CLAES director agreed to provide a car whenever needed for field work. A data show set and 2 digital cameras are being delivered now from CAES to the unit. All procedures were done under the direct supervision of the consultant.

4.5 Training

4.5.1 Training strategy

The training strategy is based on decentralizing the training process. The ICD sup-groups are being trained at the central level on participatory communication, and are being prepared to be trainers. Communication facilitators are being trained in site by related ICD sub-group. Along with the criteria to select the ICD sub-groups from among VERCON staff, the training strategy help sustaining the number of qualified field staff and minimizing training costs especially when one or more persons leave RADCON, or in case of expanding activities to other villages in the governorate. Availability of printed material, edited books, and e-learning material (in progress) are another strong foundation to support this strategy. On the long run, performance appraisal meeting that should be held regularly every month is designed to raise the quality of performance of ICD personnel. This meeting objectives are to follow-up the participants' performance, share successful experience, solve performance problems together in an educational environment, fill performance gaps, and discuss and adopt valid suggestions.

4.5.2 Training courses

Based on the suggestions of the international consultant, the consultant developed a training programme consists of 4 training cycles. The training plan was cleared by the FAO backstopping officer and the needed budget was released. The consultant was fully in charge of planning, conducting, evaluating the training programme as well as all related financial and administrative aspects. Due to some administrative procedures, the time frame was re-adjusted to cope with budget instalments release. Three training cycles

are already implemented, while the fourth cycle will begin on 15/7/2007. Each trainer of the ICD group was trained for 125 training hours totaling 3125 training hours. Communication facilitator had 75 training hour per trainees, amounting to 8625 hours. Three training reports including subjects, dates, trainers, trainees, and evaluation were submitted to FAO each after the course concludes. The training conducted in brief is as follows:

4.5.2.1 First training cycle

- ICD subgroups were trained as trainers in course 1A entitled "Participatory Communication and Content Management and Development". The course was conducted for 10 days from 30/7 to 10/8/2006 in CLAES. 25 trainees representing the ICD subgroups and some stakeholders' representatives attended the training. Master trainers were university professors from Cairo, El-Azhar and Alexandra universities, while chief researchers were the director, deputy director of AERDRI, and PCUWA director.
- Communication facilitators training was implemented in seven training courses entitled "Participatory approach" in the seven governorates of the project. Training endured for 5 days from 20/8 to 24/8/2006 in Assuit, Fayoum and Behira, and from 27/8 to 31/8/2006 in Kafr E-shiekh, Ismaillia, Nobaria and Daquahlia. 115 participants representing the 50 villages of the project attended training.
- An Assessment Workshop on ICD Unit field tasks and training in CLAES followed the training. The workshop was implemented in 2 days 5-6/9/2006 and was attended by 55 participants representing: the ICD core unit members, the international consultant, 7 ICD subgroup members in the project governorates, 10 master trainers of the ICD TOT course, 5 RADCON system developers, 1 Executive committee member, 1 FAO/RNE backstopping officer, and 4 main stakeholder representatives.

4.5.2.2 Second training cycle

- Training of trainers course on "Participatory Rural Communication Appraisal" was conducted for 9 days from 14/1/2007 to 24/1/2007 in CLAES. 25 trainees representing the ICD subgroups and some stakeholders and the PRCA consultant attended the training. This course was planned to be conducted in 10 days, but it was shortened to 9 days and one day works shop after the suggestions of participants in the previous workshop. The adjustment was discussed with the international expert and the concerned backstopping officer and was cleared before implementation.
- Training of communication facilitators on "Analysis of rural people's information needs and solving their problems" was conducted in seven training courses in parallel from 4/2/2007 to 8/2/2007 in Assuit, Fayoum Behira, Kafr El-Shiekh, Ismaillia, Nobaria and Daquahlia. The 115 participants representing the communication facilitators in the 50 villages of the project attended training.
- The Assessment Workshop on ICD Unit field tasks and training was held on 12/2/2007 in CLAES and attended by 33 participants representing: 3 ICD core

unit members, 25 ICD subgroup members in the project governorates, and 5 Trainers of the ICD TOT course.

4.5.2.3 Third training cycle

- Training of trainers course on "Information and Communication Plans" was conducted in five days from 25/3/2007 to 29/3/2007 in CLAES and attended by 25 participants.
- Seven training courses for communication facilitators on "Teaching-learning strategies" were conducted in parallel from 4/4/2007 to 12/4/2007 in Assuit, Fayoum Behira, Kafr El-Shiekh, Ismaillia, Nobaria and Daquahlia. The training was spread over 2 weeks due to the Easter holidays.

4.5.3 Training content

The consultant supported master trainers with references and background for their content, and wrote some of the material for TOT courses. The content of the communication facilitators was written by the consultant and sometimes with the help of other ICD consultants. This material is mostly depended on the TOT material, yet in more simple language and practical sense to suit their level and nature of work. Handouts were delivered to the ICD group to be distributed to trainees before training.

