

United Nations Development Programme

Communication strategy for agricultural reforms
intended to the Independent Commission

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List of abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
ADF	Association of Dekhan Farms
AIC	Agricultural Information Centre
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CP	Community Programme
DCC	Donors Coordination Council
DDC	District Development Council
DFID	Department for International Development
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations
GOT	Government of the Republic of Tajikistan
IC	Independent Commission
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
JRC	Jamoat Resource Centre
LAC	Legal Advisory Centre
NADF	National Association of Dekhans' Farms
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PMU	Project Management Unit
RT	Republic of Tajikistan
SDC	Swiss Development and Cooperation Agency
SRC	Strategic Research Centre
TV	Television
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
UNDP	United Nation Development Programme
WB	World Bank
WUA	Water Users Associations

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Introduction

Cotton plays a crucial role in Tajikistan, with 15% of export earnings, 35% of tax revenues and 60% of agricultural output. Furthermore, it is produced by the majority of the agricultural producing units, supporting about 75% of the rural population, and cultivated on 45% of arable land. Despite this predominant role, the cotton sector is characterised by low and stagnating productivities in production and ginning, a massive debt of 402 millions US\$ of the majority of the cotton producing units, producer exploitation by cotton processing and marketing monopsonies controlling as well inputs and outputs and current land use and competition policies and their implementation at local levels, impeding growth opportunities.

Specialists and experts report that the main reasons for the appearance and accumulation of cotton farms debts are a lack of access to objective and accurate legal, financial and economic information, and a lack of transparency in the funding mechanisms from and for the industry and the processing of raw cotton. Insufficient awareness of the agricultural sector in general, and of the cotton sector in particular, is characterised by:

- i) ineffectiveness of coordination and expertise of state programs and informational projects created from the state budget account. This has also contributed to a widespread interference of all state management bodies and local authorities into cotton production and commercialisation;
- ii) absence of a monitoring system for economic processes, especially in the agricultural sector, and inability to conduct comprehensive statistical analyses of the processes,
- iii) weakness of current agricultural sector legislation, and the poor legal provision of land restructuring processes, thus hampering any economic, financial or legal analysis.

Aware of the requisite for change and supported by the donors, the Government has issued the resolution 111 on March 5, 2007. This resolution clearly describes activities to be implemented, with the responsible bodies and the time frame. The implementation of this resolution will have extremely important implications to the farming community, the cotton producers in particular, and those stakeholders linked to cotton production and farming. Some stakeholders might need time to trust the proposed changes, while others might perceive losses following the implementation of this resolution. Resistance for its implementation might hence appear. It is hence necessary to accompany its implementation with a specific communication program, as proposed in the resolution itself.

The Independent Commission (IC) is responsible to manage the debt resolution. A first communication strategy document was adopted by the IC on December 30, 2005 (protocol 5). Some elements of it have been initiated, but the lack of funding and the absence of a clear mechanism for the debt resolution have resulted in small results.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Tajikistan has being mandated by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) to elaborate such a communication strategy for the Independent Commission (IC). The objective of the communication strategy is to provide the Independent Commission on Farm Debt Resolution with approaches, methodologies, activities, outputs and outcomes for them to effectively raise awareness among Dehkan farmers and the rural population about the Tajik Government's agricultural reforms and its Decree on Debt Resolution, and to ensure that a sustainable mechanism is in place for this awareness-raising to continue well after project implementation.

The proposed communication strategy presented here takes into account IC previous work and relevant official document. Since the debt resolution mechanism has not been approved yet, this communication strategy will have to be adjusted and complemented accordingly, in cooperation of the Government and the international donors.

1. The context

The Parliamentary Resolution 111 was signed by the President of the RT on March 5, 2007. As a Resolution, it stands lower than a law or a decree in the legal hierarchy. This implies that it is not required to be published in newspapers. It was however published in the Kishowar newspaper that was published at 2'000 copies.

This Resolution presents a set of activities within the agricultural sector with dates of implementation. The real new element of the resolution is the debt resolution and the communication activities. Most of the others, such as termination of government interference in production, have already been subject of a law or a decree, but not yet enforced. On one hand, this resolution represents a great opportunity for change. The donor community also support it, even if some donors consider it as necessary, but not sufficient. All donors recognise the need for communication activities for the resolution and its application.

Analysing the potential impacts of these reforms is complex as they concern most aspects of farming and commercialisation of the agricultural sector, and cotton in particular. First, it is not the result of a logical framework and is not systematic. It is more the result of negotiations between the Government of RT and the international donor community. Second, some of these activities have not been defined yet. This is particularly true for the debt resolution mechanism. The latter was not known by end of October, delay for the report delivery, and is still not adopted now. The communication strategy proposed in this report may hence need adjustment based on the coming decisions about the debt resolution, the role of IC and the support of the major international donors or otherwise. It is acknowledged that the implementation of the resolution 111 will have major impacts on the various stakeholders, in particular for those involved into the cotton supply chain. Initial stages of the implementation of the resolution might prove complex and difficult.

