

Agricultural Research Centre

Central Lab for Agricultural Expert Systems

**Rural and Agricultural Development
Communication Network**

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

Information and Communication for Development Unit

Executive Participatory Communication Plan Implementation and Costs

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Background:

The Rural and Agricultural Communication Network (RADCON) is a network connecting a variety of stakeholders that works in rural development and the beneficiaries targeted by their services. The network connects stakeholders using a variety of information and communication technologies, and other traditional communication methods. Hence, RADCON is practically a combination of using the tools of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and using the tools of Information and Communication for Rural Development (ICRD).

Using ICT was always criticized for its complexity and high cost for rural development and especially with rural poor, yet, the Virtual Extension and Research Communication Network (VERCON) succeeded to reach poor farmers and override such obstacles through a mixed media strategy that combines ICT with traditional media.

Notwithstanding, VERCON was an organizational based system that is limited to connecting research with extension systems in favor of a specific category of audience, i.e., farmers. On the other hand, RADCON problem lays in connecting comprehensive stakeholders either as development entities or target users.

As a network of ICT and people, 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 will be 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 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
- The experimental model

This is a short form of the communication plan that tackles the background, objectives, implementation, training and budget.

Objectives:

The communication plan is based on using mixed media to support the network ICT with the traditional communication methods familiar to rural people. Communication process within the village depends on the Participatory Rural Communication approach that is led by a communication facilitator from the village. Hence, the main goal of the plan is to support the communication and information flow of RADCON network with the traditional individual, group and mass communication methods. Specific objectives of the plan are:

- Make the target rural people in the project area aware of RADCON and its objectives.
- Avail the information of RADCON to rural people through individual and group communication methods.
- Identify rural people's information needs, experiences and ideas and share it through the network.
- Coordinate the mass communication activities of mass media, and integrate it with the individual and group activities and the virtual network.
- Support group and cooperation work of rural people in the target villages.

Implementation:

Implementing the communication plan depend on a simplified shape of Participatory Rural Communication Appraisal following its methodology and using its tools. This approach reduces the administrative work of the network, decentralize control, and enhance the network partnerships in future with the least technical control at the central level, which would enhance sustainability even with limited financing.

The plan is divided into three stages: preparation stage, system testing stage, and regular implementation stage. The aim of the preparation stage is to raise awareness in the village before implementation of communication activities. This phase will take one month. The system testing phase aims to verify and adjust communication activities of the network alongside with the system testing and stakeholders coordination. System testing phase will last for 3 months and should end up with an evaluation study to adjust and update RADCON systems as well as the communication plan. Regular implementation phase aims to harmonize the system and flow of information. Communication activities in this stage is almost the same as the activities of the testing stage.

Communication activities briefly described here follow the activity time cycle rather than the project phases to clarify the task, roles and responsibilities of different teams of the project.

Initial activities:

These activities will be done in

- A sign for each village communication node will be produced to identify the center to the village people.
- An announcement board (100 x 70 cm) will be produced to be used for the node staff, regulations, working hours, the work plan and meetings schedule and agenda, and newly uploaded information in RADCON.
- A public forum will be held once in all RADCON villages to raise awareness about the network, introduce its objectives, staff, services and regulation. In

- addition, rural people's opinions will be identified to sensitize their participation with communication facilitators.
- Printed material will be produced on demand. This will depend on: project stage, newly uploaded information, or regularly. This includes posters to be posted in the village crossings, extension centres, agricultural administrations, research stations and the like. It will also include folders, invitation letters, pamphlets, and newsletters.