For easy referencing, sustain the training results and facilitate personnel replacements in case of dropout; the training material of each course was delivered to trainees as handouts. The same material was planned to be educationally processed for consistency, simplification, integration, and supported by learning objectives and self assessment questions and be valid for self learning. The handouts are sent regularly to a specialised professor in Cairo university for processing and compiling into a book for each training course.

The same books are planned to be processed again in shape of e-learning material. This process will start right after educational processing. Both material will be produced it printed and digital formats and be distributed to the ICD groups and communication facilitators. The operation is totally under the direct supervision of the consultant.

4.5.4 Monitoring and evaluation of training activities

The consultant and other ICD consultants attended the training sessions of the TOT. This helped in sharing knowledge, monitoring and put the training on track. Two end-of-course formats were used to evaluate training (facilities and environment) and learning (knowledge test). Results and recommendations were mentioned in brief in the training report mentioned earlier.

Field visits were paid to the seven governorates to monitor the training of communication facilitators. The visits were paid mostly by the consultant and PRCA consultant. Outreach consultant shared these visits sometimes and so did the international consultant during his second mission with the backstopping officer. Two end-of-course formats were used to evaluate training and learning. Results and recommendations were mentioned in brief in the same training report.

All in all, evaluation results were satisfying and showed steady improvement in training process and knowledge gain.

5. PRCA ACTIVITIES

5.1 The communication plan

5.1.1 Description

In collaboration with PRCA consultant, a plan to apply participatory communication approach in RADCON village was prepared, submitted to FAO and was approved as well. The contract with AERDRI is sent for signature in the second week of July. The duration of the LAO is eight months. One month is designated for awareness activities about RADCON, its site in the village, services, facilitators and working time. The following tree months are to test the system, performance, communication model and ends up with evaluation study. The last phase is for smooth implementation that ends up with an impact study. The plan is based on the IMI model integrated with mass media intervention and Participatory Rural Communication Appraisal (PRCA) in the village, and supported by a build-in monitoring system. The communication plan was developed to regulate the communication structure, communication methods, information flow and system's updating and sustainability. The plan defines: Objectives, Inputs, RADCON general communication model, Roles and responsibilities of the ICD staff, Information sources, Communication methods, Content, Implementation mechanisms, Training, Budget, Monitoring and evaluation, and The experimental model.

5.1.2 Objectives

The main goal of this plan is to support communication and RADCON information flow with individual and group communication methods that are used by the communication facilitator in the village in response to the rural community information needs.
Specific objectives are:

- Avail rural development information of RADCON to farm families through individual and group communication
- Identify rural audience's needs, ideas and best practices and upload it to RADCON
- Coordinate and integrate village participatory communication efforts with mass media activities
- Enhance group and public action in the rural community

5.1.3 Personnel

- ICD core unit
- ICD groups in the project governorates
- Communication facilitators in the project villages
- Media group

5.1.4 Training

The plan is supported with two training components, one for communication and the other for media. The communication training for ICD groups and communication facilitators will be conducted in the test phase and implementation phase. Media training is for the media group and will be conducted in the test phase.

5.1.5 Communication methods

- RADCON network

- Personal communication
- Group meetings:
    - Awareness and discussion meetings
    - Action orientation meetings
    - Action meeting
    - Media display and discussion meeting
- Public meetings
- Extension equipped vehicles
- Printed materials
- Mass media
- Announcement boards

5.1.6 Workflow

Communication intervention in the village starts with a public meeting to introduce RADCON as a concept and as a service to targeted rural communities. Information flow through RADCON is in annex 5.

5.1.6.1 Daily and weekly activities:

- The communication point in the village will be open to receive rural individuals 5 days a week, from 5:00 to 8:00 PM, except in meeting days.
- Two meetings weekly will be organized in or out the communication point:
    - The first meeting each week will target presenting the newly uploaded information, or discussing a high priority topic with concerned category interchangeably. An official or and expert might be present for formal or technical support.
    - The second meeting in the week will be held to display (from a CD) and/or discuss a mass media topic, or to orient or take group/public action interchangeably. An official or and expert might be present for formal or technical support.
- ICD group in all governorate weekly will report their achievements, information needs, suggestions, and the results of media activities evaluation.
- The ICD core unit will analyze information needs and submit the results to the concerned stakeholder, system developer, or the media group. They will also write a bi-weekly newsletter based on these needs, updates and potential activities of RADCON.

5.1.6.2 Monthly activities:

- Performance appraisal of communication facilitators well be held at the governorate level. All village staff under the supervision of the governorate ICD GROUP will attend the meeting. In addition to follow up the regular activities, participants will develop the framework of the action plan of next month.
- Performance appraisal of ICD groups well be held in CLAES. Participants will be ICD groups, system developers, and representatives of stakeholder organizations.

