



DEVELOPMENT FOR AGRICULTURAL INNOVATION SYSTEMS

## **Documenting CDAIS**

### **Guidelines for country project managers**

#### **Objective**

Support country project managers and CDAIS country teams in documenting CDAIS activities with a view to record the project and maximize outputs for public information and communication for development.

#### **Rationale**

Documentation is a vital part of CDAIS' objective to test the theory of change in pilot countries because it will enable to record the process of capacity development in agricultural innovation systems. At the same time, documentation will help CDAIS in delivering on public information targets, complying with requirements of its main donor and provide material for communication for development.

#### **Core concepts**

Documenting CDAIS is about telling the story of the project and how it is achieving its core objective.

According to the CDAIS communication strategy the core objective of the project is to make agricultural innovation systems more efficient and sustainable in meeting the demands of farmers, agribusiness and consumers.

This objective, and other key messages contained in the communication strategy, should guide all documentation activities. The key messages help to decide whether to document or not: only document what illustrates the key messages.

Focus on detail. Break the big story of CDAIS down into elements. Tell the story of each element and how it illustrates the big story. But: be selective. Only document details that tell something bigger than themselves.

Focus on people. Eventually, CDAIS is about improving the livelihood of the project's beneficiaries: farmers, agribusiness and consumers. Document activities that benefit the beneficiaries and show how.



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Focus on content, not form. A group photo of a workshop is a precious memory, but it does not explain what the workshop was about. Show what participants do.

Keep it simple and short. If you don't tell the story in simple language and in short space it will not be heard by anybody else then you.

## **Step-by-step**

### **Production: information gathering**

Documenting starts with gathering information on the different stages of CDAIS.

**What:** cover the key CDAIS activities, such as needs assessment, market place, capacity development, innovation niches, partnerships.

**When:** plan coverage of the activities based on the CDAIS workplan or logframe.

**How:** decide if the information is best recorded in written, photographic or audio-visual form based on how it is going to be used. To ensure correct information gathering, allocate appropriate budget and assign skilled human resources.

### **Outputs: communication material**

When the information is gathered it can be transformed into communication tools and material.

**What:** many different communication tools and materials exist: a press release or a banner, a film or a fact sheet. Decide which one(s) you need based upon criteria including the content of your message, the opportunity for which you want to make it public, or your target audience.

One option is to work towards a final report in which the project is fully documented, while using the building blocks of it (in text, image, etc) for other purposes along the way.

**When:** material should be produced in time for appropriate dissemination. This seems obvious, but it is often problematic and should be taken into account right from the beginning of the documentation process.

**How:** properly produced materials need appropriate funding and skilled human resources.

### **Dissemination: communication opportunities**

When the material is produced it has to be disseminated in an appropriate way to reach the audience it is intended for.

**What:** determine the appropriate communication tool or material for the audience targeted. Examples of the contrary abound. Don't send a fact sheet to a newspaper as an article, or use technical photographs for a poster.

**When:** timing is often crucial to reach an audience. Again, it seems obvious to issue a press release when you make the statement, or have your banners ready for the event, but it is often problematic and should be taken into account right from the beginning of the documentation process.

**How:** many different platforms for dissemination exist. An event, a publication, or a website. Decide which one(s) are most useful based on the content and the audience you target.

## **Support**

- Communication is a craft. It requires specific skills and experience. Don't reinvent the wheel, but work with communication specialists when possible.
- Technical backstopping is available (to be discussed how and by whom)
- These references from FAO and the EU provide additional practical and conceptual tips
  - CDAIS communication strategy  
[http://tapipedia.org/sites/default/files/cdais\\_communication\\_strategy\\_2015-2018\\_0.pdf](http://tapipedia.org/sites/default/files/cdais_communication_strategy_2015-2018_0.pdf)
  - Communication and visibility manual for EU external actions  
[https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/work/visibility/index\\_en.htm\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/work/visibility/index_en.htm_en)
  - Communication at country level  
[https://home.fao.org/departments/occ/tools\\_and\\_resources/,DanaInfo=intranet.fao.org+](https://home.fao.org/departments/occ/tools_and_resources/,DanaInfo=intranet.fao.org+)