The UNDP experience in communicating the resolution 111 at the Jamoat Resource Centre (JRC) level has demonstrated that the four steps of the communication process have to be taken into account. For example, the approach used did not result in acceptance nor action (see box 1 below). This experience further hints to the fact that acceptance and action both require that the central government is actively involved in the communication strategy and conveys a clear and unique message. This has been acknowledged by most of the interviewed people.

Box 1: Communication process

Successful communication requires continuous engagement of the information sender towards the receiver and vice-versa. The process can be described in four steps:

1. Attention: the receiver first needs to get the information. One has to win his/her attention and send a clear message, clear of "noise" and respectful.
2. Understanding: it is the responsibility of the sender to find a way of establishing the understanding, hence the entry door for the receiver.
3. Acceptance: this step requires that the information is understood perfectly. However, it is not sufficient as the person or the group of persons might not believe it or accept it. An indirect indicator of acceptance would be that the person or the group of persons transmits positively this information.
4. Action: action by the receiver should follow. It might still requires support from the sender .

Several existing institutions as well as projects have communication, advising and/or training objectives and activities that are directly or indirectly related to agricultural reforms and hence, would greatly contribute to accompany the national communication strategy overall. Among them, there is:

- the weekly radio programme on the national Canal 1
- the coordinated Legal Advisory Centres (LACs) that are spread in several districts
- the Advisory Information Centres (AICs)
- a brochure "Freedom to farm" has just been published in 50'000 copies to be distributed through the LACs
- a cotton credit project has just been agreed. It foresees some advice through the banking institutions that would allocate the credits.
- Information posters for investors
- Technical Sheets that present information in a simple and innovative manner, and
- The creation of the Project Management Unit (PMU) for cotton projects financed by the World Bank (WB) and the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

Some of these initiatives cover rural areas, such as the weekly radio programme. But most initiatives are atomised, using own specific communication material in their working geographical regions. For “sensitive” messages to be disseminated at national level, such as termination of government interference in production and commercialisation and debt resolution mechanism, the atomisation should be reduced in order to decrease risk of confusion, enhance acceptance and action and allow to reach a critical mass. Most current initiatives also mainly work with the farming community. However, resistance to change has been acknowledged by the other cotton supply chain actors, such as the investors, the banks, the local government, etc.

The agricultural reforms concern at least 2 millions people. In order to see changes in the expected directions, the communication strategy should reach a critical mass of people who are then able and willing to take positive action. This critical mass varies according to the stakeholders. For the farming community, this critical mass might well be over 70% of the farm heads and farm workers, including women, but all gin owners should be reached. The strategy also requires the active, regular, iterative and positive cooperation among all stakeholders, namely the Government of RT, the international donors’ community, the private sector, the civil society and the farming community. It is also agreed among various experts in Tajikistan that the communication strategy will have to first concentrate on two main messages, namely mechanism of farm debt resolution and the termination of the state and local authorities into the process of production, harvest and commercialisation of cotton. Furthermore, it is clear that the Independent Commission (IC) will need to secure cooperation in order to be able to implement a successful communication strategy, cooperation in various forms: financial support, training, complementary activities, etc.

2. Main characteristics of the Communication strategy

2.1. Objectives

The proposed overall objective of the communication strategy of the IC is to accompany Tajik agricultural reforms, including the elements of the resolution 111, with the aim of increasing the reform process by informing all relevant stakeholders and by reducing their resistance to change.

The sub-objectives are presented in the annex 1:

1. Ensure sufficient financial and human resources, clear anchorage and validation of the communication strategy
2. Create and disseminate coherent, simple, reliable, trustful and useful generic information nationwide about the actual agricultural reforms, approved by the Government of RT
3. Ensure access to useful and timely adapted information about the agricultural reforms, their expected impacts and the implementation process and enhance the understanding from all concerned parties
4. Provide opportunities for stakeholders’ feedback and support, in particular for the farming community
5. Monitor activities and results of the communication strategy for communication purposes and for regular adjustment of the communication strategy.

2.2. Target audience

The primary target audience are the stakeholders active in farming and cotton in particular, namely:

- Farm heads, farm workers and members: these actors are informed about their rights and obligations as well as the changes in the cotton sector, the debt resolution, etc. They trust the new regulations and are willing and able to act upon. Particular attention will be paid to small farm heads, farm workers, farm members and women in particular.
- Farm input and service suppliers and output buyers, such as investors, banks, fertilizers suppliers, gin owners, investors, international buyers: the private sector understands the reforms, the new opportunities and the required changes within their management.
- Government: local and central: the authorities know about the various changes and are willing and able to implement them.

The communication strategy also needs to reach other stakeholders, such as the civil society, including the “intelligentsia”, specific relevant university faculties, local active NGOs, etc. in order to ensure sustainability and success of the reforms’ implementation. Furthermore, the international donor

community within Tajikistan and abroad will also need to be well informed about the changes in the legal and economic farming framework in order to adapt accordingly their activities, in particular in the cotton areas.

It should be noted that some actors are classified as audience, but may be instrumental for information dissemination and training too. For example, gin owners might have an interest to be involved in agricultural extension.