5.1.6.3 Quarterly activities:

- Develop the mass media plan by the media group, ICD core unit, and ICD group in related governorates, as well as representatives of the media.
- Develop the visits schedule of the extension-equipped vehicle.
- Implementing media plan under the direct supervision of the media sub-group. This will include production revision, reproduction of CDs, and broadcasting.
- Printed materials will be produced according to the recommendations of the media group and approval of the executive committee.
- Media activities reporting

Performance appraisal: enhancing performance of RADCON staff will be done through assessing their tasks, monitoring reports and audience responses. These monthly meetings serve two purposes training and monitoring. Seven monthly meetings for communication facilitators will be held in the governorates followed by a meeting for the ICD groups that will be conducted at the central level.

5.1.7 Monitoring and evaluation

5.1.7.1 Formative evaluation

The communication plan has a build-in mechanism for formative evaluation that depends mainly on the performance appraisal. In parallel, communication facilitators should write weekly reports in related RADCON system. The ICD groups in the governorates would also write monthly reports to document the governorate activities, barriers, and suggestions. The core unit will also report the network activities to the executive committee monthly. The consultant is also responsible for presenting a collective report to the steering committee as a member.

5.1.7.2 Summative evaluation

Two main studies are planned in the communication plan.

- The first study would be conducted at the end of the test phase. A study framework was prepared in collaboration with the PRCA consultant. The study aims to assess the participatory communication approaches used in the communication plan of RADCON project to determine the suitable participatory communication mix in some villages of the project. The study compares five combinations of individual, group and mass communication methods by analyzing their knowledge and implementation intention effects on rural people after exposure to these methods. Data will be collected from RADCON participants in 10 villages located in the 7 governorates of the project during the first 3 months of the communication plan. Communication facilitators of these villages will fill online pre-tested reports after interviewing their audience. The study was submitted to FAO backstopping officer for clearance on 24/5/2007.
- The second study should be conducted by the end of the project to identify the impact of the communication intervention, and specifically the effect of RADCON on rural people. This study would also come up with recommendation for future action of the network. Impact measuring criteria are focused on the network management and organization, the effect of quantity, quality, variability, sufficiency and suitability of information on different categories of rural people, and information flow in terms of quantity and speed across the network.

5.2 Mass media Plan

Under the supervision of the consultant, the consultant of communication strategy and outreach prepared a three-month plan for mass media intervention. A contract was signed with the Development Support Communication Centre to implement the plan in coordination with the local TV channel 6, and mid-delta radio station. Although the media plan is in action now, but due to the delay of implementing the communication plan it is only useful in publicizing RADCON. If the communication plan was implemented soon, a mixed media approach might be used to coordinate between the two plans. So far, 6 episodes of TV programmes and 6 of radio programmes were produced and aired. Implementation details are not reported by the concerned consultant yet.

6. OTHER ACTIVITIES

6.1 Working with system developers and stakeholders

Cooperation with system developers started by holding 2 sessions with all of them. In the two meetings, the general features of the systems were agreed upon. Each system objectives and components was driven from the study of stakeholder analysis conducted by the consultant. In addition to joining the discussions during the systems implementation in the executive committee meetings and other system reviewing sessions, the consultant paid at least three visits with each system developer to related stakeholder.

RADCON systems are online now in its initial phase and will be subject to update after the communication test phase. The developers are working in harmony with the ICD unit to meet their systems developmental objectives.

The consultant also sent the objectives of the monitoring system to the lead consultant to develop the VERCON monitoring system to suit RADCON activities.

6.2 Cooperating with the Supreme Council for Youth

To expand the field work in the village beyond the ministry of agriculture, and to attract young people, some Youth Clubs were selected to work as RADCON sites in the village. The consultant contacted the Supreme Council for Youth formally to approve this action. There were a good opportunity and fully acceptance and understanding for collaborative work. Moreover, the Council contacted the selected clubs asking for fully cooperation with RADCON.

6.3 Cooperation with the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology

After the initial workshop held jointly with the MCIT, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between RADCON and Kenana online. One of the joint activities between the MCIT and RADCON was to arrange for the “Mobile Information Technology Club” work together in RADCON villages. The goal is to train rural people on using computers, Windows, MS office, browsing the internet, using Kenana online site, and using VERCON systems. The consultant arranged with the ICD groups in the governorates to host the bus in RADCON villages.

The first field work for the bus under this agreement was in Ismaillia governorate. The bus was hosted in Tosson village for 2 weeks where 110 persons from the village were trained. The prove to be very successful that it was a covered in 3 TV program of the local channel 4. The head of the political party paid a visit to the training site and held a

meeting with the mobile club staff, RADCON staff, and local leaders in the village to discuss future benefits for those trained people. He also asked to extend the duration of the training to exceed the 45 days planned.
The consultant coordinated with the MCIT headquarter for extend the work of the bus in Ismaillia and it was greed to extend the mission for another 15 days.

