



**African Forum for Agricultural
Advisory Services**

Knowledge & Novelty for Africa's Livelihoods

**African Forum for Agricultural Advisory Services Knowledge
Management and Communications Strategy**

June 2015

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List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

AAS	Agricultural advisory services
AFAAS	African Forum for Agricultural Advisory Services
CF	Country forum(s)
CIKM	Communication, information and knowledge management
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IPR	Intellectual property Rights
KPIs	Key performance indicators
MDTF	Multi-Donor Trust Fund
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
QA	Quality assurance
VSNP	Virtual Social Networking Platform

INTRODUCTION

The Importance of Knowledge Management and Communications for AFAAS

The African Forum for Agricultural Advisory Services (AFAAS) vision (AFAAS 2011) is for *agricultural advisory services that effectively and efficiently contribute to sustained productivity and growth of African agriculture*. Its mission is *to promote lesson learning and add value to initiatives in agricultural advisory services through sharing of information and increased professional interaction*. Information and knowledge sharing is emphasised within the AFAAS Strategic Framework (ibid.) where a specific objective is *to ensure availability and accessibility of knowledge on agricultural advisory services (AAS) in Africa and worldwide*. The centrality of knowledge sharing and learning as a platform for technical change makes the implementation of a knowledge management strategy essential for AFAAS.

There is also a more strategic dimension, because AFAAS has the opportunity and challenge now to use its position at the heart of an AAS knowledge network to provide a leadership role in knowledge management initiatives in support of rural and food sector innovation. It is increasingly recognised that “innovation, rather than the increased use of inputs, is the essential driver of productivity and improved rural livelihoods” (Rural21.com 2015 citing the One Hunger Programme of Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development). In this context the AFAAS ‘feet on the ground’ (through its membership network of organisations working closely with farmers and within rural value chains) puts it in a pivotal position as an enabler of rural innovation both technical and institutional – and a conduit through which other national, sub-regional, regional and continental bodies can interact to realise more demand driven and consumer driven modes of technical change.

Given this pivotal role and the diversity of AFAAS stakeholders, the strategy outlined here goes beyond more traditionally defined knowledge management approaches and incorporates a strong communications component within a single integrated strategy.

Acknowledging Previous Contributions towards this Strategy

It is necessary to acknowledge the previous work that has provided a sound platform for the creation of this strategy. Two sources in particular are referenced here and additional sources are identified in the methodology that was used to research, consult and develop the strategy (Annex 1)

The AFAAS Learning Framework (AFAAS 2011) tells us that “*AFAAS best fits the description of a knowledge network that focuses on developing social relationships among actors, with the central objective of learning, accumulating knowledge and using the knowledge to add value to what they are doing.*”

The AFAAS Communication, Information and Knowledge Management (CIKM) Strategy (AFAAS 2014) (created in the context of a project supported by the International Fund for Agricultural Development, IFAD), refers to a knowledge ecosystem, and emphasises the importance of fostering dynamic intensive environments that create value by delivering the best knowledge products and services possible. It also sets up a key challenge: “*How to organize ourselves in such a way that in a combined effort access to relevant (and validated) information is vastly improved and our existing tools – website, virtual platform, media and social media – are utilized as effective means of communication with our stakeholders.*”

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The purpose of defining a conceptual framework here is to provide clarity and definition around a number of key concepts – and also to introduce some practical ways in which the AFAAS knowledge management strategy can be operationalised.

Learning in an Agricultural Innovation System

Information (and data) can be transferred, or shared – knowledge cannot. When we refer to knowledge sharing and knowledge management we are referring to a system and practices designed to encourage the creation and communication of information and content as a means to achieve strategic goals. Key elements of such a system are highlighted here.

When we consume information whether we learn anything useful as a result (gain knowledge) depends on how (or whether) we **engage** with it, as determined by our culture, experience, education – and the availability of supporting **knowledge services**.

The information we consume from various **media** has been consciously packaged to engage us with relevant **messages** and elicit a **behavioural response** – information that has been packaged for consumption we can refer to as **content**. Professionally crafted content is optimised for different **channels**, a document, a presentation, a blog, a radio script, a tweet etc.

When information and content are exchanged we refer to **communication** – [if communication is unilateral we are broadcasting, not communicating] – **professional communications take place for a purpose** – a narrative is built and an outcome is sought – when we communicate professionally we must be conscious of messages and purpose and be able to measure outcomes.

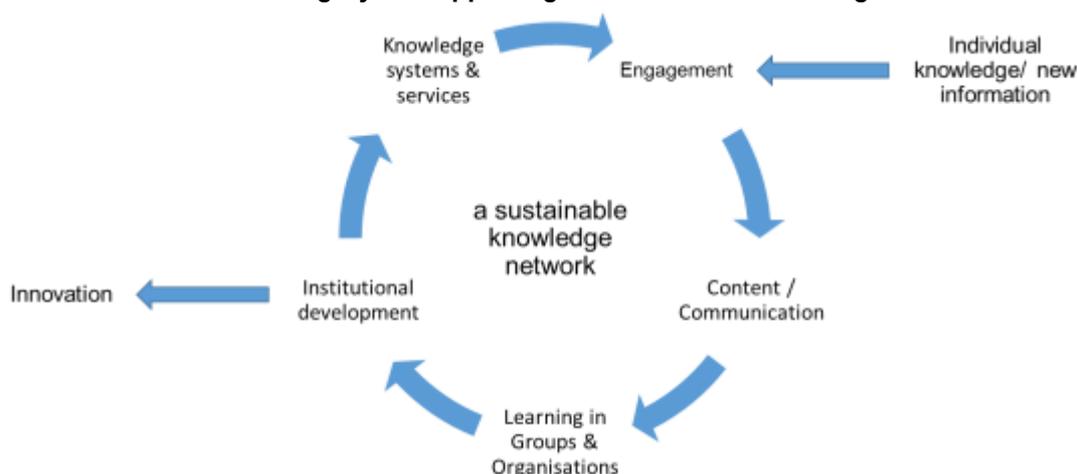
In the context of the AFAAS system the desired outcome is **learning** leading to **behaviour change** – productive new approaches are adopted, better policies are formulated, new partnerships are formed – a new state of **knowledge** exists as the foundation for further communication and change.

Learning that takes place within individual people and organisations may enable **localised technical innovations** and new **value creating** activities – however a successful knowledge network seeks to **scale and embed the capacity for learning** so that innovations occur with increasing frequency and involve a wider set of actors. This kind of learning goes beyond individuals and organisations and requires **institutional developments** and enabling change. Essentially the required network is one that **learns how to learn**.

From Conceptual to Practical Interventions

Understanding this cycle (see Figure 1) – from individuals and organisations, through group learning, through system changes and institutional improvements, to increased levels of engagement, content creation and communication – has important practical implications. The chain is easily broken – but there are a number of touch-points where the sponsor/ coordinator of a knowledge network can aim to create the right conditions for a learning network.

Figure 1: A Virtuous Learning Cycle Supporting a Sustainable Knowledge Network



A virtuous cycle of:

- ❖ Engaging individuals and organisations with relevant knowledge within a supportive, socialised knowledge network
- ❖ Incentivising the creation of content and building communications skills and capacity
- ❖ Fostering demand-side skills in the acquisition and use of content for learning
- ❖ Stimulating a knowledge economy through institutional improvements that remove constraints on new knowledge partnerships and reward innovation
- ❖ Constantly developing and improving available knowledge services and platforms
- ❖ and so stimulating higher rates of engagement and willingness to collaborate in creation of high value content

THE AFAAS STRATEGY IN CONTEXT

Starting Point

AFAAS is building a pan-continental network of country forums representing a diverse range of actors working directly or indirectly with farmers and other rural value chain actors. There are 14 forums fully launched with all institutional structures in place and a host institution; 10 close to launch; and another 16 in development. The exact number of individual organisations ultimately to be involved is not known exactly but even conservatively this is an incipient knowledge network of at least 250 diverse actors across 40 countries ranging from central and local government to farmers’ organisations, unions, local and international Non Government Organisations (NGOs) and the private sector. AFAAS’s wider peer stakeholder base additionally includes many of the most influential technical, policy and financial institutions on and off the continent also engaged in diverse programmes of support and financing for rural innovation and growth.