2.3. Approaches

The communication strategy will adopt a mix of approaches, such as:

- **Nation-wide communication strategy:** nation-wide dissemination is required for both messages in order to reach a minimal critical mass so that behavioural changes occur and can be noticed.
- **Stakeholders-wide communication strategy:** the agricultural reforms concern most aspect of production, input supply and commercialisation of agricultural products, and cotton products in particular, and all stakeholders. Success of the reforms requires behavioural change from all stakeholders. The farm workers will have to decide whether to get their land certificate or not and to become a farm manager or remain as a farm worker. Farm managers may see “their” farm size being reduced and will have to act accordingly. Local government will have to stop interfering in cotton production and turn into development planning. Services and input suppliers will have new opportunities and will have to adapt their strategies accordingly. Output buyers will have to manage the competition challenges. Central government will also need to accompany agriculture development in a different way.
- **Respect the stages of communication process:** the communication strategy needs to respect the four stages of communication and make use of a mix of tools and strategies accordingly (see also annex 3: Tools and approaches).
- **Communication leadership:** the communication strategy needs to be clearly institutionally anchored and well coordinated. The communication coordinator will, among others:
 - o Coordinate the information sequencing: the communication strategy requires a long list of messages. However, it is crucial that these are clearly sequenced in such a way so that noise is reduced and assimilation can occur. The sequencing will have to take into account the time needed for understanding and the timing of the various reform’s elements.
 - o Organise the big wave for reaching a critical mass, critical mass sufficient for inducing positive action
 - o Establish the time frame for information sequencing and repetition
 - o Create the various forms of information
 - o Take into account advise from the steering committee
- **Cooperation with existing information – training projects:** no communication strategy dealing with agricultural reforms can be implemented without the cooperation of the current institutions and projects in Tajikistan. This will greatly contribute to change facilitation as well as increase sustainability.
- **Involvement of the Government:** this is a requisite in order to create trust in the information. This is particularly relevant as several stakeholders may use their current power to dismiss messages as they might perceive a loss in their position.
- **Transparency:** the aim is to provide equal access to some basic reference information to all target groups and making these groups aware that all the other groups have the same basic reference information about the agricultural reforms and that the information is valid for all.
- **Flexibility:** the strategy has to remain flexible, particularly at district and jamoat levels where conditions (relevance of cotton, resistance to change from the various stakeholders, presence or not of established training – advisory projects, etc.).
- **Use of tools from the participatory, change management and gender approaches:** in the strategy it-self (see Annex 3: Tools and approaches) and in communicating with the target audience at district and jamoat levels.
- **Monitoring:** monitoring the progress and communicate the results (both outputs and impacts) is a decisive factor that will support the various stakeholders to trust the information and to take action.

2.4. Channels

No new institution should be created. There are several existing institutions, public or otherwise, which may serve as communication transmitters as well as support to the communication process. In order to reach a critical mass for change, all these channels should be ideally included in the communication strategy, at least for generic information dissemination. Some may require some support in form of training or equipment.

The existing channels that may potentially be used as information transmitters are:

- **Office of the President:** every body agrees that the President should be actively involved in the communication process through TV appearances, statements in the media, validation of the basic reference document and letter to the local government leaders.
- **Ministries and their Departments at district level :** Ministries contribute in many ways:
 - Dissemination of the basic generic information, special edition of the newspapers, basic communication material, etc.
 - Participation in the steering committee at national level
 - Creation and manage district task forces that are responsible to coordinate communication at district level
- **National Association of Dekhan Farms (NADF):** the NADF has a central role to play, not only for disseminating information material in general, but also for support, training and for allowing for feedback, specifically to farm heads and farm workers.
- **Research institutes related to agriculture and their antennas:** involvement of these institutions in training and advising within the farming production sector should increase following the reforms. Being able to contribute to the communication strategy would provide them with useful information for dissemination as an entry door. Further research-actions could be introduced.
- **Mass media:** the mass media are most important in this strategy. This will include:
 - At least 2 special editions of a specific newspaper, published in very high quantities. The first will have a statement from the Office of the President as well as specific articles on the reforms. The second will include success stories, obtained progress and further articles about forthcoming reforms.
 - The pursue of the weekly radio programme
 - Several documentaries and clips on the TV
- **Universities:** universities, with the faculties of agriculture, economics and law in particular, are often forgotten in communication as well in various project activities. They are however training the future leaders of the agricultural sector among others. Specific lectures as well as training opportunities for students should be included as a communication channel.
- **Legal Advisory Centres (LAC):** the LACs are also central as the 90 units may disseminate information, in particular to rural population, offer advise and contribute to the monitoring.
- **Agricultural Information Centres (AIC) :** the existing AICs are key in disseminating information as well as in providing support and advise on particular issues in cotton production, soil fertility, farm management, etc. They may also contribute to the monitoring process.
- **DDCs and JRCs:** They have comparative advantages in disseminating information material, offering support to the local officials and the civil society through training in participatory agricultural planning and in the rights and obligations of the supply chain actors, organising multi-stakeholders meetings and round-tables, namely with the private sector and the civil society. DDCs and JRCs may also contribute to the monitoring process.
- **Banks:** banks that are active in the cotton areas are potential beneficiaries of the reforms and might hence have interest in disseminating some of the messages as well as offering support in aspects such as rights and obligations of the creditor and the debtor.
- **Water User's Associations (WUA):** these small organisations within the farming community may contribute to information dissemination.

