BRICKS Communication Strategy, Monitoring Framework and Action Plan

This document outlines the communication strategy for the BRICKS Project and the broader SAWAP umbrella that it supports. The strategy provides an overview of communication objectives and activities at various levels. It identifies primary and secondary stakeholders, main communication channels and indicators. It also incorporates the emerging communication approach for the GGWI based on the communication plan of the Regional Harmonized Strategy for the Implementation of the "Great Green Wall for the Sahara and the Sahel Initiative" (GGWSSI) elaborated by FAO and other partners.

Communication approach in the GGWI. There is wide recognition that a comprehensive, coherent and sustained communication effort is key to achieve the GGWI's goals. In particular, a strategic approach to communication will help define the Initiative and build support for it. Specific objectives of such overarching communication strategy for the GGWI are (with regard to the intended audiences): (a) to raise awareness (media, general public); (b) to clarify the landscape approach (institutional actors); and (c) to rally support for the initiative (NGOs, development practitioners).

C*ommunication approach in the BRICKS project and SAWAP.* Deploying strategic communication to build out networks on innovative technologies and M&E will be crucial to realize BRICKS' goal of improving the SAWAP portfolio quality.
To support the BRICKS development objective of improving accessibility of best practices and monitoring information within the SAWAP portfolio, the communication objectives are integrated throughout project and program design. Taking into account also the need to integrate the overarching communication strategy for the Great Green Wall the objectives are: (i) to harmonize strategy, actions and tools in support of the GGW and sustain multi partners regional dialogue; (ii) to promote collaboration and build a community of practice among the project teams and key stakeholders of the SAWAP portfolio as well as with the implementing institutions of the BRICKS; (iii) to effectively share knowledge on innovations in managing natural resources, climate change, and natural disasters and (iv) provide communication support and enhance the communication capacity of the 12 country project teams in the SAWAP umbrella.

Key stakeholders identified are the country project teams of the SAWAP portfolio, country level actors and regional institutions active in multiple sectors, decision makers, NGOs, academic institutions, and, ultimately, the beneficiaries of the country projects at local level.

To validate the communication approach and further map stakeholders, a workshop will be held with the SAWAP country project team coordinators and team members in charge of communication activities, and communication staff of the three regional implementing agencies for BRICKS, and representatives of international and regional partners. Then regular (e.g. biannual) monitoring workshops between the implementing agencies and project coordinators in each country will follow for the purposes of coordination among the implementing agencies, and between the agencies and the SAWAP projects. A survey instrument will also be prepared to assess the communication needs of the direct beneficiaries of the project -- the country project teams and key country stakeholders implementing the SAWAP projects -- and identify motivational factors that would facilitate portfolio-wide knowledge sharing and production, as well as benchmarking and monitoring. The main components of the survey will be identified prior to and further discussed during the first SAWAP communication workshop.

To achieve the communication objectives a working group on strategic communication will be established within the BRICKS Project Implementation Unit under the leadership of the IUCN to develop an Action Plan coordinated among the three implementing agencies of the BRICKS. The working group

will include bilingual communication and Knowledge Management experts, and the communication staff of the BRICKS implementing agencies. The Communication Action Plan will be updated on a yearly basis.

Communication Objective 1. **Harmonize strategy, actions and tools in support of the GGW and sustain multi partners' regional dialogue**.
The working group on strategic communication will liaise with the communication persons working in the GGWI partners' institutions to establish a continuous flow of information with regard to activities, events and results achieved. Starting from the definition of a common visual identity for the Initiative and the development of joint communication products on regional best practices a fruitful collaboration among communication GGW partners to exploit synergies will result in creating a GGW communication task force, which will be more effective in conveying a comprehensive vision and consistent messages on progress and accomplishments of the Initiative.