7. GENERAL CONCLUSION

In spite of the delay due to the administrative and financial procedures, the ICD unit is now fully established and ready for action. The project is advancing steadily although slowly. All planned activities are implemented successfully so far except the last cycle of the communication plan that will start most likely this July. Without any pre-mature judgements, the project is expected to achieve its goals in the coming short period.
The formal entity of the Unit is fully supported by FAO, CLAES and AERDRI, and procedures to issue a formal design is in progress.
The SWOT analysis reported by the international consultant showed that there are more opportunities for advancement than those expected to hinder the network. No significant problem is in sight except the collaboration with stakeholders and their limited number. Such a problem might be a temporary one as the nature of RADCON mechanism as a developmental tool is not clear to them nor its impact.
Mass media activities began too early. Expected outcomes from this activity is some pre-matured publicity for the beta version of RADCON. Using the produced material later as records on a CD in the village site will gain a VCR or an audio tape recorder effect. That means loosing the mass media audience and the effect of both TV and radio. The cycle of participatory communication supported by mixed media is missing. If that would be the case then less expensive production can be made, and even some off-the-shelf multimedia can be utilized.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FOLLOW-UP ACTION

- The media plan should be implemented in the context of participatory communication plan. The mixed media effect might be lost in case of using mass media separately or just for propaganda.
- More stakeholders should be involved in RADCON. This will depend on the impact of the communication activities and when RADCON prove to be valuable for them. Convincing stakeholders should be tackled gradually on the bases of related system demands.
- Chances for RADCON sustainability should be studied more deeply in the coming phase. Chances for self-financing of RADCON sites as information clubs should be investigated.
- Opportunities for horizontal expansion after the project should be also investigated before the end of the project. Other extension centres and youth clubs are the most likely way for fast expansion, and the least expensive too.

Annex 1

Terms of Reference
The Participatory Communication Unit

Objective:

The Unit and its personnel will act as a body of information and communication researchers and trainers. The overall purpose of The Unit is to learn, use and transfer concepts, methodologies, techniques and tools of participatory information and communication processes to all people that are involved in agricultural and rural development activities.

Structure:

The Unit will be headed by a director from AERDRI and composed of two layers, a core team at the central level, and seven field groups at the governorates level.

a. The core team:

The team will take the responsibilities of planning, management, coordination, follow up, and evaluation of RADCON activities at the central. as well as the training of trainers on participatory communication and community mobilization.

- Two researchers (male and female) specialized in participatory rural communication (full time)
- Six representatives from the Central Laboratory for Agricultural Expert Systems (CLAES), Agricultural Extension and Rural Development Research Institute (AERDRI). Central Administration for Agricultural Extension Services, Department of Rural Development (CAAES/DRD), Policy and Coordination Unit for Women in Agriculture (PCUWA), CARE organization, and Soil, Water and Environmental Research Institute (SWERI). This multidisciplinary group is to generate ideas and ensure contributions from different disciplines that will tremendously enrich the cultural common vision of RADCON
- Supporting staff (1)

b. Information and Communication for Development Groups (ICD groups):

The main tasks of these groups are local planning, execution and monitoring of RADCON activities, as well as conducting local training on communication activities and community mobilization. Groups number and affiliation are as follows:

ICD group in the governorates	Research Station	Agric. Directorate	Extension Centres	DSCC	University	Total
Kafr Al-Shiekh	1	1	2	-	-	4
Assuit	1	1	2	-	-	4
Noubaria	1	1	1	-	-	3
Fayoum	1	1	1	-	-	3
Ismailia	1	1	1	1	-	4
Beheira	1	1	2	-	-	4
Dakahlia	1	1	1	1	1	5
Grand Total	7	7	10	2	-	27

Roles and Responsibilities:

- Develop the plan for information content and flow.
- Develop communication mechanisms plan for disseminating network information among rural people.
- Develop a plan for building the capacity of sub-units staff.
- Organize and implement the pre-assigned plans for communication mechanisms, information content and capacity building.
- Monitor and evaluate the activities of communication mechanisms, information content and capacity building.

- Re-adjust the project activities according to the results of monitoring and evaluation.
- Monthly report will be submitted to the executive committee includes achievements, situation, problems and suggestions.
- The unit will be responsible for communication for development aspects in the executive committee.
- The unit will be represented in the project steering committee.

