CGIAR Research Program on Forests, Trees and Agroforestry (FTA)

ISC meeting 4th November 2019

**Document No. 4b**

**Elements for a communication and outreach strategy for FTA**

The purpose of this document is to provide elements to inform the discussion on a communication and outreach strategy for FTA. It successfully presents the reasons for it, the challenges to be addressed and the means to address them.

1) <u>Why a communication strategy?</u>

Importance and roles of communication and outreach for FTA

Internal communication is an important tool to increase the coherence of a program that:

- Is multidisciplinary
- Involves multiple organizations
- Engages researchers that are only part time engaged in the program and have many other engagements
- Engages partners that have very diverse levels of engagement, from managing partners to partners in bilateral projects that may not even know that they are part of FTA

External communication and outreach is essential to:

- Communicate results
- As a mean of action, to inform, influence, drive change, as part of the Theory of Change of FTA
- To attract partners, including researchers
- To attract funding

Need for a strategy

- To contribute to the overall objectives of FTA
- To clearly position FTA in a very competitive field.
- To precisely target audiences.
- To communicate clear messages
- To best use scarce resources in order to achieve its objectives, orient choices and prioritization.

2) <u>Challenges</u>

Crowded landscape:

- Competition with numerous other organizations, UN agencies, think tanks, NGOs…
- Complex CGIAR organization, unreadable for layman
- Risk of competition/confusion with CIFOR, ICRAF, GLF

A multitude of communication opportunities, how to select, target?

Message to be conveyed

- Often not simple
- Diverse audiences

Objective is not just to convey information; it is to influence, to make change happen.


3) <u>Way forward</u>

**3.1 Identify and segment potential audiences:**

The scientific community; or rather, scientific communities:

- Forestry
- Agriculture
- Development
- Specialized communities
  - Climate change
  - FSN
  - Nutrition
  - Water
  - Agroecology…
- Science-decision interfaces
  - IPCC
  - IPBES
  - HLPE

International arenas, bodies and organizations

Big players in the development world

- International finance organizations (GEF, GCF…)
- Development banks
- ODA
- Big NGOs
- Foundations

National governments

Local actors

- Subnational governments
- Communities
- NGOs

Private sector

General public? An end or a mean?

**3.2 Clarify objectives:**

- Show FTA
- Show our partners
- Convey our messages
- In order to change things

**3.3 Distinguish the messages to be conveyed:**

- General, "institutional" messages (branding):
  o FTA is a reference
  o A broad research for development partnership
  o That addresses broad challenges
  o And supports the realization of the SDGs
  o In particular: landscapes, CC, FSN, livelihoods, value chains…
- More specific ones, linked to a specific topic, product, event

**3.4 Focus, at program level, on a set of channels**

Annex 3.11 of the proposal " Communication tools and approaches" contains a detailed list of tools and means.

Following the objectives and general messages underlined above, some of them are particularly important:

- The website, to be perceived as an essential scientific reference. This requires its organization in such a way that it can be used as a reference base.
- FTA newsletter to:
  o Give information on what we do, on the breadth of what we do
  o Give visibility to our partners
  o Establish FTA as a reference knowledge provider
  o Show results
- Synthesis products showing what we do, positioning FTA as a reference, and that can open to the diversity and breadth of what we do (including copublications, see partnerships, as well as participation to major publications like reports for science-policy interfaces)
- Program level events (including side events, webinars…)

**3.5 Focus, at program level, on a set of issues and events**

Identify a set of areas (thematic) and places (recurring events) in which to maintain a minimal constant presence. For instance:

- GLF
- UNFCCC
- UNCCD

- CBD
- CFS
- International organisations
- International science policy interfaces

Identify every year a set of issues, events, publications on which to focus program level efforts. For instance, towards post 2020 in UNFCCC and CBD, process on food systems and nutrition in CFS…

**3.6 Devise a 2 year workplan to implement the above defined orientations.**

This is to be started following the ISC meeting, taking into account ISC recommendations.