Communication Objective 2. **Build a community of practice and promote collaboration among the project teams and key stakeholders of the SAWAP portfolio as well as with the implementing institutions of the BRICKS.**
An integrated approach to communication is needed to establish an information infrastructure, networking and innovative solutions to SAWAP projects teams and to mobilize people to act and cooperate. To achieve this objective the communication strategy will need first to position the BRICKS project and market the services offered at regional level to the country teams.

The strategy will also support the engagement of the SAWAP project teams in knowledge production and sharing activities and the creation of a learning and networking platform. Through the regional web portal a consistent flow of information will be established to ensure the gathering, processing and dissemination of lessons learned and knowledge produced in each project among the SAWAP projects teams. The web portal could include a virtual collaborative space for the country project teams and implementing agencies to allow knowledge exchanges across projects and across teams.

The working group on strategic communication will play an important role in this process by acting as moderators of the web-based platform (requesting inputs from contributors, highlighting current and new functionality, etc.). For harmonization purposes the regional web portal should be designed in a way compatible for being integrated in the GGWSSI umbrella platform. The umbrella platform is being developed by the African Union Commission (AUC), the Pan African Great Green Wall Agency, in collaboration with the GGWSSI technical committee and other partners[1] to promote the networking of scientists and practitioners working on GGWSSI and encourage wider dissemination of scientific and technical information.

Communication Objective 3. **Effectively disseminate knowledge on integrated management of natural resources, climate change, and natural disaster.** The strategy will help make widely accessible and understandable regional and global best practices to support outreach to country level actors and regional institutions, decision makers and beneficiaries at local level. Formal and informal communication channels, a mix of media and formats tailored to the intended audiences will be used to disseminate innovations in a broad range of natural resource management technologies and approaches, from science-based to grassroots-driven traditional approaches. Effective communication initiatives to facilitate the uptake of innovations by local communities (where applicable) should address resistance/aversion to innovation that is reported by many development practitioners working with local

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[1] These include: Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Land Degradation Assessment in Drylands (LADA), World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies (WOCAT), Climate for Development in Africa Program (ClimDEV), African Monitoring of the Environment for Sustainable Development (AMESD)

communities. The strategy will include media outreach and advocacy initiatives, making use of existing communication platforms of stakeholders, including websites and social media, such as Connect4Climate[2] and TerrAfrica/NEPAD's advocacy and mutual learning activities.

Communication Objective 4. **Provide communication support and strengthen the communication capacity of the SAWAP project teams.** The project will support coordination and enhance implementation of each country project's communication strategies financed within the SAWAP portfolio. As communication support is an integral part of the demand driven knowledge services provided by BRICKS, a crucial component of the strategy is to enhance communication capacity and skills at project level with the ultimate goal of creating a region-wide network of communicators. To optimize resources, learning opportunities provided by BRICKS to the SAWAP project teams will include modules on strategic communication. The BRICKS working group on strategic communication would promote and coordinate the preparation of a series of guidance notes on lessons learned and tips for effective communication.

Communication staff will collaborate and work jointly with the regional BRICKS project and country projects' M&E officers to track and evaluate the results of communication activities during project implementation. Periodic surveys will track increased performance in the SAWAP portfolio with regards to (i) innovation, (ii) communication, and (iii) knowledge.

The following tables describe the evaluation framework for the strategy and include communication objectives, proposed interventions, expected outcomes, indicators and means of measurement, as well as a preliminary action plan to be refined once the communication research phase has been concluded.

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[2] See http://connect4climate.org/