Table 1 : Types of Actual and Potential Country Forum Members	Some Key Regional and Continental Stakeholders
AAS providers and agencies	Global Forum for Rural Advisory Services (GFRAS)
Ministries of agriculture (and related ministries)	Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP)
Farmer organizations and commodity associations	Pan African Farmers’ Forum (PAFFO)

Civil society groups	Pan African NGOs Consortium on Agricultural Research (PANGOC)
Private agribusiness firms providing AAS	Pan African Agribusiness and Agro Industry Consortium (PANAAC)
Agricultural research institutions	Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA)
Agricultural extension education institutions	Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM)
End users (farmers, pastoralists, agro-pastoralists and agribusinesses)	Pan African Farmers' Forum (PAFFO)
Professional associations	Association of African Agricultural Professionals in the Diaspora (AAAPD)
Mass media organizations involved in dissemination of agricultural information	African Platform on Access to Information (APAI)
Microfinance institutions and banks	African Development Bank (ADB)
Development partners	IFAD
Policy makers	African Union (AU)

A great deal of positive progress is evident from review of the evaluation material, however it is also clear that the degree to which these actors yet perceive themselves as part of a unified coherent knowledge network is patchy. According to a recent baseline survey undertaken in the context of project support from a World Bank managed Multi-Donor Trust Fund (MDTF II) (AFAAS 2015, unpublished draft), most of the extension workers surveyed reported a lack of effective access to on-line interactions with agricultural advisory services communities of practice or thematic working groups – three quarters cited generally limited access to mechanisms to enable AAS providers to network. An October 2014 meeting in Addis to review AFAAS Strategy (AFAAS 2014) explored some of the issues and constraints and pointed to capacity issues around use of online tools, systems and connectivity problems, lack of coordination and guidance, recruitment challenges, and a generally weak culture of information and experience sharing. A knowledge sharing and content opinions survey (see Annex Two) undertaken for this strategy indicates very low baseline levels to which members codify their knowledge into shareable products.

This strategy sets out then to identify some practical ways in which AFAAS can accelerate progress towards the goal of a single coherent knowledge network. This is illustrated in Figure 2. The required coordination behind a strong network de-emphasises hierarchies and facilitates many-to-many trusted relationships between the participants. This figure illustrates how AFAAS will transition from supporting individual country forums to being at the centre of a continental AAS network – providing a natural conduit to this community for other regional and continental stakeholders.

Goal Statement

A sustainable knowledge network which:

- ❖ meets stakeholders' evolving needs for high value relevant content;
- ❖ adds value to the knowledge management programmes of other stakeholders;
- ❖ positions AFAAS effectively as a leader in AAS knowledge management;
- ❖ serves as a pan-continental platform for innovation and sustainable technical change.

Figure 2: AFAAS at the Heart of a Sustainable Knowledge Network

FROM



TO

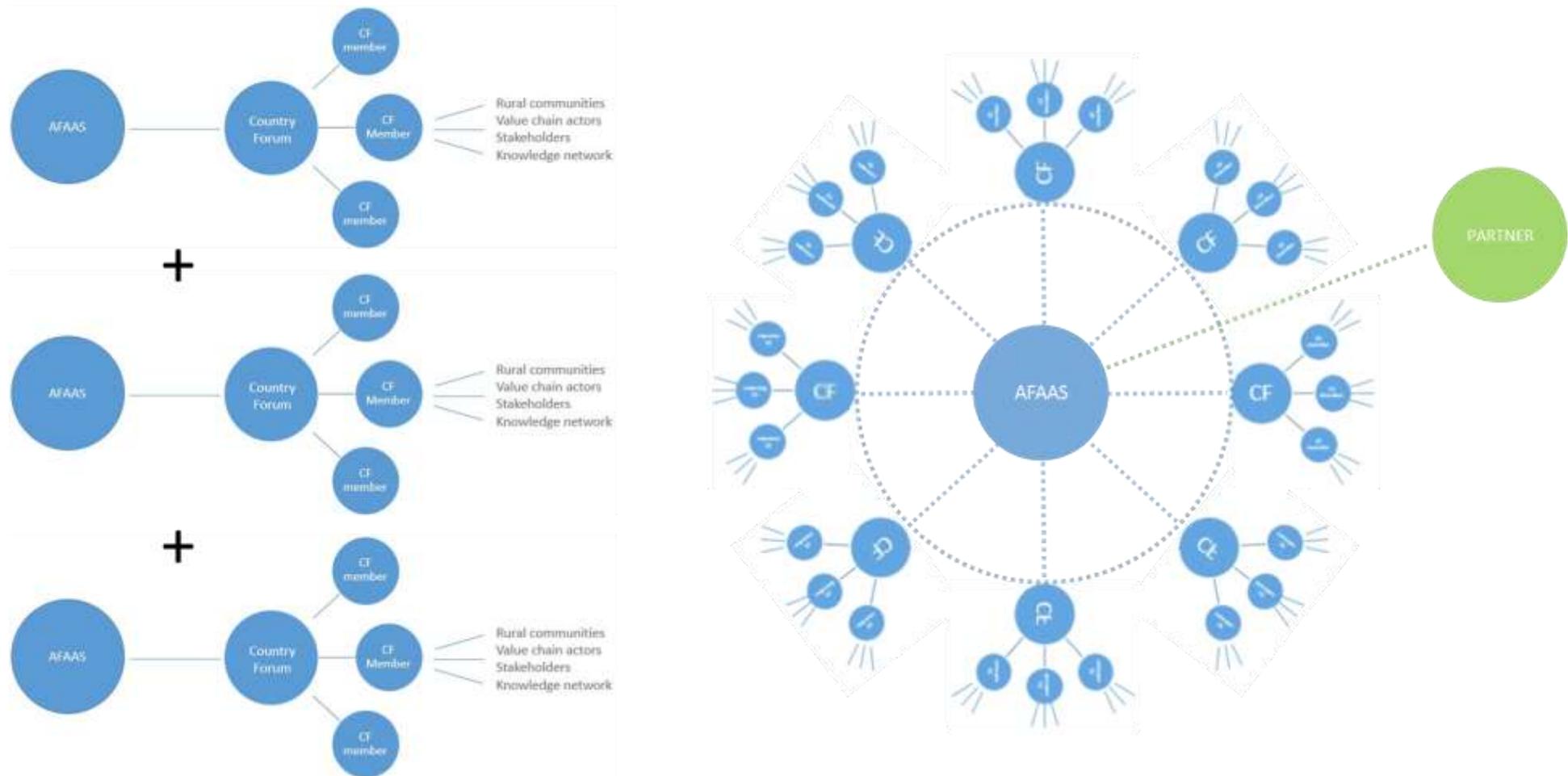


Table 2: Overview of the Strategic Pillars for AFAAS's Knowledge and Communications Strategy

Pillars	Purpose	Means
Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Build trust and confidence in the network. ❖ Mitigate risks: reputational, legal etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly communicated framework agreements on standards, rules and norms of the network. • Democratised governance of the network • Clarity on roles, accountabilities and key performance indicators (KPIs)
Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Build social capital & motivate knowledge sharing. ❖ Position AFAAS as a knowledge management leader 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular high quality multi-channel communications across the network and with key stakeholders • Simple intuitive means to participate with training • Clear pathways to professionally rewards and resource mobilisation opportunities.
Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Anticipate and plan progression from public to stable, mixed mode public-private financing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early wins focusing on content, network identity and capacitation. • Strong and innovative partnerships across public, private, rural communities and civil society.
Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Drive the availability of high value relevant content. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear signposting of types and standards of content available and required • Simple means to share existing content into network • Strong content partnerships • Incentivisation of knowledge content creation through challenge funds, revenue & investment opportunities.
Tools and Platforms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Support the network with world class knowledge services & infrastructure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus communications on content and communications rather than online of offline • Prove simple intuitive platforms that support mixed modes of communication.

STRATEGY BUILDING BLOCKS

Governance

Governance as a Strategic Pillar

Governance is of paramount importance. In order for people and organisations to accept and participate in a knowledge network and especially where the many of the interactions will be via electronic systems, including AFAAS's 'virtual social networking platform (VSNP)' and other digital platforms, the participants must trust that contributions will be respected, reciprocated and secure from piracy. These issues came out clearly from a knowledge sharing and content opinions survey undertaken for the purposes of developing this strategy. AFAAS needs to build trust by establishing and communicating clear understandings and agreements about expected behaviours, rules and norms governing information and content sharing.

