

11. Marketing, communication and knowledge management strategy

CRP5 is predicated on the assumption that major changes in knowledge, attitudes and skills are needed to address the challenges of how water land and ecosystems can be managed to reduce hunger and poverty.

The Theory of Change, Impact Pathway and Partnership Strategies all contribute towards achieving impact. Marketing, communication and knowledge management (MC&K) cut across all these areas and will play a crucial role in building the overall strategy to achieve impact. Traditionally, CGIAR MC&K were pigeonholed as corporate services, thereby isolating them from the research effort and marginalizing their importance in achieving impact.

MC&K are in themselves valid and rich disciplines with their own set of concepts, theories and rigorous scientific processes. It is now recognized that MC&K must also be part of the research effort from the outset in order to bring about the desired changes.

There has also been a shift from linear, top-down MC&K (i.e. sender–receiver) to more participatory, collaborative and customized approaches for different users and contexts. The use of social media is the most outstanding example of this, whereby users and their own networks are the ones actively communicating ideas and messages. Likewise it has been demonstrated that effective internal communication in a research program is a prerequisite to achieving and ensuring effective external communication.

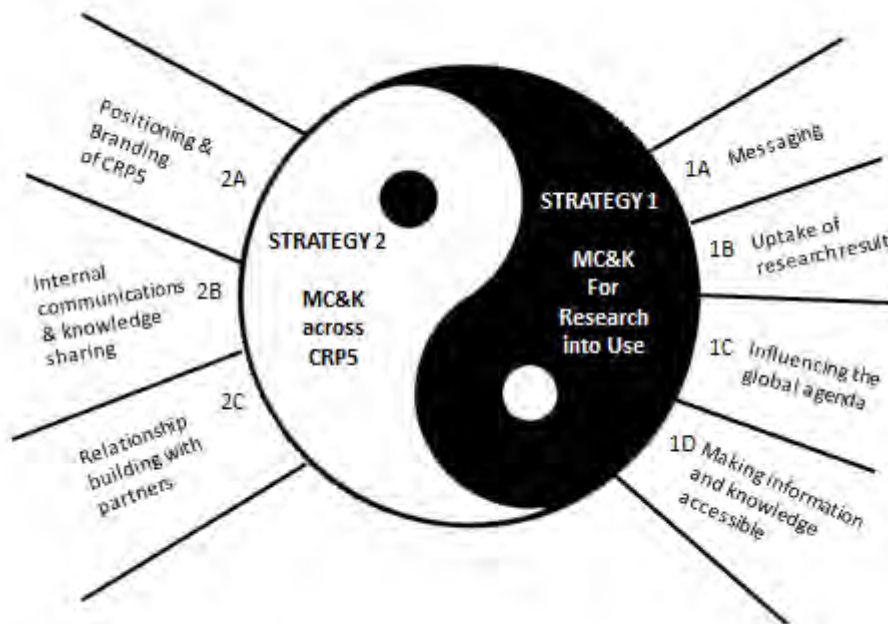
Goals and principles

The overall goals are to contribute to greater impact of the CRP5 research through both internal and external MC&K.

Programmatic areas of work, focus and follow up

The CRP MC&K strategy takes an innovative and integrative approach. As Figure 11.1 shows, the strategy integrates the MC&K sciences into the research effort while also recognizing the importance of supporting traditional efforts to improve MC&K across the whole Program. To do this, there are two overarching strategies and six component areas. All component areas are inter-linked, and systems and messages will cut across and support the CRP as a whole (SRPs, regional efforts and the Program).

Figure 11.1. Marketing, Communications and Knowledge Management (MC&K) Strategy for CRP5



11.1. Strategy 1: Marketing, communication and knowledge management for research into use

Research utilization is seen as just as important as the generation of research itself. For either to be effective, they need to be integrated.

Area 1A: Messaging

Messaging is about collaboratively developing and explicitly clarifying what the key messages are. It is an area rarely given dedicated time and efforts. Emphasis on messaging is a new way of contributing to building a collaborative approach, engaging partners, building awareness and contributing to the greater chances of achieving uptake.

It is important that messaging is seen as a process and not a top-down exercise where messages are developed through an iterative process amongst partners at various levels. The CRP will develop processes for achieving this.

Developing and clarifying what the key messages are will be critical for:

- to target uptake strategies for research results
- developing strategies to raise awareness and influence the global agenda
- building the links across SRPs and to contextualize this into the regional situation
- feeding into the internal communications and knowledge sharing
- being made available in the broad access strategies.