Table 1: *Communication Strategy: How it supports BRICKS*

BRICKS Project Development Objective (PDO)	Communication challenge	Communication objectives to support the PDO of BRICKS	Communication intervention	Communication Outcomes	Communication Impact* *(Contribution of Communication to Desired Change(s) of Overall Project)*
Improve accessibility of best practices and monitoring information within the SAWAP portfolio on sustainable land use and management	• Multiplicity of similar donors projects in support of the Great Green Wall Initiative in the region (see Table 9.1 in the PAD)	(i) Harmonize strategy, actions and tools in support of the GGW and sustain multi partners regional dialogue	- liaise with the working group of communication experts established within GGWSSI, to agree on common visual and textual definition of the initiative, and develop and fine tune messages; - BRICKS web portal designed in such a way to be integrated in the GGWSSI umbrella platform	- Comprehensive vision and consistent messages on progress and accomplishments of the Initiative emerge from the "noise" of multi actors communication efforts (symphony instead of cacophony); - The evolution of the Great Green Wall Initiative into a sustainable landscape program is understood by the relevant regional institutional actors; - Increased support for long term, integrated initiatives to address the cross-cutting nature of land degradation and desertification	Lessons learned contribute to influence environmental policies at national and regional level

• Coordination among SAWAP project teams and implementing agencies	(ii) promote collaboration and build a community of practice among the project teams and key stakeholders of the SAWAP portfolio as well as with the implementing institutions of the BRICKS	- biannual workshops between the implementing agencies and project coordinators in each country - Establish a consistent flow of information among the SAWAP projects teams to feed the BRICKS web portal; - establish a virtual collaborative space for the country project teams and implementing agencies to allow knowledge exchanges across projects and across teams	- Lessons learned and knowledge produced in each project are gathered, processed and disseminated - Country projects benefit from lesson learned in similar projects and global and regional best practice	
• Accessibility of scientific knowledge and innovative technologies at grassroots level • Regional diffusion of	(iii) effectively share knowledge on innovations in managing natural resources, climate change, and natural disasters	- public awareness campaign on the importance of sharing good local practices in environmental management and sustainable development; - media outreach (beyond project positioning and visibility to include training for journalists); -capitalization and dissemination workshops; - use of existing communication platforms of stakeholders, including rural radios, websites and social media, such as Connect4Climate and TerrAfrica/NEPAD's advocacy and mutual	- Regional and global best practices are widely accessible and understandable	*argued, not measured*

	grassroots-driven traditional approaches		learning activities to establish information channels to and from the local level ; side events and exhibitions (documentary and photos) in major international events (conferences, workshops, etc…)	
			- strategic communication modules included in south-south learning events organized within BRICKS - on demand communication based assessment carried out in SAWAP projects;	
	• Low communication capacity of SAWAP implementing agencies; • isolated and sporadic communication activities at project level; • duplication of communication efforts	(iv) provide communication support and enhance		- Outreach to country level actors and regional institutions, decision

		the communication capacity of the 12 country project teams in the SAWAP umbrella		makers and beneficiaries at local level is facilitated - a region-wide network of communicators is created	

Table 2: *Monitoring Framework for the Communication Strategy*

Communication Strategy Outcome	Indicator	Measurement Methods
Comprehensive vision and consistent messages on progress and accomplishments of the Initiative emerge from the "noise" of multi actors communication efforts	% of public aware of the initiative and its accomplishments # of news items reporting on the GGWI	Survey (relevant survey population) Media content analysis
The evolution of the Great Green Wall Initiative into a sustainable landscape program is understood by the relevant regional institutional actors	% of institutional actors who are knowledgeable about the landscape approach	Survey (relevant survey population) Key informant interviews
Increased support for long term, integrated initiatives to address the cross-cutting nature of land degradation and desertification	# of coalition initiatives advocating for integrated NRM, climate change and natural disaster	Special study
Lessons learned and knowledge produced in each project are gathered, processed and disseminated	# of knowledge products available on the portal	Project reports Web portal traffic analysis
Country projects benefit from lesson learned in similar projects and global and regional best practice	Virtual collaboration space established and used % of country projects teams satisfied with the services offered through the web portal	Observation and web portal traffic analysis Survey (relevant survey population)
Regional and global best practices are widely accessible and understandable	# of multi format dissemination toolkits produced Scale 1-5 on quality and usability of products # of news items reporting on innovations in managing natural resources, climate change, and natural disasters	Project reports Survey (relevant survey population) Media content analysis
Outreach to country level actors and regional institutions, decision makers and beneficiaries at local level is facilitated	# of requests for communication support from SAWAP project teams Level of satisfaction of project teams requesting communication support	Project reports Key informant interviews
A region-wide network of communicators is created	Existence of a regional network characterized by regular meetings/workshops, mailing list, newsletter, virtual venues for exchange purposes	Observation, project reports, records