Weekly and daily activities:

- RADCON node in the village will be operating for public to present RADCON content and respond to their information needs from 5:00 to 8:00PM daily, except during extension meetings.
- Eight meetings will be held monthly (2 per week) in each node as follows:
 - The first meeting in the week to present a newly uploaded subject, or to discuss a high priority subject and identify needed information interchangeably.
 - The second meeting in the week to present and discuss a mass media topic, or to organize a group or collaborative work in the village.
 - Village facilitators can invite a consultant, specialist, official or speaker once each month to support a specific topic during the meeting.
- The ICD group in the governorate collect its village achievements, information needed to be uploaded in RADCON, urgent barriers facing the villages, results of mass media evaluation. The group will analyze needs, set priorities and:
 - Report to the ICD core unit.
 - Schedule visits to support village nodes and copy the core unit.
 - Set priorities of mass media program and report to the media group.
- The ICD core unit will analyze the weekly information needs and contact:
 - Related stakeholder to upload the needed information.
 - Related system developer to maintain or resolve the system malfunction if needed.
 - Media group with refined suggestions.
 - Publish a weekly or bi-weekly newsletter including distinguished achievements, news, and potential activities.

Monthly activities

- Performance appraisal for village facilitators.
 - To follow up the facilitator's performance and the network flow of information. Seven meetings will be held in the third week of the month, one in each governorate, headed by the researcher and assisted by other ICD group.
 - In the meeting, village achievements will be reviewed with the remarks of the ICD group and instructions, barriers facing the facilitators and solutions if possible, train the facilitators on the newly modification in RADCON systems, and get attendees' opinions and suggestions.
 - At the end of the meeting, CDs of media programmes to be broadcasted will be distributed and the governorate monthly work plan will be set.

- Performance appraisal for ICD groups.
 - To be held in the last week of the month in CLAES and attended by all ICD group members, stakeholders representatives, system developers and headed by the ICD core unit.
 - In the meeting, governorates achievements will be reviewed with the remarks of the ICD core unit and instructions, barriers and solutions if possible, train attendees on the newly modification in RADCON systems, and get their opinions and suggestions.
 - At the end of the meeting, the network monthly work plan will be set. The meeting will be documented to be presented in the monthly executive committee meeting.

Quarterly activities

- Developing the executive plan of mass media

Because the project media plan depends on the media agency plan, this is a quarterly activity. RADCON mass media plan would be developed by the media group that headed by the director of Development Support Communication Centre (DSCC) and includes representatives from: ICD core unit, related radio station and TV channel, and ICD group in related governorates, as well as DSCC media production unit, and DSCC head of the administrative affaire.

- The executive plan will be discussed and developed in the DSCC by the media group one month before broadcasting.
- The plan starts by the identified needs of rural people according to reports of evaluation, and includes: priorities of production, technical modes, locations and timing, script revision timing, copy testing timing, and broadcast dates. In addition, supporting printed material, design and content, number of copies and distribution cycle will be set.

- Implementation of mass media plan:

As detailed in the mass media plan developed by the consultant of “communication strategy and out reach”. The media subgroup will be responsible for implementation under the direct supervision of the director if the DSCC.

- Mass media plan financing

The mass media plan has a separate contract.

- Production of printed material

The ICD unit in coordination with the media group will identify the needed material according to information needs resulted from the monitoring reports of the villages and governorates. They will design, develop the content and the results will be presented in the executive committee meeting for approval.

- Extension equipped vehicle

All DSCCs have a vehicle equipped with media facilities and extension material that visits its DSCC’s related villages according to a predefined programme. Coordination will be made with RADCON villages related DSCC to support the vehicle with a computer and CDs with RADCON material and related media material to be shown to rural people. A special schedule will be arranged for the vehicle to visit RADCON villages to support awareness stage. RADCON systems and media materials can be used within the vehicle’s regular programme during extension activities.

Training on Communication for Development

Using ICT for rural development is a newly introduced approach in Egypt. Adaptation strategies for communication and knowledge sharing are based on more recent experiences as well. Hence, training is an essential part for the Communication activities for building the capacities of RADCON staff.

