

POSITION STATEMENT



Development Communication

CABI envisions a world in which positive research results are adapted at scale through the use of development communication approaches to: improve incomes; enhance nutritional outcomes; make farming systems more resilient; and lead to greater anticipation and mitigation of shocks.

Background

Development communication refers to communication that *focuses not only on the provision of information but also on the social relationships and economic policy which constitute the enabling environment for sustained uptake of new techniques and technologies.*

40 per cent of crops are lost to pests, reducing incomes for farmers and agricultural workers, as well as decreasing food and nutrition security. Smallholder farmers are very vulnerable to climate change and the impact of invasives. Farmers need better access to information and inputs to build their businesses, grow more diverse and better quality crops, connect with higher value markets, and adopt more sustainable practices. Furthermore, the potential of women and youth in farming communities is underutilised and addressing the barriers to their participation requires social change, which includes changes in attitudes, systems and policies. There is growing evidence of the important role progressive development communication can play to help address these challenges.

CABI implements a portfolio of development communication that is focused on engaging farmer communities and local public and private partners in sustaining and expanding the social change that is associated with progressive research outcomes in agriculture and the environment. This is a key strand of CABI's multidisciplinary research and development capacity that allows CABI to support the uptake of research results and to deliver impact on the ground. Complementary activities including publishing, marketing, extension service provision, the science journalism platform, SciDev.Net. and digital development means CABI is uniquely positioned to deliver a full complement of research communication functions.

CABI's contribution

CABI's development communication portfolio makes an important strategic contribution to CABI's international development and knowledge business, and to support agricultural transformation, as described in CABI's mid-term strategy:

- CABI will support links to private enterprise – CABI's communication activities focus on building an enabling environment for research adoption that includes supporting value chains and livelihood opportunities around farmer communities
- CABI will operationalise opportunities in mobile and digital service delivery – mobile platforms are part of the mix of communication channels CABI uses to engage farming communities
- CABI will provide systematic ways and methodologies to collect monitoring data and information on farmer demand so that the intelligence gathered in building and implementing development communication campaigns is systematically captured and analysed throughout CABI



CABI's goals and activities

To ensure that change takes place and the Sustainable Development Goals are achieved, new research findings and innovative ideas – e.g. climate-resilient farming practices or new ways of managing plant health – need to be adapted to local contexts and taken to scale. CABI uses development communication to deliver this overarching objective through activities that pursue four key goals. These goals have emerged as critical points for CABI's development communication, reflecting the organisation's capacities and the sectoral needs.

GOAL 1

Link learning and planning

By learning from systematic evaluation and monitoring of development communication initiatives, CABI will expand the evidence base for what works; contribute to efficient use of resources; and ensure that CABI's work is informed by realities on the ground. Activities will include:

- Integrating action research into programmes that explore the evolving practice and gaps in knowledge in the sector
- Implementing after-action reviews at key milestones, for increased effectiveness and efficiency
- Generating supporting resources for use by governments, civil society and CABI partnerships to strengthen development communication practice in various contexts

GOAL 2

Develop innovative hybrid models

By using multiple communication channels and formats we can ensure that we achieve the optimal balance between maximum reach and increasing the likelihood of sustained change. Activities will include:

- Investing in processes for appraising environments, including the segmenting of audiences (particularly at the household level)
- Distinguishing programme objectives that can have an impact on the timeframe and measures of success. Objectives are categorised into early warning, emergency management, new technology, and good agricultural practice
- Blending emerging digital technologies with more traditional extension services for more effective programmes, to achieve a balance between sustainability (by mobilising local resources) and scale (by leveraging the right mix of models)



GOAL 3

Support entrepreneurship

This is a crucial new area for CABI's work because it also supports value chains, input availability, market access and collective action, which are required to sustain research uptake at scale. Activities will include:

- Ensuring campaign objectives address enterprise development as a key part of agricultural transformation, leading to economic inclusivity for key stakeholders as they access markets and inputs
- Including policymaker awareness-raising on problems and solutions for transformation in the agricultural sector as a key component of communication processes
- Developing guidelines for investors in new technology as a core output of programmes

GOAL 4

Partnership building

Effective partnering allows CABI to collaborate with local resources and expertise to deliver at scale, efficiently. This also allows the CABI to bridge local agendas and international expertise. Activities will include:

- Refining the CABI process of mapping the institutional landscape around farmers, identifying partners across a variety of needs (knowledge partners with proven technologies or practices to share; input partners to ensure sustainable supply chains for the required inputs; delivery partners using proven media and pathways to engage farmer communities; and research partners to support learning around effective communication)
- Aggregating knowledge from national and international sources based on socioeconomic analysis of sites and undertaking participatory work with partners in signature 'writeshop' events which produce technical briefs for messaging around campaigns
- Developing audience-focused materials and capacity support resources

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