Note that gin owners might take part in offering advices to the farming community in the mid or long term. In the short term, they remain within the target audience.

2.5. Form and content of information

Studies and experience shows that the form of the information is not only important for getting attention, but for the whole communication process. Disposing of several different forms of information increases the success rate. Furthermore, the requisites for information repetition, credibility and feedback and training opportunities have dictated the various forms of information.

The strategy include the following tools and communication material (see also Annex 3: Description of tools for further explanations):

- **Letter:** the Office of the President should inform the various Ministries and local government leaders by letter about the enforcement date of the agricultural reforms.
- **Press conferences:** the Office of the President should organise at least one press conference that is relayed by the media.
- **Basic reference document:** a file composed of technical sheets should be used as basic reference document. Each technical sheet (TS) describes a specific concept on one A4 page (recto and/or verso). The whole file (as each sheet) is officially validated by the Government in order to increase its credibility. It is to be distributed to all stakeholders in parts (one, a few sheets or the whole file) of in full. The various stakeholders need to be informed that the TS are available to all and the same file is distributed to the various stakeholders. This is to support the understanding and action steps. It may also be used as a basis for training modules. The content is the various aspects of the agricultural reforms. The World Bank has began elaborating such technical sheets on the major reforms aspects, basic cotton market notions, rights and obligations of the various cotton actors as well as basic concept in accounting, farm management, workers rights (and obligations), soil fertility, cotton production, etc.
- **Special edition in newspaper:** at least one special edition in a or several newspapers should be printed in at least 800'000 copies in order to be distributed nation-wide. Depending on the cost and the impact of the action, a special edition could be organised every 6 months. The content of the first special edition should be the debt delinkage, its mechanism and its expected impacts. Success stories of profitable farms without "chronic" debt should also be described. It should also include the fact that weekly cotton prices will be published regularly in the newspapers and communicated by the NADF. Further editions may include progress description as well as other aspects of the reforms.
- **Newspapers:** one (or several) newspaper should be chosen to print at a weekly basis prices of the major agricultural commodities, namely cotton, wheat, potatoes, goat, beef and several horticultural products. Kishowar might be a possibility. Other articles about the various aspects of the reforms as well as success stories should be printed on a regular basis. Success stories should also relate successes obtained by women.
- **Weekly radio program:** a 30' weekly radio program already exists and positively contribute to enhance communication of the reforms. It is hence included in the strategy. It mainly deals with agricultural issues. This program could be extended to twice a week. Information should also include a weekly cotton price announcement. It should also have gender topics. Another program might also be created for targeting non-farming stakeholders.
- **Documentaries and clips on TV:** several documentaries (15-20') and clips (3' long) are created to be shown on television. UNDP which has a competent communication unit could undertake this activity. The topics would be: rights of farm workers and heads, role of women in farming and cotton production in particular, soil fertility, how to calculate profits from different crops, how to get the land certificate, how to choose a creditor, etc.
- **Hotline:** a free hotline for enquiries is to be implemented. The aim is to allow anonymity as well as free access to information as well as opportunity for claims to all. Studies have shown that some groups within the farming community have a lower attending rate to meetings or training sessions. The hotline would allow individual members of these groups to have access to an easy and anonymous source of information as well as advice. It is evident that the hotline will not be able to solve all the claims. However, it may offer information on where to get further advise (list of AICs, LACs, where to get the Technical Sheets, etc.) or how to proceed for simple matters.
- **Mobile information/advising team:** a team of two persons would travel in rural areas with the aim to inform and advice, mainly within the farming community. One of the team member should be a woman. Their program would first prioritised districts where no AICs, LACs, ADFs, etc. and/or no projects with training activities on related topics exist. The team should be able to programme information/advising events in different locations in order to be allow often marginalized population to take part: bazaars, mahallahs, private homes, crop fields, schools, clinics, etc.
- **Communication material:** simple communication material should be prepared in relation with the reforms and the communication strategy. Examples are:
 - o **Cotton harvest bags:** these are printed with the phone number of the hotline and a slogan related to the reforms, such as: "I have my land certificate. And you?", "Questions or claims about cotton: call free and anonymously!", etc. The Tajik flag may also be printed. This communication material is implicitly intended to women, representing 80% of the cotton workers. Cotton shopping bags could also be printed with messages related to other issues relevant to the reforms.