Building the capacities of ICD groups and communication facilitators is conducted in three stages:

Training in the preparation stage:

This training aims to make the trainees acquainted with basics and principles of participatory communication, group/cooperative work, using modern communication channels, and communication planning. To ensure capacity sustainability, training mechanism depends on training the ICD groups in the governorate to be trainers, and they will train communication facilitators in related villages. Both training courses are being evaluated through an evaluation workshop follow the training under the supervision of master trainers. This stage of training is implemented in 4 cycles as follows:

- A TOT course on Participatory Communication and Content Management and Development to be followed by 7 training courses for communication facilitators on Participatory approaches.
- A TOT course on Participatory Rural Communication Appraisal to be followed by 7 training courses for communication facilitators on Identifying rural people's need of information and solving their problems.
- A TOT course on Introduction to Media; Technology, Languages and Techniques to be followed by 7 training courses for communication facilitators on media usage.
- A TOT course on Information and Communication Plans to be followed by 7 training courses for communication facilitators on Information and Communication Work Plans.
- In addition to training communication facilitators on using the computer and operating VERCON systems (conducted by CLAES).

Training in the system testing stage:

- Implementing RADCON communication plan: This training aims to make the trainees able to implement the communication plan and make the trainees acquainted with using RADCON for rural development. Training syllabus includes: how to use youth, women, NGO, environment, market information and VERCON systems for rural development, roles and responsibilities of ICD groups and communication facilitators in implementing communication and media plans, and using RADCON monitoring system. The cycle will begin with training the ICD groups in the governorate to be trainers for 5 days, and they will conduct 7 training course to train communication facilitators in related villages in a two-days training course in each governorate.
- Implementing mass media plan: This is a limited training that aims to train media group, media sup group, and related ICD groups on implementing the media plan

- including their tasks in the pre-production, production, and broadcasting stages, as well as the copy testing. The training will take 3 days.
- Operating RADCON systems: this is a one-day training conducted by CLAES for ICD groups and all communication facilitators.

Training in regular implementation stage:

- This training aims to make the trainees acquainted with newly modified RADCON systems and content. Training syllabus includes: usage of the updated youth, women, NGO, environment, market information and VERCON systems for rural development, adjusted roles and responsibilities of ICD groups and communication facilitators, using modified monitoring system. The cycle will begin with training the ICD groups in the governorate to be trainers for 5 days, and they will conduct 7 training course to train communication facilitators in related villages in a two-days training course in each governorate.
- Performance appraisal: enhancing performance of RADCON staff will be done through assessing their tasks, monitoring reports and audience responses. These meetings serves 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.

Budget:

Table 1: Costs of preparation stage

Activity	Cost details	Sub-total	Total
Public forum	Reception costs = LE 2 x 100 attendees x 50 villages x 1 meeting	10000	
	Experts fees = LE 100x 2 expert x 50 villages x 1 meeting	10000	
	Logistics	1000	
	Casual labor = LE 50 x 50 villages	2500	23500
Equipped vehicle	LE 100 x 26 village		2600
Announcement boards	LE 100 x 50 board		5000
Signs for village units	LE 50 x 50 sign		2500
Printed material	Estimate		5000
Grand total			38600

Table 2: Costs of testing stage (3 months)

Activity	Cost details	Sub-total	Total
Extension meeting	Reception costs = LE 2x10 attendees x50 villages x7 meetings x3 months	21000	
	Casual labor = LE 50 x 50 villages x 3 months	7500	28500
Meeting with expert	Reception costs = LE 2 x 10 attendees x 50 villages x 1 meeting x 3 months	3000	
	Experts fees = LE 100x 1 expert x 50 villages x 1 meeting x 3 month	15000	
	Logistics	500	18500
Performance appraisal (governorates)	Travel costs = LE 100 x 136 facilitator& ICD x 3 months	40800	
	Casual labor = LE 50 x 7 labor/governorates x 3 months	1050	
	Logistics	1500	43350
Performance appraisal (central)	Travel costs = LE 100 x 35 ICD staff x 3 months	10500	
	Casual labor = LE 50 x 2 labor x 3 month	300	10800
Grand total			101150