Tasks and functions

The initial tasks of The Unit are related to:

- Open and improve communication channels
- Identification of information and communication needs
- Recover and process data and information
- Produce information and communication materials
- Distribution of information and materials
- Monitoring and evaluation

Strategies

RADCON will follow these basic strategies:

- decentralize the services through the involvement of the local and regional offices of AERDRI and CAAES in feeding, control and operation of the system. The decentralization include a very active role of people in the field, agricultural and rural development staff together with the farmers, to make decisions on what the system will be about;
- increase the participation of rural communities in the operation of RADCON through participatory methodologies and techniques that let other stakeholders and farmers organizations to actually take a share of the system;
- include other stakeholders within the system though the incorporation of representatives in the Steering Committee and into the many stages of the operation of RADCON;
- diversify the delivery of information through the use of many different channels and media of information and communication, both to acquire new content and to disseminate data and information. This strategy must be complemented through the training of the staff;
- broaden the thematic scope through the inclusion of information and data that are not directly related with agriculture. The assortment of subjects linked with rural development must be treated equally through the system channels;
- create a multidisciplinary team for acquiring, analysing, and developing information as well as for performing participatory events that will prioritise and define topics and content to be incorporated into the system;
- train the unit members to prepare and generate local development projects through participatory methodologies suitable for their own locality in project planning, execution and evaluation;

Location.

The Unit will be hosted within AERDRI. However, the area required has to be suitable for normal operation, hold casual meetings with some ICD-Groups, and regular meetings for the complete core team members. CLAES will host all ICD groups in Cairo for training or coordinating workshops. For each ICD-Group, an office of roughly fifteen to twenty five square metres must be assigned to it preferably in the research station.

Equipment and facilities:

For the unit on the central level, the following facilities are required:

3	PCs connected to the Internet and its tables
2	Printers
1	Scanner
8	Data displays for central and field training
1	Flip chart, or a portable whit board

1	Telephone line with long distance facility
1	Vehicle facility for field trips
7	Digital photographic cameras for ICD-group
2	Video digital cameras for DSCCs
2	Non-linear video editing and accessories for DSCCs
	Stationery and office facilities

Training

Personnel involved in the Unit and RADCON require a number of other training courses and workshops covering the communication for development approach. Subjects are entirely related to the participatory approach, content management (decision making in content level, organization and social codification), media languages and usage, on-going subject and communication research, time strategic participatory rural communication appraisal and finally training in preparation, execution, follow up and evaluation of Local Information and Communication Plans.

Each course has a period of learned subject application at field level, materialized through a phased detailed work plan for each ICD-Group. The ICD-group will have to complete the task decided in common and given to them to attain a specific result or a set of products. The next training period will start revising the tasks, evaluating the products and making suggestions and recommendations on the work developed before starting a new topic.

- **Workshop 1: The Unit's Stakeholders Workshop**. One day workshop to define the number of members and designate The Unit's participants ready for starting to work within The Unit framework and mission and following its development strategies; nominating The Unit's head or general manager and prepare a route for the development of the inception phase work plan.
- **Workshop 2: The Installation Workshop**. Two or three day workshop to install The Unit as an organic entity in-charge of RADCON implementation. Setting up mission and objectives of The Unit, defining roles and functions of the institutions participating in the network, results to be achieved, establish the main mechanisms for reporting and task development, training plans and practices at field level, follow-up, evaluation analysis and issues of copyright among other managerial and non-managerial issues.
- **Course A**: "**Participatory Communication and Content Management and Development".** Duration: two (2) weeks. Main subjects are related to: a) communication for development, Participatory approaches in rural villages, sharing knowledge and experiences processes, I-M-I participatory communication model; b) linguistic communities, codes, symbols and information level; c) adult education and teaching-learning strategies, human perception and comprehension, changing aptitudes, attitudes and behaviour; d) content management and development, methodology of content development, content production; e-data and information e) channels of transmission, traditional media, mass media information systems, groups media usage, e-learning problems and facilities.
- **Course B**: "**Introduction to Media; Technology, Languages and Techniques**" Duration: three (3) weeks. Topics to be developed: a) identification of target groups and information and communication objectives, learning objectives, interlocutor's profiles, communication strategies; b) principles of information and communication technology, management of images, introduction to audio and audiovisual technology, printing materials; c) languages, interactive languages, visual language, radio and audio language, audiovisual language, written language, d) procedure of media materials application, methodology usage, objectives and goals.
- **Course C**: **"Participatory Rural Communication Appraisal".** Duration: two (2) weeks. Main chapters of the PRCA training course will be: a) Participatory Rural Communication Appraisal Overview, b) Situation Analysis in PRCA, c) PRCA methodology, d) PRCA Tools and techniques, e) Baseline Survey in PRCA, f) How to Plan and Conduct PRCA.
- **Course D**: **"Information and Communication Plans".** Duration one (1) week. Topics ranges within the following: a) Systematic design of information and communication strategies, rural development requirements and necessities, rural development policies and models, modernization of agriculture, markets, requirements and procedures, comparative advantages; b) information and communication planning and designing, development objectives, system resources, objectives and results, risks and advantages, timing.