Table 3: *Preliminary Communication Action Plan*

Communication objective (i) Harmonize strategy, actions and tools in support of the GGW and sustain multi partners regional dialogue							
Stakeholders/ Audience	**Type/Level of change[3]**	**Activity**	**Message**	**Channels/ media**	**Expected results**	**Responsibility**	**Deadline**
communication experts of GGWI partners institutions (OSS, IUCN, CILSS, WB, TerrAfrica, GM, AUC, FAO, etc…)	information	Compile a list of all the communication persons working in the GGWI partners institutions , TerrAfrica and similar regional initiatives	n/a		regularly updated list and calendar	OSS, IUCN, CILSS, WB communication team	April- May 2013 (completed)
		Establish and regularly update a calendar of meetings and events relevant for the GGWI					ongoing
	information	Periodically organize virtual meetings with GGW partners	Always debrief on activities to refine competencies	Meetings Reports Briefings	a continuous flow of information among communication GGW partners with regard to activities, events and results achieved is established		June 2013 ongoing
		Organize meetings on GGW communication at the margins of COPs and other institutional events					July 2013 (Ouaga Workshop) September 2013, (Namibia/CoP11) ongoing
	collaboration	Support the development of a corporate visual identity for the initiative	A jointly agreed visual and textual definition of the initiative is more effective	workshop	communication experts share a common vision of mosaic approach for the GGWI and use the new logo and communication materials		September 2013, (Namibia/CoP11) ongoing
		Contribute to the design of a brochure on the GGWSS					
	information	Organize bimonthly virtual meetings on the implementation of the GGW platform	Always debrief on activities to refine competencies	Meetings Reports Briefings	Integration of BRICKS web portal in the GGWSSI umbrella platform	CILLS	December 2013 ongoing
		Regularly update the PIU on GGWISS progress					
Communication objective (ii) : promote collaboration and build a community of practice among the project teams and key stakeholders of the SAWAP							

*Level of change needed to achieve the objective according to the AKAP ladder (awareness, knowledge, attitude, practice/behaviour)

Stakeholders/ Audience	Type/Level of change[4]	Activity	Message	Channels/media	Expected results	Responsibility	Deadline
portfolio as well as with the implementing institutions of the BRICKS							
SAWAP projects team members (WB)	knowledge	Organize meetings and prepare supporting materials (PPTs, talking points, flyer, etc…)	BRICKS added value	one-on-one meetings with TTLs; workshops;	SAWAP task teams are informed about BRICKS and motivated to use its services	WB	Project's launch
		Assess their communication and capacity needs, as well as their constraints	n/a	survey instrument			
SAWAP projects implementing agencies (country)	knowledge	Organize meetings and prepare supporting materials (PPTs, talking points, flyer, etc…)	BRICKS added value	Workshops;	SAWAP country teams are informed about BRICKS and motivated to use its services	WB	Project's launch
		Assess their communication and capacity needs, as well as their constraints	n/a	survey instrument			
	collaboration	Convene biannual workshops with project coordinators;	Promotion of good practices and innovations brings mutual benefits; consistency in knowledge sharing is key	Workshop	SAWAP country teams use the BRICKS services and consistently feed the web portal	CILSS.OSS, IUCN	End of first year of BRICKS implementation
		Facilitate and stimulate debate on SLM practices		discussion forums; blogs			
Key stakeholders of SAWAP	awareness	Identification of key stakeholders in each country	BRICKS added value	Mailing list; Reports; TerrAfrica	Strategic actors join the emerging	WB, CILSS.OSS, IUCN communication team	January 2014 ongoing