Scope and Implementation of the Governance Work Stream

Table 3: Elements of Knowledge Network Governance	
Oversight and management.	Ensure adequate representation and feedback from the members in how their network is governed. Agree specific roles and responsibilities backed by job descriptions and terms of reference – support these roles
Network performance	Agree and monitor a set of KPIs that best measure performance at different levels of the network, using real-time data from the VSNP, website and social channels backed by other online and offline surveys – how much knowledge sharing? / of what kind and quality?
Rewards and incentives	Agree how content creation and sharing should be incentivised and ensure this is communicated and implemented – see also below
Content quality framework	Agree how appropriate standards will be maintained across the network – see also below
Content partnerships and syndication	Identify and partner with reputable sources of relevant content; likewise ensure that high quality AFAAS content is shared into these networks.
Intellectual property framework	Document the understanding regarding ownership and rights to use data and content within the AFAAS network including for repackaging.
Information security, data protection and privacy	Document standards regarding how information will be secured as appropriate and privacy respected.
Sustainable financing	Foresee and plan measures to maintain the levels of investment the network requires over the next 3 to 5 years.
Information systems / information & communication technology	Ensure that the underlying technologies and standards for information and communication are kept up to date and responsive to the network's needs.

An audit of existing AFAAS frameworks will be needed to assess where and to what extent the above issues are already covered and where it is necessary to either amend existing agreements or create new

ones. Even where existing framework agreements cover elements of the above, AFAAS should consider developing a single mutually agreeable document covering all elements of participation including quality assurance, property rights etc.

Engagement

Engagement as a Strategic Pillar

Successful social networks are built on understanding peoples' drivers of communication and providing a foundation of underlying (knowledge) services to support and reward these behaviours. The goal for AFAAS is to build a social knowledge network in which the members feel ownership and are engaged. This will require the provision of services that recognise a range of different starting points and outcomes sought by the different actors.

Scope and Implementation of the Engagement Work Stream

The first element is to identify the **key audiences for engagement** and stratify approaches accordingly. Within the AFAAS system we can identify:

- The country forum members and/or any regional groupings of them – including national government bodies, Non-Government Organisations (NGO), agribusiness and other private sector.
- Other actors within agriculture value chains who are not CF members but who may interact with the knowledge network as consumers or providers of ideas and content
- The AFAAS secretariat
- Peer stakeholders within other regional and international technical and policy making bodies
- Existing and potential sponsors including international agencies, private sector or wider civil society through crowd funding

Table 5 identifies key messages and means of communication based on these identified audiences. Implementation will require coordination of a number of activities at different levels. Table 4 illustrates how responsibilities for the engagement activities could be allocated.

Table 4 : Potential Responsibilities for Engagement streams	
VSNP community management and monitoring KPIs	VSNP platform managers, CF facilitators, CIKM unit
Internal communications and management of the AFAAS website and social accounts	CIKM unit
CF level promotion and advocacy	CF focal people and facilitators
Strategic communications	CIKM unit with external specialist support
Application of rewards and incentives	CF focal people and CIKM unit

Table 5 : Aligning Key Message Across the AFAAS Network

Engagement	Example messages	Means
CF members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Participation in the knowledge network will raise individual and organisational status and provide opportunities to mobilise resources. ❖ The AFAAS VSNP is a secure trusted environment for knowledge sharing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Framework agreement covering key concerns around participation – quality, IPR etc. • Active community management including regular communication of network status and KPIs, news and content to build network identity and sense of ownership • Clearly articulated guidance on how to use the VSNP and other AFAAS systems backed by support services. • Clearly articulated and visible application of standards : transparency around levels and quality of contribution • Sign posting services on the VSNP such as maps and member directories. Syndication opportunities to major online publications and promotion of key contributed content via the AFAAS website and social media • Establishment of a national or African AAS journal/magazine to which members can contribute papers, • Challenge funds or other incentives for creation of high value content with training and support included • Challenge funds or other incentives for entrepreneurial activities & rural enterprise formation backed by access to mentors and finance. • Ecommerce opportunities for members to promote and sell products and services
Non CF rural actors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ The AFAAS Knowledge Network and the members behind it are a trustworthy source of information and advice – synonymous with quality rural services provision. ❖ AFAAS is an effective advocate for the interests of AAS, other rural value chain actors and communities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage CF members to promote their involvement with the AFAAS in on- and offline events, workshops and other interactions and via social media. • Support interaction of farmers and grass roots organisations with CF members via the VSNP and/or other innovative approaches – monitor and encourage participation of members in problem solving exchanges • Use radio and other local events to raise awareness of the AFAAS network as an umbrella for quality rural services provision.
AFAAS secretariat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ The AFAAS VSNP and wider knowledge network is an important and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide staff with clear guidelines on how they can support and promote the AFAAS network and how they can benefit from participation in it by being active and visible, e.g. joining groups, blogging.

effective means to achieve strategic goals

- ❖ The secretariat team have a key role by showing leadership as active users and advocates of the network.

Other policy and technical stakeholders and potential partners

- ❖ AFAAS is managing a successful high quality network trusted by AAS, other value chain actors and rural communities.
- ❖ AFAAS is showing leadership as the principle continental actor supporting grass roots and consumer led technical change.
- Surface high quality thought leadership content from the VSNP and offline events and exchanges and promote it actively via the website, through syndication and via social media –targeting the messages and content as appropriate to different audiences [initial focus on Twitter, Slideshare, LinkedIn, Facebook, YouTube]
- Identify the key online influencers relevant to AFAAS interests in social networks and forums; become a visible and active participant in these spaces to raise the visibility and credibility of AFAAS – sharing thought leadership material and opinion including links back to the AFAAS website.
- Take a leadership position in relevant regional and continental conferences and other face to face fora; promote via social media alongside these events interacting with other commentators.
- Plan and schedule a regular cycle of upgrades and improvements to the AFAAS website and VSNP to support increased engagement and measurable data on the success of all promotion efforts.

Actual and potential sponsors

- ❖ Investing in the AFAAS network provides a highly effective and efficient means to support rural innovation and increase productivity, promote fair and sustainable market led growth and improve rural livelihoods.
- ❖ Association with AFAAS provides a conduit for sponsors to access rural markets and achieve their own social or commercial objectives.
- Ditto for stakeholders and partners as above but specifically targeting organisations and networks that are potential investors with messages and case studies focusing on credibility, track record, impact and return on investment.

Content

Content as a Strategic Pillar

Ultimately the amount, type and quality of content accessible and effectively utilised across the network will define the value of the network. This is central challenge of the strategy. AFAAS at the 'centre' cannot and should not try to direct what content is supplied or taken up – its task instead is to provide a system by which members are able to signal what different types, formats and subject areas they value, and a quality framework and supply side system that effectively pushes this content to them. The principle is to 'let the market work' by signalling and facilitating the types of content most valued by the network. How successful this approach is in meeting members' needs can be audited regularly and – if there is a shortage of specific content types or subject areas, for example of educational curricula or farmer led approaches, the secretariat can respond for example by reviewing its content partner arrangements and/or stimulating further supply through a challenge funded approach.

Results of the knowledge sharing and content opinions survey give some initial insight into types of content likely to be most valued. The top four categories that CF members would like to see more regularly shared with other members are: (a) Innovative AAS delivery approaches; (b) Opportunities for continuous professional development; (c) Technical knowledge to address emerging trends & challenges and (d) Market oriented advisory services. When asked about content they would like to see come from the secretariat, facilitation skills and news on relevant regional, continental, and international events also features. Table 6 provides an initial typology of content required by the network.

Scope and Implementation of the Content Work Stream

Content partnerships and syndication

An initial push to bring strong credible content into the system is important. The upgrade currently taking place to the AFAAS VSNP can be the focal point for this effort by providing easy means for network members to share their existing content into this system. In parallel it is recommended to establish content partnerships with other leading players and establish automated feeds e.g. via Really Simple Syndication (RSS) or Application Programming Interface (API). Opening up this resource to the CF and others within a shared network will act as a supply side stimulus to the creation of new knowledge assets alongside the engagement actions outlined above. Another stimulus will be to push selected AFAAS member content via syndication arrangements with leading African online publishers and further promote this over social media.