Table 3: Costs of regular implementation stage (5 months)

Activity	Cost details	Sub-total	Total
Extension meeting	Reception costs = LE 2x10 attendees x50 villages x7 meetings x5 months	35000	
	Casual labor = LE 50 x 50 villages x 5 months	12500	47500
Meeting with expert	Reception costs = LE 2 x 10 attendees x 50 villages x 1 meeting x 5 months	5000	
	Experts fees = LE 100x 1 expert x 50 villages x 1 meeting x 5 month	25000	
	Logistics	700	30700
Performance appraisal (governorates)	Travel costs = LE 100 x 136 facilitator& ICD x 5 months	68000	
	Casual labor = LE 50 x 7 labor/governorates x 5 months	1750	
	Logistics	3000	72750
Performance appraisal (central)	Travel costs = LE 100 x 35 ICD staff x 5 months	17500	
	Casual labor = LE 50 x 2 labor x 5 month	500	18000
Grand total			

Table 4: Costs of training in the testing stage

Activity	Cost details	Sub-total	Total
TOT training	Per-diem and accommodation = LE 100 x 25 Trainees x 5 days	12500	
	Coffee breaks = LE 10 x 30 attendees x 5 days	1500	
	Trainers= LE 150 x 23 hours	3450	
	Stationary = LE 20 x 30 attendees	600	
	Printed handouts = LE 25 x 30 attendees	750	18800
	Logistics		500
	Casual labor		500
	Miscellaneous		100
	Total		19900
Communication facilitators training	Per-diem and accommodation = LE 20 x 115 Trainees x 2 days	4600	
	Coffee breaks = LE 5 x 115 attendees x 2 days	1150	
	Trainers= LE 150 x 5 hours x 2 days x 7 governorates	10500	
	Stationary = LE 5 x 115 attendees	575	
	Printed handouts = LE 5 x 115 attendees	575	17400
	Logistics		200
	Casual labor = LE 50 x 7 governorates		350
	Miscellaneous		100
	Total		18050
Media group and related ICD groups	Per-diem and accommodation = LE 100 x 15 Trainees x 3 days	4500	
	Coffee breaks = LE 5 x 15 attendees x 3 days	225	
	Trainers= LE 100 x 3 hours x 3 days	900	
	Stationary = LE 5 x 15 attendees	175	
	Printed handouts = LE 5 x 15 attendees	175	
	Logistics		200
	Casual labor = LE 50 x 3 days		150
	Miscellaneous		100
	Total		
Grand total			

Table 5: Costs of training in the regular implementation stage

Activity	Cost details	Sub-total	Total
TOT training	Per-diem and accommodation = LE 100 x 25 Trainees x 5 days	12500	
	Coffee breaks = LE 10 x 30 attendees x 5 days	1500	
	Trainers= LE 150 x 23 hours	3450	
	Stationary = LE 20 x 30 attendees	600	
	Printed handouts = LE 25 x 30 attendees	750	18800
	Logistics		500
	Casual labor		500
	Miscellaneous		100
	Total		19900
Communication facilitators training	Per-diem and accommodation = LE 20 x 115 Trainees x 2 days	4600	
	Coffee breaks = LE 5 x 115 attendees x 2 days	1150	
	Trainers= LE 150 x 5 hours x 2 days x 7 governorates	10500	
	Stationary = LE 5 x 115 attendees	575	
	Printed handouts = LE 5 x 115 attendees	575	17400
	Logistics		200
	Casual labor = LE 50 x 7 governorates		350
	Miscellaneous		100
	Total		18050

Grand total	37950
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Table 6: Total costs

Item	Total budget
Costs of preparation stage	38600
Costs of testing stage (3 months)	101150
Costs of regular implementation stage (4 months)	
Costs of training in the testing stage	
Costs of training in the regular implementation stage	37950
Grand total	