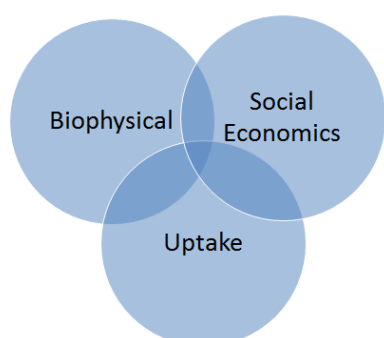
Area 1B: Uptake of research results

The *Developing uptake strategies* section details the need to see uptake as another discipline in a multidisciplinary approach and to ensure that uptake strategies are developed as part of, and integrated into, the research. Uptake is about scaling up and out, ranging from uptake at policy level to on-farm. MC&K is integral to this and should work hand in hand with the team.

The theory of change (see Chapter 3) underpins the research, ensuring that its selection and implementation are driven by an understanding of the problem and what is needed to make a positive change.

This leads to identified levers of change and research outputs as indicated in Table 3.1. Uptake strategies are the ‘how to’ of the theory of change and are needed to ensure results are being used to effect positive change. A main feature of an uptake strategy is that it is integrated into the research at the outset and seen as an integral part of the research effort, not as an afterthought (see Figure 11.2). An uptake strategy can comprise a number of different approaches, including involvement of stakeholders and relationship building, establishment of platforms, policy advocacy, capacity building, and information and communications.

Figure 11.2. Uptake seen as another discipline in a multidisciplinary approach to research



Impact Pathways are used to identify the process and roles of actors to achieve impact. Uptake strategies are developed to help move along the Impact Pathway. A dual approach to targeted uptake strategies is recommended:

Approach 1: Targeted SRP uptake strategies

Projects now form part of the bigger picture of a SRP strategy and a SRP impact pathway. This allows moving from project-based uptake strategies to a more integrated approach where the ‘sum is greater than its part’ and projects’ uptake activities are integrated into an SRP uptake strategy.

SRPs will be identifying problems/opportunities and matching SRP solutions to these. The SRP uptake strategies are built into this to operationalize the efforts needed to achieve uptake of the solutions. Developing and implementing uptake strategies at a SRP level will help ensure the SRP topics are elevated onto the agenda of different stakeholders.

A SRP uptake strategy aims to contribute to and achieve uptake through topic-based messages and identifying how projects will work towards changing the knowledge, attitudes

and skills of target audiences. These topic-based messages may range from the need to revitalize irrigation, to the reuse of wastewater for irrigation, to the need to regulate and support ecosystem services.

This will also include identifying issues of relevance globally and developing a targeted strategy to influence the global agenda.

Approach 2: Targeted regional uptake strategies

These strategies build linkages across SRPs to provide synthesized messages and integrated solutions to a targeted geographic area.

The regional uptake strategies take a problem-solving approach by matching identified problems in the region with potential SRP solutions. In this way, solutions are mixed and adapted to the specific situation and problem set identified. This then takes on a much more focused research-for-development approach. This becomes a key mechanism to integrate and link the SRPs by operationalizing the SRP impact pathways.

A region may represent different levels – for example, a basin, a country, an area like West Africa or even a state/province. How a ‘region’ is defined needs to be flexible, taking into consideration who the common target audiences are especially, but also the messages, solutions and levers of change needed to achieve action.

The regional hubs and partners within the relevant regions will be critical in developing the regional uptake strategies.

Processes for developing targeted uptake strategies need to be selected and continual lessons learnt should be fed back into the process. Typically, developing a targeted uptake strategy will involve:

- identifying the key challenges and problems in an identified geographic area and detailing the impact pathway
- matching research results that might solve the identified problems
- undertaking market research to further detail the levers of change
- developing strategies to move along the impact pathway
- undertaking monitoring and evaluation to continually assess the progress and feed back into the strategy.