Some Existing Sources of High Value AAS Content

<http://www.meas-extension.org/>

<http://knowledge.cta.int/>

<http://ifad-un.blogspot.com>

<http://ccafs.cgiar.org/>

<http://extension.cta.int/home.html>

<http://www.e-agriculture.org/>

Table 6 : Towards A Content Typology for the AFAAS Network

Network awareness and identity	Source
About the AFAAS knowledge network, rules, norms and standards governing participation – roles and responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CIKM Unit as directed by the VSNP governance group
How to participate actively with guidance on the use of the VSNP and any other shared systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CIKM Unit with support from VSNP managers
Internal network news, announcements and updates: including performance data, incentives and opportunities, who is who across the network.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CIKM unit & CF facilitators with support from VSNP managers
Thought leadership content	
About innovative tools, technologies, approaches and rural enterprises solving problems or otherwise creating value for rural communities and value chain actors especially where a CF member can be credited.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The individual CF members and secretariat including active sharing of existing content into the VSNP and tagged accordingly. • The Individual CF members and secretariat by blogging stories and experiences.
About successful examples of how AAS are being organised and financed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content partnerships e.g. with other online platforms via RSS or other technical means – API, custom search.
About policy relevant data and analysis supporting the role of AAS as a driver of innovation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content published under the auspices of the CF or Secretariat including commissioned or solicited via challenge funds
That synthesises and packages key lessons in a simple intuitive way	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The CF members according to a standard / template defined by the Secretariat and implemented on the VSNP
Promotional content	
That showcases examples of excellent work and achievements of any of the CF members.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produced or commissioned by CIKM unit for publication on website and promotion via AFAAS social channels.
That showcases AFAAS role and involvement in regional and continental events, and debates	

Quality framework

A diverse multi-tier knowledge network cannot be governed by a single monolithic hierarchical quality assurance (QA) approach without creating bottlenecks. It is essential to balance the rewards of quality assurance against the costs of putting constraints on creativity and content sharing. A potential approach is described in Table 7.

Table 7 : A Potential Standards Based Quality Framework	
Type of content exchanged	Quality standard
Informal exchange of information and content across the AFAAS network including content published on the VSNP by CF members or others with a restricted 'internal' scope i.e. not publicly viewable.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actively encouraged Peer regulated Complies with the published AFAAS Information policy
Content published by / under the auspices of an AFAAS Country or Regional Forums including any content published by members on the VSNP with public visibility.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'AFAAS Country Forum certified' – criteria to be defined by the CF membership but must meet a standard defined by AFAAS secretariat entitled to display an AFAAS CF certified quality mark promoted and syndicated through the AFAAS network CF expected to publish certified items regularly. Existing content can be certified; joint authored content preferred. Amount of certified content published by each CF to be a KPI and a degree of competition encouraged.
Content published by / under the auspices of the AFAAS Secretariat including via the website and social media,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'AFAAS certified'. A higher level quality mark. Preference for content that has regional or continental scope or that serves as an example of excellence Any content on the network can potentially attain this certification. New content may be solicited via challenge funding. A peer review panel will be required.

Sustainability

Sustainability as a Strategic Pillar

This strategy aims to guide the establishment of a knowledge network that will be a long-term asset and service to AFAAS's stakeholders. As such it is essential to think though and plan a roadmap giving the network the best chance to grow and prosper.

Scope and Implementation of the Sustainability Work Stream

Demand-side stimulus

The network members need an early signal that participation in the AFAAS knowledge network is worthwhile and to be taken seriously. The Secretariat may consider an internal promotion campaign and

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commitment to provide training in content packaging and effective communications in the context of the AFAAS knowledge network. The curricula for the training would include use of online systems – the VSNP, web and social media – but focus on the complementarity and interplay between online, mobile, other media and face to face approaches – with contributions from members already skilled in this area such as Farm Radio and others. The emphasis should be on a participatory shared learning approach to knowledge networking, with clear demonstration of the principles and practice of participating in the AFAAS network.

Training will continue to be an effective mechanism to capitalise the network but should over time evolve to a competitive challenge funded approach with match funding linked to the creation of specific high value content and/or innovative communications approaches. An example challenge might be to collaborate in the synthesis of best practices in the use of mobile technologies to coordinate effective post-harvest value chains. The grant element would be the reward for working collaboratively across CF and packaging this experience in ways that are easily assimilated by other network members.

Sustainable financing

It is notoriously difficult to sustain funding for agricultural information – pure public approaches always end up being top down and supply driven – pure private approaches don't arise outside of limited high value arenas. The challenge for AFAAS will be to progress along a path from pure public to a mixed model in which, where there is effective demand for information, services can arise to meet this without being crowded out by public provision – and where there is not, the subsidy can be targeted effectively.

The immediate task is to secure funding to operationalise this strategy in full or part recognising that a mix of sources is in itself a hedge against shifting priorities of sponsors. Realistically these will probably be public sector and NGO sources initially but as soon as there is demonstrable network activity, collaboration and innovation across the network this will evidence a pull on services that has potential to interest private sponsors and partners from microfinance and other financial services, to mobile service providers, subscription content providers, private extension and advisory services, agribusiness and other value chain actors where the willingness to pay can be tested. There will also be opportunities to explore crowd-funding approaches.

The desired goal is to evolve the rewards and incentives for networking over time from a situation in which members can advance professional interests and capture training and grant funding – to a social marketplace for information and knowledge services where members can also capture transactional revenues and investment. Within a well monitored data driven network the areas for private provision will emerge and increase while areas requiring subsidy will be apparent.¹

¹ There is good precedent for such approaches; even ten years ago a pilot project in Uganda demonstrated how limited demand side subsidy could stimulate private supply of information services (Joffe et al 2006). In 2015 the substantial advances in microfinance and related mobile services offer a readymade infrastructure for further innovation.

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Tools and Platforms

Tools and Platforms as a Strategic Pillar

The approach set out in the strategy respects all traditional means of communication. People value meeting face to face at professional events and workshops as a great way to build social capital. And they will continue to print and hand distribute or email brochures, leaflets, technical reports and other materials and use whatever other media and channels are most appropriate to their audiences. Despite the rapidly advancing spread of mobile devices and connectivity in rural areas, the people at the end of 'the last mile' may lack capacity, or simply interest, in making use of digital services to acquire or contribute content, so that complimentary innovations are clearly necessary – mixing digital with face to face, radio and other media.

However it needs to be loud and clear that continuing efforts to bring the membership online and increase their confidence in digital communications as a powerful means of discovering and distributing content of all kinds – is an essential prerequisite to achieving the goals of this strategy – not least to provide the data needed to monitor its performance. The issue is not one of *online OR offline*; this is a false dichotomy *AFAAS' digital platforms sit alongside traditional approaches and provide a vital way to find people and resources outside of traditional networks, collaborate around the development of content and open content out of closed localised loops into a network where it can reach a wider audience and create more value.*

Scope and Implementation of the Tools and Platforms Work Stream

Information Standards

The widespread use of information technology systems carries with it a need for AFAAS to establish and communicate certain content about its information policies. This should ideally be captured within a single ISO2700 compliant Information Policy document. The purpose would be to set expectations about required standards rather than to prescribe what information platforms or technologies individual organisations might use. Essentially AFAAS network members [and AFAAS itself] should be in a position to collaborate effectively and be responsive across a range of online and mobile channels [internet, mobile, email, skype, social channels, VSN, etc.] and to exchange information and content with appropriate levels of security and in compliance with relevant data protection and privacy legislation.

Digital platforms

The challenge for AFAAS is to identify and use the best technologies it can find that are practical, affordable, don't duplicate efforts, and provide an effective means to provide the digital services the members need to be active members of the network.

The core requirements are a website, social media accounts and a social content sharing platform. AFAAS has all three of these already but progress is needed to make the best use of them as an integrated means to build a content platform and to achieve AFAAS' strategic communications objectives.

Website

The website at www.afaas-africa.org is currently being redesigned and the best time to evaluate any necessary improvements when the new site is up. One very important planned addition is the ability to obtain statistics on use of the site via Google Analytics or similar.

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Social channels

AFAAS has recently created presence on Facebook [1931 followers: <http://on.fb.me/1BfTWDW>] and Twitter [72 followers: <https://twitter.com/afaasinfo>] which is a very good step. It is recommended also to create presence on LinkedIn which is the world's largest professional networking site as well as being a good recruiting platform. It is important now to actively engage on these channels and build a strong credible identity for AFAAS – all the time tracking statistics not just on volume of likes, mentions, retweets etc. but the quality of engagement achieved – for example the extent to which key influencers (with many relevant followers) are responding to AFAAS content.

Virtual Social Networking Platform

The role of the VSNP [<http://networking.afaas-africa.org>] is to provide a social content sharing platform aligned with the goals of the network – in effect to mirror the offline network structure and organisation and provide an infrastructure for collaboration. The platform has been evaluated positively by the World Bank with a recommendation to further improve and develop it. [As of December 2014 there were 325 members across 7 countries; 59 project related discussions had been initiated involved 123 members]. The VSNP is provided as a service through a partner arrangement which provides flexibility and avoids the risks of getting tied in or sinking costs into defunct systems – and is built on the Drupal open source platform which supports scale and interoperability.

An upgrade underway will make the important steps of offering the service over mobile devices and improving collaboration and content sharing features. It needs to be assessed whether the content partnership objectives under this strategy will be fully supported by this current upgrade – which will to some extent depend on protocols applied by partner platforms – or what further works may be necessary to make the desired connections. The VSNP roadmap plans further evolution including upgrading search and discovery features, multi-lingual support, and support for subscription based services, micropayments and ecommerce.