*Level of change needed to achieve the objective according to the AKAP ladder (awareness, knowledge, attitude, practice/behaviour)

Stakeholders/ Audience	Type/Level of change	Activity	Message	Channels/media	Expected results	Responsibility	Deadline
portfolio (Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Agriculture, etc…)		project and outreach;		website;	community of practice		
	knowledge	Piggyback on BRICKS learning events and study tours to promote good practices and innovations	Importance of being part of a regional community sharing similar objectives and interests	Discussion forums, blogs; e-newsletter (automatically generated from CILSS website;		CILSS,OSS, IUCN	End of first year of BRICKS implementation

Communication objective (iii) : effectively share knowledge on innovations in managing natural resources, climate change, and natural disasters

Stakeholders/ Audience	Type/Level of change[5]	Activity	Message	Channels/media	Expected results	Responsibility	Deadline
Development practitioners	Awareness Knowledge Practice	Disseminate scientific knowledge and innovative technologies and facilitate knowledge exchange	Value of best practices	Workshops Guidance notes Study tours Videos Web portal	Lessons learned and regional and global best practices are accessible, understandable and widely applied	CILSS, IUCN,OSS	End of first year of BRICKS implementation
Institutional actors	advocacy	Promote knowledge sharing events / Promote GGW partners initiatives and mosaic approach	Importance of replicating good practices and successful innovations	Meetings; Dialogue forums; Photo exhibitions; Printed materials (including info graphics, briefing notes and publications)	Best practices and innovations are taken into consideration at national and regional policy level		
NGOs and other grassroots organizations	Awareness Knowledge	Disseminate scientific knowledge and innovative	Value of best practices	rural radios learning events Videos/documentary	Global and regional local good practices are accessible		

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*Level of change needed to achieve the objective according to the AKAP ladder (awareness, knowledge, attitude, practice/behavior)

		technologies at community level (specifically targeting women and young people)			and understandable		
	Mobilization	Facilitate collecting and processing of local best practices	Importance of sharing good local practices	Existing platforms and networks, (Connect4 Climate, TerrAfrica/NEPAD)			
Journalists	Awareness Knowledge	Outreach to position BRICKS within the regional context	BRICKS as regional center for knowledge sharing	Press info kit		WB, CILSS, OSS, IUCN communication team	BRICK's launch
		Conduct informal training on environmental reporting	Need to show successful local stories for amplification and replication purposes	Media tour (piggybacking on study tours)		CILSS, IUCN,OSS	End of first year of BRICKS implementation
General public	Awareness	Design and conduct a campaign on sustainable natural resources management	Importance of sharing local practices and integrated approach	National and regional media outlets; Websites (TerrAfrica/NEPAD, C4C, etc…)		IUCN	Mid-term of BRICKS implementation

Communication objective (iv): provide communication support and enhance the communication capacity of the 12 country project teams in the SAWAP umbrella

Stakeholders/ Audience	Type/Level of change[6]	Activity	Message	Channels/media	Expected results	Responsibility	Deadline
SAWAP project country teams	n/a	Carry out communication based assessment at project level	n/a	n/a	Increased capacity of communicating effectively with project stakeholders	WB, CILSS, OSS, IUCN communication team	On demand
	Knowledge	Include communication modules in south-south learning events	n/a	Training workshops			End of first year of BRICKS implementation
	Knowledge	Ad hoc support communication activities at project level	n/a	n/a			On demand
	Knowledge Mobilization	Disseminate case studies on effective communication and facilitate knowledge exchange among communication specialists in the region		Mailing list; e-Newsletter; Online forum; Guidance notes; virtual meetings; yearly workshops	A regional network of communicators is created and communication tools developed		End of first year of BRICKS implementation

*Level of change needed to achieve the objective according to the AKAP ladder (awareness, knowledge, attitude, practice/behavior)