- **Evaluation Workshop.** A final workshop must be considered to assess the achievements and to define the future of The Unit. This final task will last three (3) days in a workshop event and ten (10) days for defining the new desired strategy.

The Unit life span and expected outcomes

The Unit must endure, at least, throughout the project life increasing responsibilities according to the training received and the experience gained. The goal of the ICD members will be to become competent trainers supporting communication services in agriculture and rural development.

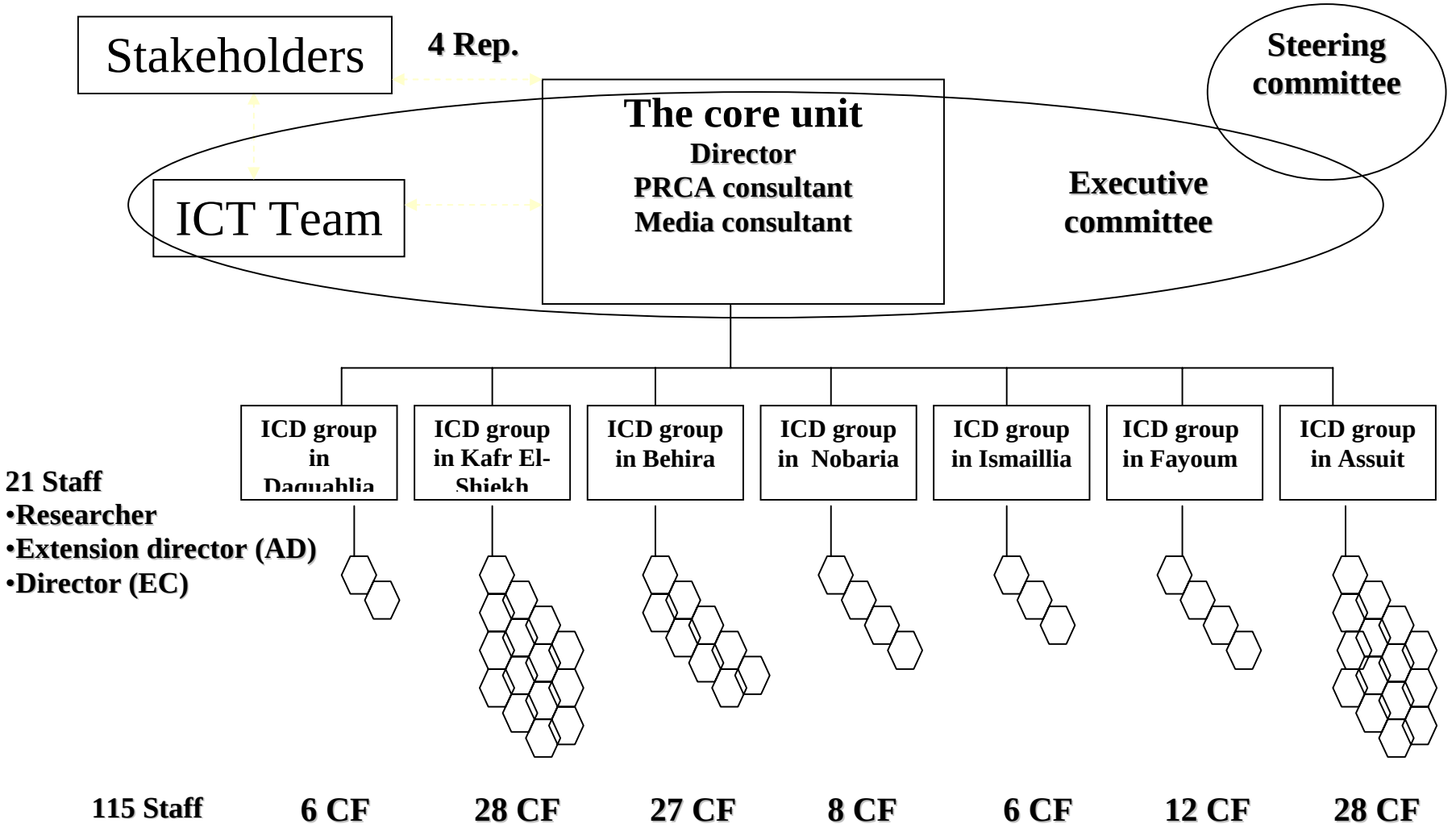
At the end of the project, three outcomes regarding the Unit are possible:

- Dismantle the ICD Unit - after training a great deal of extension staff and rural development personnel the unit could be dismantled as such, keeping the job objectives and functions;
- Maintain the ICD Unit - the second possibility is that The Unit becomes a necessary instrument for maintaining the communication research and creation of models being the apex of the information and participatory communication for agro and rural development and;
- Maintain a smaller ICD Unit – thirdly the project could maintain the Unit but with a much reduced core team to continue developing RADCON.