- **Calendars:** calendars are cheap to print and easy to disseminate and to hang everywhere. They should also have a slogan, the Tajik flag as well as information about the hotline, the LACs or other. Calendars with specific messages towards farm workers and women should also be printed and disseminated.
- **Web page:** the web page is more destined for the local “intelligentsia”, the international donors in Tajikistan and abroad and those who have access to internet. The creation and updating of the web page may be allocated to a specific government institution or otherwise. The location of the web pages dedicated to the reforms is to be determined still. The web page would include:
 - Weekly commodity prices
 - Qualitative and quantitative indicators of process and impacts, disaggregated by region, district, gender, etc.
 - Success stories of female and male farm heads, but also of other stakeholders, such as input suppliers, banks, gins, hukumats, etc.
 - Technical sheets
 - Indications about where to get individual information for the specific stakeholders (women, farm workers, farm heads, gin owners, banks, input suppliers, hukumats, etc.): hotline, training, LACs, etc.
- **Inter-departmental task forces at district level:** It is particularly appealing as the reforms are from the government. District departmental task forces may be inter-departmental, including Agriculture. It would be a focal point for the agricultural reforms and communication in particular at district level. It would be responsible for communication towards the local government as well as being an information point for the population overall. The experience of UNIFEM should be included. Furthermore, the current inter-departmental task forces at Women’s Committees should be involved in the implementation of the communication strategy.
- **Temporary working groups:** several temporary multi-stakeholders working groups are coordinated by the communication leader on several aspects of the reforms at national level. Other such groups may be created by the individual institutions or projects for training purposes at district, jamoat or village level. At each levels, a gender balance should be reached.
- **Training:** these may take various forms, such as field, farm and/or gin visits, inter-villages / jamoat and/or district visits, multi-stakeholders workshops, round-tables, field trials, etc. Training may be provided by specific project activities or delegated to selected and trained local NGOs. Specific training may be organised for the various stakeholders’ groups: farm heads, farm workers and women, etc.
- **Training material:** training material is based on the Technical sheet (and makes reference to them), is elaborated for specific issues and is destined to specific stakeholders’ groups, namely farm heads, farm workers, women, university students, input suppliers, NGOs, WUAs, local government, etc. The training material is created by the institutions or projects responsible of the specific training in the specific geographical areas.

Specific initiatives might also be taken, such as organisation of competition. Prizes could be a 2 mn presentation of the winner on TV or radio. Competition examples could be: the best input suppliers in a district, gin with highest baled cotton quality, etc.

Information about the agricultural reforms will have to be disaggregated and transmitted in sequences (see annex 2: Information dis-aggregation). The dis-aggregation and the sequencing of the specific messages depend on various and sometimes contradictory factors that will have to be taken into account.

3. Activities, resources and organisation

3.1. Activities

The logframe is given in the appendix. It clearly specifies the required activities to fulfil the 5 specific objectives.

Ensure sufficient resources

The activities should ensure that the communication strategy is institutionally anchored, its leadership clearly allocated and validated and that resources, financial and in-kind, are secured in order to undertake the communication strategy with the expected results.

The activities are, after UNDP’s presentation to IC:

- Work with the government of RT to finalise the communication strategy once decisions have been made
- Endorse the communication strategy
- Nominate a national communication leader. The latter could be the IC with delegation to another institution. The leadership needs to be credible and accountable.
- Establish a national steering committee with representatives of IC, the government, the international donors community, the farming community and the private sector.
- Secure resources for the national communication leader. This includes financial resources as well as human resources. UNDP might help IC with the funding strategy.
- Through temporary workshops or seminars with potential contributors and existing institutions, allocate and secure the various information dissemination channels and their responsibilities as well as responsibility for dissemination at national and local levels as well as advise and training activities at national and district levels.

Basic generic information

The objective is to dispose of a basic generic information document that is valid nationally, present most of the information in a simple and useful form, that can be easily updated, endorsed by the government, easily disseminated and cost effective. It is recommended to make use of the concept of the Technical Sheets and of which a draft already exist at the World Bank. This tool allows easy updating as it is possible to modify only one sheet if necessary.

The activities are:

- Contact the World Bank through its PMU for potential use of the Technical Sheets
- Complement the TS as required. This could be done through the responsibility of temporary workshops on the various topics. These workshops should also ensure the involvement of the Ministry of Agriculture and the research institutes in the relevant topics (in particular the agronomic chapters). These workshops could remain in the long run.
- Get the endorsement and validation from the government, in particular for the “sensitive” sheets, such as the rights and obligations of the specific stakeholders.
- Elaborate the other “generic” communication material, such as hotline, cotton harvest bags, calendars, etc.
- Establish the dissemination channels in cooperation with central and local authorities, existing projects and so on, so that all districts and all stakeholders are covered
- Prepare for publication and dissemination

Access to information

The aim is to ensure transparent, timely and useful information to all relevant stakeholders about the agricultural reforms and to support the understanding of the information.

It includes the following activities:

At national level

- secure the dissemination channels of communication materials in each district, in particular those with cotton production
- coordinate the creation of the various communication tools and materials and their dissemination
- elaborate the terms of reference of the inter-departmental task forces at district level
- facilitate the establishment of the inter-departmental task forces

At district level

- support the set-up of inter-departmental task forces at district level
- Coordinate the training of these task forces

Opportunities for feedback

The activities linked to ensuring feedbacks from the various target audience have been differentiated from the information access activities. This is to put emphasis on these activities. The objective is to ensure a feedback and support mechanism, at least in each cotton producing district.

The activities are:

- establish a national hotline, with calls being free of charge
- contact LACs for cooperation.
- In district where no LACs exist or need to be complemented with other supporting project or institutions, look for alternatives. Specific NGOs might be mandated.