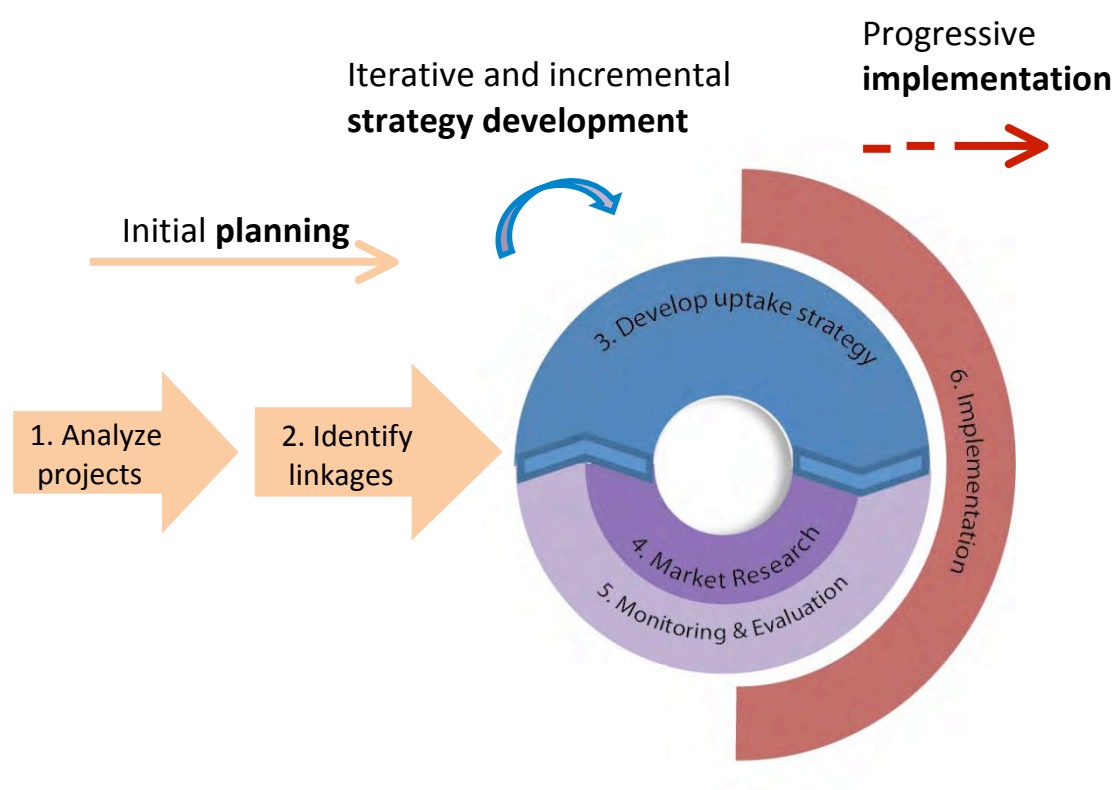
A typical uptake strategy may include:

- involvement of stakeholders (taking a participatory approach)
- internal communications
- relationship building and management
- capacity building
- information and communications.

Uptake requires an open, flexible approach, that is ‘whatever it takes’ to stimulate action. It also requires getting stakeholders involved from the start of research, rather than handing over the results after it has been completed. Iterative and incremental approaches should be

taken while developing the uptake strategy to allow for a continual process of monitoring and evaluation feeding back into the development of the uptake strategy (See Figure 11.3).

Figure 11.3: Iterative and incremental approach to developing uptake strategies



Area 1C: Influencing the global agenda

Clear objectives are needed to determine which issues and agendas need to be influenced, such as introducing water and agricultural issues into the COP agenda. Targeted strategies then need to be developed to achieve this. MC&K are critical for achieving this.

Area 1D: Broad access strategies for international public goods

This involves making all information and knowledge available as broadly as possible, ensuring that it is easily accessible and promoted widely. This is complementary to the targeted (SRP and Regional) uptake strategies and supports their effectiveness by creating a broader reach, increasing awareness and building the credibility of its messages.

Work will be closely coordinated with the SRP on information to develop systems and procedures for sharing information and knowledge across the CRP, as well as contributing to the global knowledge system.

A focus on Area 1D ensures that efforts are made to identify international public goods and also that practices and systems are put in place to promote these globally.

11.2. Strategy 2: Marketing, communication and knowledge management across CRP5

This strategy focuses on developing CRP-wide systems for marketing, communication and knowledge management.

Area2A: Positioning and branding of CRP5

CRP5 will follow CGIAR family branding but will also need to reflect the partnership approach. Positioning of CRP5, through all its outputs and activities, needs to reflect the CGIAR strategic research objectives and the overall position of the CGIAR as being a leader in agricultural research for development.

Area2B: Internal communications and knowledge sharing

Internal communications and knowledge sharing is given high priority in order to build a sense of community, share results and lessons learnt more widely, and communicate messages to staff and partners working across SRPs and regions.

A range of web-based tools will be used to share and exchange information. A number of CGIAR institutes have already developed a number of knowledge-sharing tools. Thus, emphasis will be on building on tools and systems that already exist rather than developing new systems.

Tools and systems are only one part of achieving effective internal communications. The MC&K area needs to coordinate and mentor internal communications efforts with management, leaders and the human resources department.

Area 2C: Relationship building with partners

As a research-for-development initiative CRP5 is inherently partner-driven in identifying issues, undertaking research and achieving uptake (see section on development partnerships). Thus relationship building will be a critical element of the marketing and communication strategy. The aim of this area is to enhance and strengthen new and existing partnerships in the SRPs and regions.

The focus will be developing cross-program approaches to relationship building, providing tools and strengthening capacity in partner management, and establishing cross-institutional contact management systems to avoid duplication. Ensuring that CRP staff are not 'approaching the same people with different messages' will be one focus of this area, as it is a common dilemma in many programs.