One of the recommendations of this strategy is for the AFAAS network to begin to take more ownership of how the features of the platform evolve to meet their requirements. In order not to create false expectations such consultation should be paralleled by a commitment to a rolling series of upgrades and releases rather than ad-hoc one-off investments when resources allow.

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TOWARDS AN OPERATIONAL PLAN

AFAAS has an exciting opportunity to bring together an unparalleled knowledge network of AAS actors as a powerful platform for innovation and technical change – providing a strong foundation to achieve its own strategic objectives and an enabling framework and conduit for the objectives of partners and peers across the continent. Good progress is underway, however bringing together a diverse multi-tier knowledge network on this scale is challenging and requires time, resources and careful stepwise planning. The most important role for AFAAS at the centre is to continue to provide leadership in bringing the network together and to underpin it with a sound framework and infrastructure of shared services to enable and incentivise content creation and knowledge sharing. This Strategy offers an approach to organising and managing actions in the short and longer term to strengthen coordination and the clarity of (internal and external) communications; increase engagement across the network; pump prime content supply; capacitate the demand side; and improve underlying systems. It is to be hoped that it will now spur the creation of practical operational document and finance plan to bring necessary resources behind implementation.

Next Steps

- ❖ Communicate this Strategy effectively – including packaging as appropriate in simple visual formats
- ❖ Assign initial internal accountability for each of the identified work streams: Governance, Engagement, Content, Sustainability, and Tools and Platforms – start to work on those elements that can be resourced now focusing on early wins.
 - Design and roll out a participatory ‘knowledge networking’ training package across the Country Forums backed by an internal promotional campaign.
 - Continue to build narrative and social presence using the website and social channels.
 - Roll out the upgraded VSNP; support members to share their existing content into it and start discussions with potential content and syndication partners
- ❖ Assess the resources need to operationalise this strategy starting by breaking down the work streams, grouping the tasks where appropriate and building into specific ToR for people and organisations.
- ❖ Translate into a costed 5 year operational plan
- ❖ Systematically review potential sponsors for different parts of the strategy – assessing where there is synergy with existing programmes.

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Annex 1. Methodology used to research, consult and develop the strategy

An initial review of the existing documentation was undertaken covering in particular: The AFAAS Strategic Plan; the Guidelines for Strengthening Country Forums; The AFAAS Concept and Learning Framework for Agricultural Advisory Services [which itself provides a useful review of literature]; The IFAD project Communication, Information and Knowledge Management Strategy for AFAAS; the Multi-Donor Trust Fund (MDTF II) Results Framework; An AFAAS Baseline Report (Feb 2015 Draft) undertaken to provide baseline data for the MDTF II Results Framework; The Analysis and Synthesis of Learning from a Review of the Progress in Implementation of the AFAAS Strategy and Medium Term Operational Plan (MTO) Workshop in Addis Ababa, October 2014; Several related presentations available on the AFAAS Slideshare channel : <http://www.slideshare.net/afaas/>; Online documentation available on the BMZ's new Africa policy in particular the One World No Hunger Initiative; Additionally a number of online materials covering current thinking about organisational innovation enabled by social and digital technologies available from the consultancy Post*Shift [www.postshift.com].

Meetings held at the AFAAS Secretariat provided opportunity for detailed discussions with the team on their perspectives on the challenges and key requirements from the Strategy – and additionally to gain understanding of the institutional, organisational and governance frameworks for AFAAS.

These perspectives were cross referenced and added to through meetings with some representative members of the Uganda Country Forum :

- Augustine Mwendya: Chief Executive Secretary of the Uganda National Farmers Federation.
- Dr Rosaline Nyamutale: Uganda Country Director, Sasakawa – Global 2000 and members of her team.
- Askebir Gebru: Uganda Country Director, Farm Radio International.

An online knowledge sharing and content opinion survey was undertaken of 134 Country Forum Focal Persons and other AAS actors within the membership – of which 32 fully completed responses to date. The survey covers elicits data and views on types and formats of knowledge required by the network, quality assurance, and measures to improve and incentivise rates of content creation and knowledge sharing.

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Annex 2. Survey of AFAAS Members on Content Sharing Status and Perceptions

The information presented below is based on information solicited from Country Fora Focal Persons and other AAS actors through a self-administered online survey questionnaire. The questionnaire was sent to a total of 134 people. A total of 41 people had responded to the questionnaire, by time of the analysis, out of which 32 had fully completed the questionnaire while 9 partially completed it.

Knowledge content types shared between members of the country fora

Respondents to the online survey were asked to indicate the 5 knowledge content types most regularly shared between members of the Country Forum (CF). Findings reveal that

- Information related to relevant national events (conferences, meetings, workshops, meetings, workshops, symposia) where AAS issues are discussed is the most common type of content shared between members of the CF. This was cited by 52% of the respondents (Table 1).
- News and updates on CF activities (45%), news and updates on AFAAS activities (45%), innovative AAS delivery approaches/methods (38%), and best practices in supporting farmer institutional development, are the four other knowledge content types respondents acknowledged to be most regularly shared between members of the CF although proportions citing these were below 50%.
- Reports on proceedings of CF organized events, and best practices and lessons in facilitating dynamic innovation processes/multi-stakeholder interactions were acknowledged by 28%. One in every five respondents cited opportunities for continuous professional development, technical information/knowledge to address emerging trends/challenges for agriculture in Africa, technologies/innovations for specific enterprises, and market oriented advisory services as the knowledge content types most regularly shared between members of the CF.

Table 1: Distribution of respondents reporting the knowledge content types most regularly shared between members of the Country Fora

Knowledge content types	Percent of respondents reporting (n=29)
Relevant national events (conferences, meetings, workshops, meetings, workshops, symposia) where AAS issues are discussed	51.7
News and updates on CF activities	44.8
News and updates on AFAAS activities	44.8
Innovative AAS delivery approaches/methods	37.9
Best practices in supporting farmer institutional development	37.9
Best practices and lessons in facilitating dynamic innovation	27.6
Reports on proceedings of CF organized events	27.6
Opportunities for Continuous Professional Development/Capacity building	20.7

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Technical information/knowledge to address emerging trends/challenges for agriculture in Africa	20.7
Technologies & innovations for specific enterprises	20.7
Market Oriented Advisory Services	20.7
Value Chain analysis and development	17.2
Generic information about the CF	13.8
Mainstreaming gender in AAS	10.3
Monitoring and Evaluation of AAS interventions	10.3
Guidance for effective engagement in national CAADP processes	6.9
Links to relevant sources of knowledge	6.9
Problems faced during delivery of services and possible solution	6.9
AAS advocacy materials	3.4
Establishments of relations between CF members	3.4

Source: AFAAS ICKM survey data 2015

Knowledge content types AAS stakeholders would like to see shared within the CF

Respondents were asked to indicate the kinds of knowledge content they would like to see shared more regularly within the AAS country forum. Findings reveal that:

- Innovative AAS delivery models/approaches /methods (78%), opportunities for continuous professional development (69%), technical knowledge to address emerging trends/challenges for agriculture in Africa such as climate change, sustainable intensification, urbanization(66%), market oriented advisory services(66%), as well as value chain analysis and development (63%) in that descending order of predominance are the most common kinds of knowledge content the respondents would like to see more regularly shared within the CF. These types of content areas are in line with findings of the AFAAS baseline line survey and literature on capacity gaps for the AAS workers.
- At least 56% of the respondents cited technological packages and innovations for production of specific enterprises, best practices and lessons in facilitating dynamic innovation processes, and monitoring and evaluation of AAS interventions as the kinds of knowledge content they would like to see more regularly shared within the CF.
- One (50%) in every two respondents cited best practices in supporting farmer institutional development as the kind of content they would like to see shared more regularly in the CF.
- News and updates on CF activities, news and updates on AFAAS activities, relevant national events where AAS issues are discussed, AAS advocacy materials, links to sources of knowledge were there other kinds of content respondents would like to see more regularly shared within the CF although proportions citing these did not exceed 47%.