Monitoring

Output and impact progresses are monitored. The results are then disseminated in various forms, among them, through the media.

Monitoring activities involve:

- IC nominates an institution for monitoring
- Elaborate SMART output and impact indicators for the various stakeholders groups
- Test the indicators
- Prepare the data base
- Prepare the result tables
- Prepare the communication channels and tools for the indicators
- Collect the data
- Publish the results on a regular basis.

Examples of indicators are:

- for the process:
 - o 800'000 newspaper copies of the first special edition have been distributed in the cotton producing areas
 - o 50% of the villages in districts without IAC, LAC have been visited by the mobile information / legal team in the first year
 - o 400'000 calendars (2008) have been distributed in rural areas
 - o At least 300'000 cotton harvest bags have been distributed to farm workers. 80% have been received by women.
 - o the hotline is functioning
- for the impacts:
 - o the Office of the President is regularly involved in communication issues (letter, press conferences, validation of the technical sheets, presence in several roundtables, etc.)
 - o technical sheets are in demand and are circulating in rural areas
 - o central and decentralised agricultural planning authorities do no more set up cotton areas or volumes quotas
 - o 80% of the farm heads, male and female, know where to get commodity prices

3.2. Organisation

The national communication leader has the responsibility of:

- report to IC and the steering committee
- secure the required resources, financial and in kind
- train dissemination channels if required
- facilitating the information access and training at district level, in cooperation of the inter-departmental task forces and the international donors active in specific district, and by valuing the existing institutions, such as IACs, LACs, research institutes, DDCs and JRCs, etc.
- coordinate mass media campaign
- elaboration of communication material and their publication

The steering committee is responsible for:

- supporting and advising the national communication leader, based on own experience and monitoring results
- endorse activities, budget and planning for the national communication strategy

The inter-departmental task forces at district levels are responsible of:

- ensure sufficient communication materials (TS, cotton harvest bags, calendars, etc.) are available and adequate for all stakeholders' groups, including women
- informing about the monitoring results at district level
- information flows and training within the various departments
- establish an information point at district level, available for all local stakeholders
- ensure the dissemination of communication materials through all available channels, in cooperation with the national communication leader

3.3. Resources and time frame

The communication strategy is to accompany the agricultural reforms and the implementation of the debt resolution in particular. The time frame for the IC communication strategy is not explicitly defined, in particular about the beginning of the communication activities. The resolution 111 quotes an information strategy that is continuous, at least until 2008.

Since attention is currently drawn to the debt resolution issues and their urgency, the communication strategy should be start with the official announcement of the debt resolution mechanism adopted by the government. Thus, preparation work should begin as soon as possible, so that the communication campaign begin can coincide with the first debt measure or at least with the government announcement.

As already mentioned above, delaying the begin of the national communication strategy does not exclude specific activities, such as farm training in credit costs and training of local government in agricultural development planning. Several projects activities are already linked to various communication needs for the a successful national communication campaign (LACs, IAEs, etc.).

The availability of resources (financial, material, human) is now a priority for a successful implementation of the communication strategy. Currently, the IC doesn't have the required human resources and funds for implementing, even beginning the communication strategy. It will have to get support from Government institutions and from the international donors community. It should also closely cooperate with the WB-ADB PMU.

Conclusions and recommendations

It is acknowledged that IC, the Government alone or a donor, even a major one, would not dispose of sufficient resource for a successful communication strategy at national level on its own. Intensive cooperation among the various stakeholders and a strong communication strategy are required.

It is also acknowledged that until the Government of RT has taken a decision about the debt resolution mechanism, there will be no willingness, nor ability to invest in communicating or support communication activities. Debt resolution is hence the entry door for the communication strategy. Furthermore, before the government makes its decision, attention for communication issues has been and still is very low, if non existent, particularly at central and local governments. Decisions about potential contributions for communication purposes have been and still are at a stand-still.

According to several donors, there is an urgent need to begin with communication activities. Based on the context assessment, it has been agreed that the national communication strategy should begin with the agricultural reforms, namely with the debt resolution. Current activities linked to the reforms are positive contributions to the success of the national communication strategy. However the implementation delay of the resolution 111, dated March 2007, and the road map reduce their impacts due to their atomised nature and due to the fact that all stakeholders are expecting relevant changes following Government decision and approval about the debt resolution mechanism. A further delay might discourage several stakeholders and hence, harm the credibility of IC and the Government about their willingness to make changes in the agricultural sector.

The proposed national communication strategy takes into account previous work from the IC as well as experience from current project activities related to the topic. At national level, a communication leader coordinates the elaboration of communication material that are valid and to be disseminated country-wide and activities with the mass media. It also coordinates and facilitate the establishment of inter-departmental task force at district level that will report to the communication leader. At district level, dissemination of the communication material is the responsibility of the task force. The responsibility for training and feedback activities may be delegated to current projects or otherwise. A steering committee at national level should support and advice the communication leader.

This present communication strategy, as already mentioned during briefings and the presentation, will certainly require adjustment, once the decision of the government is made and approved about the debt resolution mechanism and after the international donor community had the opportunity to acknowledge it.