The ICD work plan

	June 2006		July		August		September		October		November		December		Jan. 2007		February	
	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2
Select ICD subgroup staff in the governorates and put into action																		
Assess target villages current situation, select communication points in the target sites and select its communication officers.																		
Prepare, submit and get approval on the training programme TOR																		
Implementation and evaluation of ICD training courses for TOT																		
Implantation and evaluation of the training courses for village communication officers																		
Assess installed capacity, production oriented and willingness of media producers and broadcast stations																		
Develop media strategy and mass media TOR																		
Collaborate with RADCON systems developers in designing and populating RADCON modules																		
Initiate media partners LOAs																		
Develop RADCON communication plan																		
Monitoring and follow-up RADCON test and recommend adjustments needed																		
Conduct monitoring and evaluation activities to assess RADCON relevance																		
Development of content, initiation of media production and launching																		
Assess media effect and feedback to RADCON systems																		
Conduct awareness meetings to promote RADCON project in target villages																		
Conduct performance appraisal for ICD unit																		
Conduct performance appraisal for village communication officers																		
Evaluate pace and achievements of ICD unit																		
Report findings and conclusion to improve the quality of RADCON services																		
Evaluate and provide feedback on content development for RADCON system																		

Annex 2: Organisational structure of the ICD Unit



Annex 3

TERMS OF REFERENCE

UTF/EGY/021/EGY: National Consultant in Participatory Rural Communication Appraisal (PRCA)

The consultant will work under the general supervision of the FAO Representative for Egypt and under the technical direction of Senior Officer of the FAO technical unit (SDRE). In close collaboration with the International Consultant and the Project National Coordinator, RNE Office and other project staff and in consultation with relevant officials of the Ministry of Agriculture and Land Reclamation and other agencies. She/he will undertake the following responsibilities:

17. Prepare and develop a participatory communication assessment, incorporating participatory and bottom-up approaches in the study framework to be use used especially but not exclusively, for working with men and women in rural communities.

18. Prepare a report of the findings and conclusion and make recommendations to RADCON system to improve the quality of the services provided.

19. Document local rural indigenous knowledge and experiences to be processed and fed into the computerised system.

20. Participate and assist in the various training activities of the project. prepare materials for training male and female researches and extension workers.

21. Compile and review gender sensitive information sources and content (including indigenous knowledge) together with the staff of various institutions to be added to the RADCON system.

22. Collaborate in the design of the overall structure of the RADCON communication system in collaboration with the International Consultant.

23. Conduct monitoring and evaluation activities to assess the use and relevance of the RADCON system and identify areas of demand.

24. Evaluate and provided feedback on content development for the RADCON system.

25. Present progress and technical reports as required.

Annex 4

TERMS OF REFERENCE

UTF/EGY/021/EGY: National Consultant in Communication Strategy and Outreach

The consultant will work under the general supervision of the FAO Representative for Egypt and under the technical direction of Senior Officer of the FAO technical unit (SDRE). In close collaboration with the International Consultant and the Project National Coordinator, RNE Office and other project staff and in consultation with relevant officials of the Ministry of Agriculture and Land Reclamation and other agencies. She/he will undertake the following responsibilities:

1. Assess the installed capacity, production orientation and willingness of media producers and broadcast station towards rural development issues. State pros and cons of mass media broadcast taken into consideration the goals of the project.

2. Evaluate potential media partners to participate in RADCON system and prepare Terms of Reference for contracts with media organizations.

3. Develop linkages with local media organizations to promote RADCON.

4. In collaboration with project staff initiate contracts for media organizations and jointly develop content for outreach of RADCON communication system.

5. Support the implementation of RADCON communication system and collaborate with other national consultants.

6. Collaborate with the ICRD-Unit and ICD-Groups in preparing information materials to promote extension modules and participatory communication approaches.

7. Publicise RADCON system in local media and the various products released by the system; notify project participants on the releases and make them available in the appropriate media.

8. Conduct monitoring and evaluation activities to assess the use and relevance of the RADCON system and identify areas of demand.

9. Evaluate and provide feedback on content development for the RADCON system.

10. present progress and technical reports as required.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

UTF/EGY/021/EGY: National Consultant in Communication Strategy and Outreach

The consultant will work under the general supervision of the FAO Representative for Egypt and under the technical guidance of the Chief of NRRR and technical supervision of RNE Technical Officer. In close collaboration with the International Consultant and the Project National Coordinator, ICD Unit, project staff and relevant officials of the Ministry of Agriculture and Land Reclamation and other agencies, the incumbent will undertake the following responsibilities:

1. Support the implementation of RADCON communication system and collaborate with other national consultants.

2. Collaborate with the ICRD-Unit and ICD-Groups in preparing information materials to promote extension modules and participatory communication approaches.

3. Organize, train, and put into action a media team to implement the media production plan.

4. Collaborate with the media team to develop work plans, time line and performance of the media production and broadcasting and supervise its implementation.