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Table 2: Distribution of respondents reporting the kinds of knowledge content Country Fora members would like to see shared more regularly within the forum

Kinds of content CF members like to see shared more regularly within the forum	Percent of respondents reporting. (n=32)
Innovative AAS delivery models/approaches/methods	78.1
Opportunities for Continuous Professional Development/Capacity	68.8
Technical knowledge to address emerging trends/challenges for agriculture	65.6
Market Oriented Advisory Services	65.6
Value Chain analysis and development	62.5
Technological packages and innovations for production of specific enterprises	59.4
Best practices and lessons in facilitating dynamic innovation processes	56.3
Monitoring and Evaluation of AAS interventions	56.3
Best practices in supporting farmer institutional development	50.0
News and updates on CF activities	46.9
News and updates on AFAAS activities	43.8
Information from relevant national events (conferences, meetings, workshops etc),	43.8
AAS advocacy materials	37.5
Links to relevant sources of knowledge	37.5
Guidance for effective engagement in national CAADP processes	34.4
Mainstreaming gender in AAS	31.3
Generic information about the CF	25.0

Source: AFAAS ICKM survey data 2015

Knowledge content types shared between AFAAS Secretariat and the CF

The survey sought information on the knowledge content types most regularly shared between AFAAS Secretariat and the CF. Respondents to the on-line survey were asked to indicate the 5 knowledge content types most regularly shared between AFAAS Secretariat and the CF members. Findings indicate that:

- Reports on proceedings of AFAAS Secretariat organized events (57%), news and updates on AFAAS activities (43%), relevant regional, continental and international events where AAS issues are discussed (39%) and reports on proceedings of CF organized events (36%) in that descending order of predominance were the four most common kinds of content respondents acknowledged to be shared between AFAAS Secretariat and the CF (Table 3).
- Experiences and lessons from implementation of AFAAS/CF activities, and reports of synthesis and strategic studies on topical AAS issues, approaches and tools tie in a joint fifth having been cited by 29% of the respondents respectively.
- The low proportions of respondents acknowledging the various content types suggest weakness in sharing of information between AFAAS Secretariat and the CF. By and large there is a mismatch between the kinds of content respondents acknowledged to be more regularly shared between AFAAS Secretariat and CF and that they would like to see shared more regularly. The findings on types on knowledge content respondents would like to see more regularly shared within the CF as well as between AFAAS

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Secretariat and the CF, to the need for a systematic process dedicated people and robust infrastructure to facilitate the desired flow of the required knowledge content.

Table 3: Distribution of respondents reporting the knowledge content types most regularly shared between AFAAS Secretariat and the CF member

Knowledge content types	Percent of respondents reporting (n=28)
Reports on proceedings of AFAAS Secretariat organized events	57.1
News and updates on AFAAS activities	42.9
Relevant regional, continental, and international events (conferences, meetings, workshops, symposia) where AAS issues are discussed)	39.3
Reports on proceedings of CF organized events	35.7
Experiences and lessons from implementation of AFAAS/CF activities	28.6
Reports of synthesis and strategic studies on topical AAS issues, approaches and tools	28.6
Technical knowledge to address emerging trends/challenges for agriculture in Africa (like climate change, sustainable intensification, urbanization)	21.4
News and updates on CF activities	21.4
Implementation guidelines/methods/tools/templates on various aspects	14.3
Innovative AAS delivery models/approaches/methods	10.7
Market Oriented Advisory Services	10.7
Value Chain analysis and development	10.7
Monitoring and Evaluation of AAS interventions	10.7
Opportunities for Continuous Professional Development/Capacity building	10.7
Links to relevant sources of knowledge	10.7
Technological packages and innovations for production of specific enterprises	7.1
Mainstreaming gender in AAS	7.1
Best practices in supporting farmer institutional development	7.1
Links to funding opportunities	7.1
Best practices and lessons in facilitating dynamic innovation processes/multi-stakeholder interactions	7.1
AAS advocacy materials	3.6

Source: AFAAS ICKM survey data 2015

Kinds of content CF members would like to see shared between AFAAS Secretariat and CF

Respondents were asked to indicate the kind of content they would like to see shared more regularly between AFAAS secretariat and the CF members. Findings reveal that:

- Technical knowledge to address emerging trends/challenges for agriculture in Africa (like climate change, sustainable intensification, urbanization) and Market Oriented Agricultural Advisory Services were the most predominant knowledge areas cited by 63% of the respondents as the kinds of the content they would like to see more regularly

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shared between AFAAS Secretariat and the CF. This is followed by best practices on facilitating dynamic innovation processes/multi-stakeholder interactions; relevant regional and international events where AAS issues are discussed, opportunities for capacity building and links to funding opportunities all of which were cited by 59% of the respondents.

- Value chain analysis and development (56%); reports on proceedings of AFAAS Secretariat organized events (56%), best practices in supporting farmer institutional development (53%), implementation guidelines/templates on various aspects (50%), as well as experiences and lessons from implementation of AFAAS/CF activities were the other kinds of knowledge content cited by at least 50% as the type they would like to see more regularly shared between AFAAS Secretariat and the CF.
- Generally the content types cited by majority of respondents point to the inherent need by AAS actors to access information to improve their abilities to respond to client demands, enhance their competencies and capabilities to improve delivery of services; and the market intelligence for mobilizing funds to support AAS. The above knowledge content types should guide AFAAS and the CF in determining the critical knowledge themes to focus on in the short run so as to offer a competitive advantage of the knowledge management efforts.

Table 4: Distribution of respondents reporting the kind of knowledge content CF members like to see shared more regularly between AFAAS secretariat and the CF member

Kind of content CF members like to see shared more regularly between AFAAS secretariat and the CF members	Percent reporting (n=32)
Technical knowledge to address emerging trends/challenges for agriculture in Africa climate change, sustainable intensification, urbanization)	62.5
Market Oriented Advisory Services	62.5
Best practices and lessons in facilitating dynamic innovations	59.4
Relevant regional, continental, and international events (conferences, meetings, workshops, symposia) where AAS issues are discussed)	59.4
Opportunities for Continuous Professional Development/Capacity building	59.4
Links to funding opportunities	59.4
Value Chain analysis and development	56.3
Reports on proceedings of AFAAS Secretariat organized events	56.3
Best practices in supporting farmer institutional development	53.1
Implementation guidelines/methods/tools/templates on various	50.0
Experiences and lessons from implementation of AFAAS/CF activities	50.0
Innovative AAS delivery models/approaches/methods	46.9
Reports of synthesis and strategic studies on topical AAS issues	43.8
Monitoring and Evaluation of AAS interventions	40.6
Links to relevant sources of knowledge	37.5
Reports on proceedings of CF organized events	34.4
AAS advocacy materials	34.4
Technological packages and innovations for production of specific enterprises	34.4

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News and updates on AFAAS activities	31.3
News and updates on CF activities	28.1
Mainstreaming gender in AAS	21.9

Source: AFAAS ICKM survey data 2015

Communication channels for sharing knowledge and information within the CF

Respondents were asked to indicate the communication channels most used by the CF and its members for sharing knowledge and information within the forum. Results indicate that:

- Conferences/seminars/workshops, and email/mailling lists are the most predominant communication channels respondents acknowledged to be used in sharing of knowledge and information. Four (83%) in every five respondents cited conferences/workshops while 77% reported email as the communication channel most used by the CF and its members to share information.
- One (50%) in every two respondents reported that the AFAAS website is the communication channel most used by the CF and its members to share information while 23% cited the CF website and social media respectively (Table 5).
- Use of the AFAAS website (13%), document sharing tools like Drop box, Google drive (10%); on-line discussion forums (7%), and group SMS sent to member mobile phones were there other communications reported to be used although proportions citing these did not exceed 13%.
- Effective distribution of knowledge products and services is a prerequisite for increasing access to and use of knowledge. The findings point to the need to implement ICT as part of larger systematic knowledge management initiative encompassing traditional communication channels (seminars, workshops, face to face etc), and social media geared at enabling flow of desired knowledge and information among AAS actors who are intrinsically motivated to share and learn from others. Strategies will focus on building capacity of AAS actors to use Web 2.0 applications and document sharing tools; take the AFAAS website and virtual platform to the users through allowing mobile phone interface and SMS reminders, and creating incentive mechanisms to motivate people to share knowledge.

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Table 5: Distribution of respondents reporting communication channels most used by the CF and its members for sharing knowledge and information within the forum

Communication channels most used by the CF and its members for sharing knowledge and information within the forum	Percent reporting (n=30)
Conferences/seminars/workshops	83.3
Email/Mailing Lists	76.7
AFAAS Website	50.0
CF Website	23.3
Social Media	23.3
AFAAS Virtual Platform	13.3
File sharing tools like Drop box, Google drive etc	10.0
On-line forums (i.e Dgroups)	6.7
Group SMS sent directly to members mobile phones	6.7

Source: AFAAS ICKM survey data 2015

Knowledge products/content produced and share by CF or its members in last 3 month

Respondents were asked to indicate any 5 knowledge products / content produced and shared by the CF or its members in the last 3 months articulating improved technologies/innovations/practices that may be adopted by farmers. Findings reveal that Respondents from five out of the twelve countries reported at least one knowledge product/content to have been produced and shared by the CF or its members in the last 3 years. The content was mainly restricted to news and updates on activities/events, flyers on general information about the CF, extension delivery approaches.