The following recommendations are suggested for the preparation, the adjustment and the successful implementation of the communication strategy:

1. IC
 - a. Complete the development of the debt resolution mechanism and adopt the debt re-structuration programme,
 - b. Strengthen coordination with international donors about communication issues in general, and with the communication strategy in particular,
 - c. Adjust and complement this proposed communication strategy, based on the decision and approval about the debt resolution mechanism,
 - d. Establish the steering committee that will advise and monitor the strategy and its implementation,
 - e. Endorse and monitor the implementation of the communication strategy and its progress and impacts,
 - f. Encourage the pursue of the following activities:
 - i. Large dissemination of cotton world prices
 - ii. Regular update of the IC web page
 - iii. Elaboration of technical sheets.
2. Government of RT
 - a. Make an official public statement in mass media about the IC decision about the debt resolution and debt resolution mechanism. High ranking official authorities should make the announcement.
 - b. Provide regular broadcasting time on state TV and radio channels for communication purpose of the agricultural reforms, being communicated by the IC,
 - c. Inform authorities at central, regional and district levels about the implementation programme, the role and responsibilities of the various stakeholders and the expected results,
3. International donor community
 - a. Define their own commitment to the various elements of the communication strategy, based on their added value: preparation, funding, monitoring, etc.
4. UNDP
 - a. Pursue the support to elaboration of the communication strategy and its adjustment following the approval of the debt resolution mechanism,
 - b. Lead the coordination of the donors' community in communication activities related to agricultural reforms.

Annex 1: Logframe

Objective	Expected results	Indicators	Activities	Indicators	Assumption
Overall objective Accompany current efforts to make Tajik agricultural reforms, with elements of the resolution 111 in particular, come true with the aim of increasing the reform process by informing all relevant stakeholders and by reducing their resistance to change.					
Specific objective 1: Ensure sufficient resources, clear anchorage and validation of the communication strategy and leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the communication leader is clearly allocated to a recognized institution - the communication leader disposes of sufficient resources - the communication strategy is approved by the government and the IC - the donors support the communication - responsibilities are clearly allocated among the stakeholders at national and district level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - IC and the GOT validated the leader - Budget is secured and adequately adjusted to the objectives - The communication strategy is validated by IC - Donors support the communication strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UNDP presents the communication strategy to IC - IC works with GOT and donors to finalise communication strategy based on decision - IC endorse communication strategy - IC nominates / bid for leadership - Allocation of communication leader - IC organize funding research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the communication strategy is endorsed by IC - a credible communication leader is nominated - sufficient resources are secured for the coordination of the communication strategy - the major international donors support through finance or cooperation the communication strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The debt mechanism has been defined and approved. Termination of GOT interference is enforced Accompanying measures are defined.
Specific objective 2: Create and disseminate coherent, simple, reliable, trustful and useful generic information nation-wide about the agricultural reforms that are currently being formulated, approved by the Government of Tajikistan, in particular in cotton areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a simple, coherent, trustful and useful basic reference document approved by the government available - the regular update of the reference document is institutionally anchored - there is a clear and sustainable transmission channel for generic information - basic reference document available nation-wide 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a basic reference document has been formulated and approved by government - an / several institutions are responsible for the update of the reference document - a clear transmission channel for generic information has been set up and agreed upon - Generic communication material elaborated - Stocks available at each region, district and jamoat official offices + partners - XX% of farm heads know about access to TS, LACs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - contact the World Bank about the technical sheets for common use - elaborate / complement the technical sheets - get the TS approved by the Government - test the technical sheets - print at least 400'000 copies - set up sustainable dissemination channels - organise the dissemination of the TS and communication material through the proposed channels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - First edition (even if only about 2st messages) of TS file validated - Generic communication material available - Dissemination channels established and functioning - Hotline functioning and available - 30% of farm workers have received a cotton harvest bag before harvest 2008 - at least selected TS are available on 50% of farms the 1st year - at least a 2008 calendar is hanging in each jamoat 	
Specific objective 3:					

<p>Ensure access to useful and timely adapted information about the agricultural reforms, their expected impacts and the implementation process and enhance the understanding from all concerned parties at national and district levels</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ensure that information is timely related with the reform implementation's program - coordination established with partners for communication at national and district levels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 90% of the farming community understand what debt resolution is about (detail this indicator...) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - coordinate inter-departmental task-forces at district level - facilitate coordination of district information and training coverage with existing institutions and, if required, with recruited and trained NGOs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 40% of farms at district level have received some form of training about XX the first year 	
<p>Specific objective 4: Provide opportunities for stakeholders' feedback and support, in particular for the farming community</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - there is a feedback and support mechanism available for the various stakeholders, in particular for the less privileged - the feedback and support mechanism is used by the stakeholders, in particular to the less-privileged 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - XX% of the private sector and 90% of the farming community know of the feedback opportunities (hotline, LACs, etc.) - Use? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Contact all potential channel institutions for cooperation opportunities - Analyze the opportunity for a free hotline service nation-wide (ask WB too) - elaborate the feedback mechanism, based on voluntary institutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - all channel institutions are aware of the need for feedback and support opportunities, in particular for the less privileged and have been contacted - a light feasibility study for a free call hotline is available - there is a feedback and support mechanism, in particular for the less privileged 	
<p>Specific objective 5: Monitor activities and results of the communication strategy for communication purposes and for further adjustments of the communication strategy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the communication strategy is regularly monitored and adapted accordingly - the results are publicly available and published 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - there are clear output and impact indicators for the various stakeholders' groups - monitoring is clearly anchored - the regular indicators are communicated to the communication leader and those institutions involved 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - IC nominate an institution for monitoring - Elaborate SMART output and impact indicators for all stakeholders' group - Test the indicators - Prepare the data base - Prepare the result tables - Prepare the communication channels for the indicators - Collect the data - Disseminate results in adequate form 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - an institution is responsible for monitoring - SMART output and impact indicators are available and validated by IC and the steering committee - Those indicators have been tested - The data base and the result tables are available and useful - There is a dissemination procedure for the table results - Data are regularly collected - Monitoring results are regularly and publicly published and used for communication strategy 	