5. Ensure that the scripts and media forms are approved before production and before airing.

6. Pre-test all produced media material for validity, relevance, and suitability and supervise any modifications accordingly in the copy before airing.

7. Review and approve the media programmes summarized in digital format before uploading it on RADCON

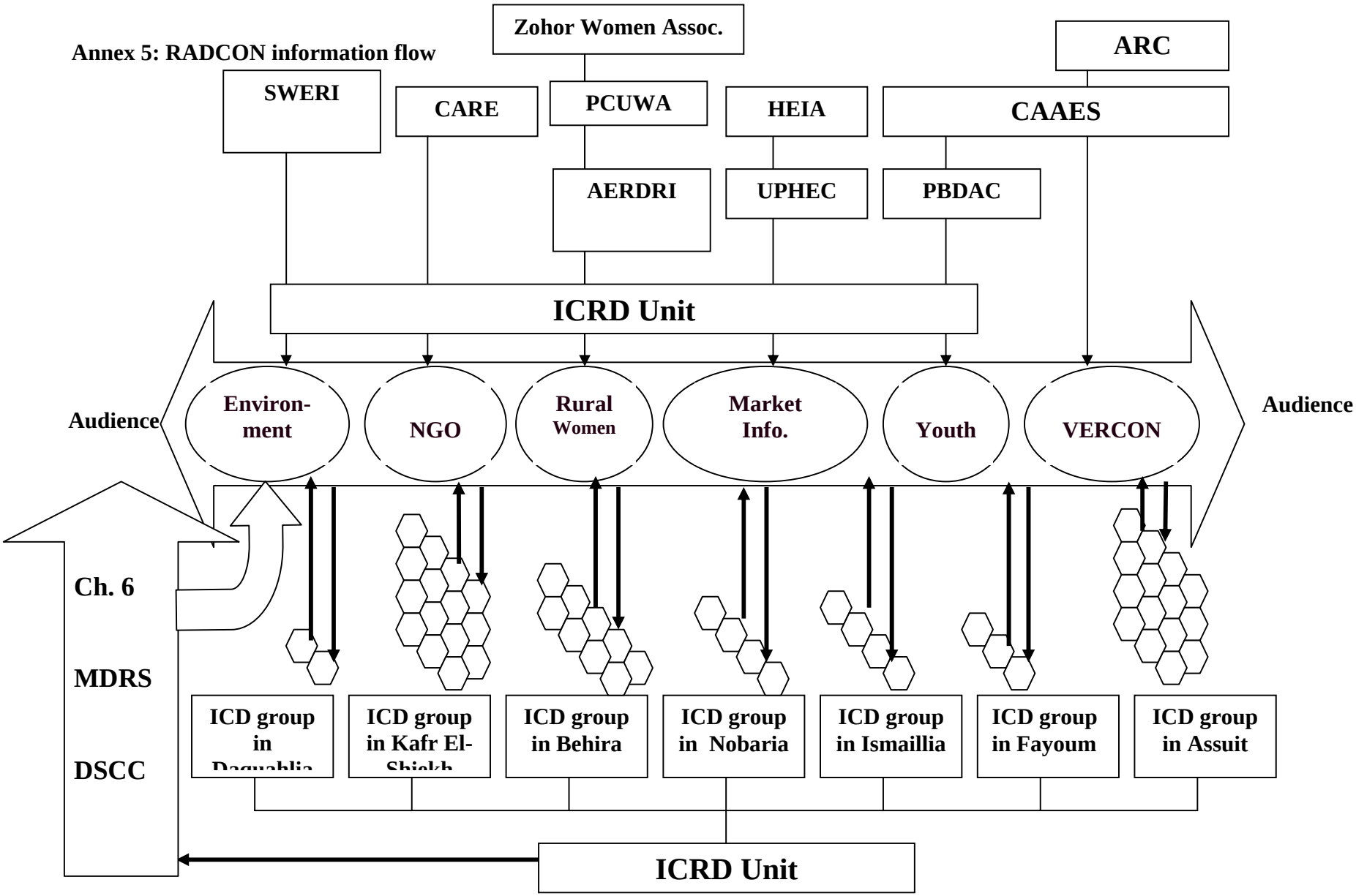
8. In coordination with PRCA consultant, supervise media meetings in the village using the digitally recorded media programmes.

9. Publicise RADCON system in local media and the various products released by the system; notify project participants on the releases and make them available in the appropriate media.

10. Conduct monitoring and evaluation activities to assess the use and relevance of the broadcasted media programmes and identify areas of demand and needs for modification.

11. Prepare a report of the findings and conclusion and make recommendations to RADCON system to improve the quality of the services provided

12. present progress and technical reports as required.

Duration: Total of 4.5 months during the period of 9 months on a WAE basis.

Annex 5: RADCON information flow