- Farmers field schools, linkage facilitation (Burkina Faso(1))
- Nigerian Forum for Agricultural Extension and Advisory Services (NIFAAS) Flyer published on the Vision, Mission and objectives discussing about NIFAAS during conference, seminar, workshops etc. Established a website Steering committee meetings. (Nigeria(1))
- News and update on farmer's activities during Ebola outbreak. Recent information on progress made by the Ministry of Agriculture. Information on different capacity building opportunities (Sierra Leone(1))
- Conferences/seminars/workshops Pull-Up Banners (Nigeria(1))
- Information on forthcoming events (South Africa(1))

Respondents were also asked to indicate any 5 knowledge products /content relating to AAS approaches/models/methods/tools produced and shared by CF members in the last 3 months Findings indicate that:

Response were only registered in two (Uganda and Burkina Faso) out of the 12 countries. These include:-

- Finalizing compilation of AAS approaches (Uganda(1))
- Farmers field schools (Burkina Faso(1))
- Ethics and Standards for AAS in Uganda (draft) (Uganda(1))
- Facilitating an Innovation platform(Uganda(1))
- Innovation approaches (Uganda(1))

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Respondents were also asked to indicate any 5 knowledge products / content produced and shared by the CF or its members in the last 3 months articulating recommendations for AAS policy reforms Findings indicate that:

Response were only registered in two (Uganda and Cameroon) out of the 12 countries. These include:-

- Proposition to think about public extension services and facilitate public and private partnership was propose to the direction of extension (Cameroon(1))
- The Use of the army in agricultural extension disbandment of NAADs in Uganda (Uganda(1))
- Ethics and Standards for AAS in Uganda (draft) (Uganda(1))
- Declaration on Agricultural Single Spine System (Uganda(1))

Types of communication formants used by CF to produce and share information

Respondents were asked to indicate the types of communication formats that are used by the CF or members to produce the information/knowledge shared within the CF. Results indicate that:

- Power point presentations, conference/seminar papers, and printed leaflet/brochures in that descending order of predominance were the most common communication formats cited by 50%, 40% and 33% of the respondents respectively as the types used by the CF or its members to produce and share information.
- Printed manuals and social media were acknowledged by 23% of the respondents while one (20%) in every five respondents reported use of analytical papers/reports.
- Low use of online-forums, electronic audio CDs, videos, question and answer services which were reported by 10%, 7%, 7% and 7% respectively.

Table 6: Distribution of respondents reporting type of communication formats used by the CF or members to produce the information/knowledge shared within the CF

Type of communication formats used by the CF or members to produce the information/knowledge shared within the CF	Percent of respondents reporting		
	CF INPLACE(N=21)	CF NOT INPLACE (N=9)	Total(N=30)
Power Point Presentations	42.9	66.7	50.0
Conference/seminar/workshop papers	47.6	22.2	40.0
Printed leaflet/brochures	33.3	33.3	33.3
Printed Manuals	33.3	0.0	23.3
Social media	23.8	22.2	23.3
Analytical papers/reports	23.8	11.1	20.0
On-line forums	9.5	11.1	10.0
Electronic audio CDs	4.8	11.1	6.7
Video CDs	9.5	0.0	6.7
Question and Answer services	9.5	0.0	6.7
Consultation meetings	4.8	0.0	3.3
Members meeting	0.0	11.1	3.3

Source: AFAAS ICKM survey data 2015

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Quality Assurance

Respondent suggestions on incentives to encourage people to create knowledge content for sharing with other CF members, i.e. 'codify' their tacit knowledge.

- Apply the Laws of each country or the African union's code information (Burkina Faso(1))
- Supporting local knowledge and innovation (Cameroon(1))
- Platform (Liberia(1))
- Enough funds for CF to function effectively (Nigeria(1))
- Transparency, Inclusions and openness of participation (Nigeria(1))
- Accessibility to necessary materials, relevant media and smooth networking among CF members. (Nigeria(1))
- Creating more awareness and making information relevant (Nigeria(1))
- People will be motivated to create knowledge content for sharing if they are sure of being able to retain ownership of content (Nigeria(1))
- Members are more comfortable with paper based information as opposed to digital. They are more likely to share their reports with the CF Secretariat than post it on virtual website (Sierra Leone(1))
- Capacity building and funding (Sierra Leone(2))
- Peer recognition (South Africa(1))
- Recognition (South Africa(1), Uganda(1))
- Best knowledge content submitted each month published with author's name on CF website; best from CF websites in AFAAS region published on AFAAS website each month (Uganda(1))
- Explore and co consider extending meritorious awards for such members (Uganda(1))
- Money (South Africa(1))
- Honorary recognition inform of wards in any form for future reference by such people
- ii) Their involvement/participation in CF affairs is important (Uganda(1))
- Firstly make the different provinces aware of CF and introduce recognition awards during conferences (South Africa(1))
- Possibility to undertake study tour (South Africa(1))
- By activating the forum in countries (Sudan(1))
- Linking the members via seminars and meetings (Sudan(1))
- Provision of equipment like laptops and digital camera (Sudan)
- Sponsoring them to events where that information can be shared. (Uganda(1))
- Respect for originality (Uganda(1))
- Giving a little incentive maybe for information provided, maybe a little pay (Uganda(1))
- Organize conferences specifically to create knowledge content for sharing (Uganda(1))
- AAS Journal or Magazine-members contribute technical articles (Uganda(1))
- Capacity enhancement (Uganda(1))
- Repository for Working Papers in Extension and Advisory Services (Zimbabwe(1))
- Mentor the key champions in agricultural advisory services so that they can contribute effectively to agricultural development (Zimbabwe(1))
- Call for proposals (papers & case studies) (Zimbabwe(1))
- Can be awarded seed money (Zimbabwe(1))

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Respondent suggestions on incentives that would be helpful to encourage people to collaborate on content creation with other CF members.

- Recognition on contributions made by of the forum members. Open up opportunities for private sector participation and create linkages for them to advertise, demonstrate and sell their product to consumers (farmers) (Nigeria(1))
- Institutional recognition (South Africa(1))
- Continuous Improvement & Innovation (Zimbabwe(1))
- Training in mindset change (e.g. to be recipient to other viewpoints and development pathways) (Zimbabwe(1))
- Online discussion (Cameroon(1))
- Also by activating the forum of AAS in Africa countries (Sudan(1))
- Accountability and bottom-up approaches (Nigeria(1))
- Some money in the pocket (Sudan(1), (South Africa(1))
- Create, activate and facilitate a forum/platform for sharing. (Uganda(1))
- Recognition (Uganda(1))
- Sharing (Uganda(1))
- Members are generally very interested in sharing information related to production challenges and benefit. They are also keen to know the opportunities available for fund raising, training and scholarships (Sierra Leone(1))
- Each CF Will include collaboration with other fora and AFAAS in its legal texts as a prerequisite
- Capacity building and funding ((Sierra Leone(2))
- Encourage adaptive research/piloting of tested innovations (Uganda(1))
- Meetings (Sudan(1))
- Strong commitment of CF members, timeliness and logistics/facilitation (Nigeria(1))
- Setting up working groups (Uganda(1))
- Through conferences (Uganda(1))
- Those collaborating could be provided with link to related resource (Uganda(1))
- AAS Journal or Magazine-members contribute technical articles (Uganda(1))
- Honorary recognition inform of wards in any form for future reference by such people (Uganda(1))
- Publication and newsletters (Liberia(1))
- Creating more awareness and making information relevant (Nigeria(1))
- Awareness and publicity to all stakeholders ((South Africa(1))
- People will be motivated to create knowledge content for sharing if they are sure of being able to retain ownership of content
- Possibility of sponsorship to attend conferences, etc. (Nigeria(1))
- Funds and skills (Uganda(1))

Quality assurance with respect to content relating to problems farmers face and potential technical solutions.

Respondents were asked to indicate who should be responsible for quality assurance with respect to content relating to problems farmers face and potential technical solutions. Findings reveal that

- Farmers through their feedback and adoption were cited by 48% of the respondents as the entity that should be responsible for quality assurance of this type of knowledge content.

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- Knowledge domain owners, CF Information Communication Knowledge Management Specialist, AFAAS Secretariat ICKM staff, the organisation that creates the content and the CF collectively were cited by at least one in every three respondents as entities which should be responsible for quality assurance of knowledge content relating to problems farmers face and potential technical solutions (Table 7).
- Findings point to need for use of a multi-pronged/layered approach in QA of knowledge content relating to problems farmers face and potential technical solutions.