Annex 2: Information dis-aggregation

Selected messages

Reform implementation		Reform implications	
Action	Message	Implication	Messages
Debt resolution*	Debt will be solved Debt will be delinked from XX on. Debt will be restructured Farm heads and investors have to XX	The stakeholders have new rights and obligations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Farm wage workers: debt no more linked to investor, can get their land certificate, can hence have their own farm or remain workers - Farm heads: debt no more tied to investor, can hence choose their creditor, input suppliers and output buyers; size of managed farm may be reduced - Investors: their "old" credit is no more linked to "old" creditor, now competition for input and credit supply, - Local government: - Gin owners: debt no more tied to investor,
No more government interference in cotton production, commercialisation	The resolution about XX is now enforced Central and local government do no more set cotton targets, make land use requirements and control selling Farm heads are legally free to choose their cropping pattern and their buyers, also for cotton	The stakeholders have new rights and obligations as well as new opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Farm wage workers: can get their land certificate, can have their own farm or remain workers - Farm heads: free crop rotation, can choose their creditor, input suppliers and output buyers, size of managed farm may be reduced, - Investors: no more pressure for cotton production - Banking institutes: new opportunities - Local government: no more cotton areas decision, but participatory agricultural planning... - Gin owners: competition for cotton supply
Price reform	Cotton price has been reformed There is a new methodical that enforced from XX onwards This new methodical is the only one, valid for all	Only one methodical: this one... There is a minimum cotton price Cotton price varies Cotton price can be calculated World prices are published No more trader discount Sales tax at 10% of FOB value	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Farm heads: cotton price linked to world price, but with a minimum price, cotton price varies, cotton price published regularly in XX, price calculation and control possible, contract can be registered, there is a strategy to reduce cotton price variation with fixed price - Ginners/Investors: farmers can ask for contract registration, ginners too..., price calculation and control possible, can buy at fix price or otherwise, minimum buying price is set, prices are published, cotton selling price at any shipment term, sales tax of 10% FOB price, no more 5% "trader" discount - Local textile mills: can buy at ex-work price (not FOB) and fixed price basis, fixed discount for shipment. - Banking institutes: cotton price linked to work price with minimum price, price can be calculated - International buyers: - Local and central government: cotton price published regularly, cotton price linked to world price, but with a minimum price,
Farming credit	There are new opportunities for farming/cotton credit		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Farm wage workers: if land certificate, can have credit (?) - Farm heads: there are new sources of finances, need to understand how to choose which is the best, credit costs can be calculated and compared - Investors: competition may increase - Banking institutes:

Note: this table will have to be adjusted and completed when the decision about the debt resolution and the accompanying measures has been made.

Annex 3: Description of tools

Material and tool	Information content	Distribution where	Distribution how
Hotline	General information + addresses (LACs, IACs, etc.) + where to get more info	National: Mass media, press conference, communication material, TS, training, etc.	Through channels + mass media, communication material, etc.
Cotton harvest bags	Slogan + hotline phone number	National, in rural areas	Through more specialised channels
Calendar	Slogan. May have calendars with different messages for the various stakeholders	National, all stakeholders	Through channels
TS	All aspects of reforms + farm management + cotton production	National All aspects of reforms: stakeholders wide Farm management + cotton production: farming community + jamoat + IAC + etc.	Through channels
Special edition of newspaper	debt resolution, interference's termination, etc., hotline number,	National, Stakeholders' wide	Through channels
Newspapers	Cotton price, monitoring progress, success stories, hotline number, TS	National	
Weekly radio program		National	
Documentaries and clips	Debt resolution, interference's termination, etc.	National, TV, if possible shown at university + jamoats	TV + if possible training
Mobile information/advising team	General information, TX, etc.	District: in districts with low access to LACs, IACs, etc.	Recruited NGOs
Inter-departmental task forces		District	Mass media, web page, TS, hotline, weekly radio program
Web page	General information	National...	Through channels + mass media
Temporary workgroups	Specific issues	National District	
Training	More detailed issues from the messages (conditions, implications)	National: universities District:	Existing projects and institutions Recruited NGOs in specific districts