Table 7: Distribution of respondents reporting who should be responsible for quality assurance with respect to content relating to problems farmers face and potential technical solutions

Responsible entity	Percent reporting (n=30)
Farmers by their feedback and adoption	48.3
Knowledge domain owners nominated/appointed by AFAAS Secretariat	37.9
CF ICKM specialist/focal person	37.9
AFAAS secretariat ICKM staff	34.5
The CF collectively	34.5
The organisation that creates the content	34.5
an external organisation	24.1
Website users (most popular as measured by down load volume)	6.9
External organisation i.e. specialised institutions in areas	3.4
Focal Person or other person or small committee by CF	3.4

Source: AFAAS ICKM survey data 2015

Quality assurance of content relating to innovative extension approaches/methods/tool/practices

Respondents were asked to indicate who should be responsible for quality assurance with respect to content relating to innovative extension approaches/methods/tool/practices. Findings reveal that:

- None of the individual entities received recommendation from majority of the respondents.
- CF ICKM specialist (48%), AFAAS Secretariat ICKM staff (45%), the organisation that creates the content (35%) were the entities recommended by at least one in every three respondents. Farmers through their feedback (31%), knowledge domain owners appointed by AFAAS Secretariat (28%), the CF collectively (24%) and an external organisation (21%) in that descending order of predominance were recommended by at least one in every five respondents (Table 8).
- Findings point to need for use of a multi-pronged/layered approach in QA of knowledge content relating to innovative extension approaches/methods/tool/practices

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Table 8: Distribution of respondents reporting who should be responsible for quality assurance with respect to content relating to innovative extension approaches/methods/tool/practices

Responsible entity	Percent reporting (n=29)
CF ICKM specialist/focal person	48.3
AFAAS secretariat ICKM staff	44.8
The organisation that creates the content	34.5
Farmers by their feedback and adoption	31.0
Knowledge domain owners nominated/appointed by AFAAS Secretariat	27.6
An external organisation	20.7
The CF collectively	24.1
Website users (most popular as measured by down load volume)	6.9
External organisation i.e. specialised institutions in areas	3.4
Focal Person or other person or small committee by CF	3.4

Source: AFAAS ICKM survey data 2015

Quality assurance of content relating to policy reforms to support improved AAS provision

Respondents were asked to indicate who should be responsible for quality assurance with respect to content relating to policy reforms to support improved AAS provision. Findings reveal that:

- None of the individual entities received recommendation from majority of the respondents.
- AFAAS Secretariat ICKM staff (41%), CF ICKM specialist (35%), and the CF collectively (35%) they were the entities recommended by at least one in every three respondents. Knowledge domain owners appointed by AFAAS Secretariat (28%), organisation that creates the content (24%), an external organisation (24%), and farmers through their feedback (24%) in that descending order of predominance were recommended by at least one in every four respondents (Table 9).
- Again findings point to need for use of a multi-pronged approach in QA of knowledge content relating to policy reforms to support improved AAS provision.

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Table 9: Distribution of respondents reporting who should be responsible for quality assurance with respect to content relating to policy reforms to support improved AAS provision.

Quality assurance entity	Percent reporting (n=29)
AFAAS secretariat ICKM staff	41.4
CF ICKM specialist/focal person	34.5
The CF collectively	34.5
Knowledge domain owners nominated/appointed by AFAAS Secretariat	27.6
An external organisation	24.1
The organisation that creates the content	24.1
Farmers by their feedback and adoption	24.1
Focal Person or other person or small committee by CF	3.4
Website users (most popular as measured by down load volume)	3.4
All stakeholders including government	3.4

Source: AFAAS ICKM survey data 2015

Recommendations to improve knowledge capturing and flow

Respondents were asked to indicate changes required to improve ability of the CF to share knowledge and collaborate on high quality content creation with other CF members. They were asked to distribute ten votes among the options of their choice to indicate level of preference, where the option with the most votes is the most preferred. The number of respondents who allocated a given number of votes for any particular issue, has been multiplied by those votes, with the products summed up and divided by the total respondents to get the overall average. Findings reveal that:

- Better access to research knowledge and better access to farmer knowledge which received the highest average votes are the most common desired changes required to improve ability of the CF to share knowledge and collaborate on creation of high quality content. This points to importance of research (synthesis studies on topical AAS issues) to generate new knowledge and capturing of indigenous knowledge in the custody of farmers for subsequent transfer to other communities.
- Better access to research knowledge and better access to farmer knowledge are closely followed by the need to enhance access to content packaging services within the CF, availability of standardized templates for generation and sharing of knowledge, in house skills in content packaging, ability to use wider range of channels and formants, and improved availability of on-line information systems.

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Table 10: Distribution of changes required to improve ability of the CF to share knowledge and collaborate on high quality content creation with other CF members

Required change	Votes indicating level of preference								Avg score
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
Better access to research knowledge (n=28)	4	6	0	8	1	1	14	88	21.1
Better access to farmer knowledge (n=28)	3	2	6	2	1	1	28	80	19.8
More availability of content packaging services within the CF(n=24)	0	4	9	6	5	8	42	40	19.1
Availability of standardized templates for knowledge sharing (n=25)	2	1	0	4	5	6	42	32	18.7
Better in-house skills in content packaging (n=28)	1	4	9	0	2	2	14	64	18.6
Ability to use wider range of channels and formats (e.g; digital & social media) (n=27)	1	8	3	2	1	1	42	48	18.4
Improved availability of online information systems (n=24)	2	4	6	8	1	3	14	72	18.3
More guidance and training in the use of online information systems (n=26)	3	4	6	6	1	1	28	64	17.1
Better access to policy makers (n=27)	1	4	3	4	1	1	35	56	17.0

How can AFAAS ensure that it learns from the experiences of CF focal persons in implementing CF activities in their respective countries

- During conference and international meeting and through periodic reports (Cameroon (1))
- Provide needed support to CF activities. (Liberia(1))
- Accountability and monitoring through video recording, photos and success stories (Nigeria(1))
- By having face to face periodic meetings of AFAAS with focal persons to ensure that both are on the same page in their various dispensation and in transfer of knowledge: strong networking is advised. (Nigeria(1))
- Ensuring effective feedback mechanism (Nigeria(1))
- Experience sharing avenues for CF focal persons (Nigeria(1))
- Occasional surveys, regional meetings, encourage writing and submission of write ups (Sierra Leone(1))
- Organizing learning events (Sierra Leone(1))
- More information sessions (South Africa (1))
- By introducing network between members of AFAAS (Uganda(1))
- Create and effectively manage a forum/platform (e-platform) (Uganda(1))
- Hold periodical joint AFAAS/CF fora for knowledge sharing (Uganda(1))
- Consider piloting adaptive research of key activities (Uganda(1))
- Regular meeting to share experiences (Uganda(1))
- Through fora (Uganda(1))

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- Reports ((Uganda(1))
- Documenting experiences and effective knowledge management ((Uganda(1))
- Continuous engagement with the CF (Uganda(1))

Respondents were asked to what means they would recommend to facilitate the capture and transfer/flow of knowledge among CF members as well as other AAS practitioners in other countries. They were also asked to distribute ten votes among the options of their choice to indicate level of preference, where the option with the most votes is the most preferred. Findings reveal that

Clear standards and quality assurance framework for knowledge sharing, best practice forums, thematic working groups/teams, incentives for knowledge sharing, communities of practice and lessons learned programs in that descending order of preference are the mechanisms/approaches recommended by respondents to facilitate the capture and subsequent flow of knowledge among CF members as well as other AAS practitioners in other countries.

Table 11: Distribution of means to facilitate the capture and transfer/flow of knowledge among CF members as well as other AAS practitioners in other countries

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Avg score	N
Clear standards and quality assurance framework for knowledge sharing	0	8		12	10	12	35	64	23.50	25
Best practices transfer forums	1	2	1	8	20	18	56	32	18.63	25
Thematic working groups/teams	1	4	3	12	5	12	56	56	18.63	27
Incentive for knowledge sharing	3	6		28	10	12	14	56	18.43	25
Communities of practice	1	6	6	8	5	12	35	72	18.13	27
Lessons learned programs	2	4	6	8	25	6	21	64	17.00	25

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Several related presentations available on the AFAAS Slideshare channel: <http://www.slideshare.net/afaas/>

Postshift website: a number of online materials covering current thinking about organisational innovation enabled by social and digital technologies available from the consultancy Post*Shift [www.postshift.com].

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