

**COMMUNICATIONS PLAN
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CA DR SPECIALTY QUALITY COFFEE
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The Central America and Dominican Republic Quality Coffee Project is working to increase the competitiveness and sustainability of smaller producers of high quality coffee across the region. This document identifies communications goals for the project and a roadmap for meeting them. It describes an overall approach, core messages, a preliminary assessment of stakeholders, results to be achieved — in behavioral terms, and tactics.

The plan reflects substantive input by team members, USAID, and home-office communications specialists and authors Heather Peck and Liberty Jones.

1. Overall Communications Approach

The project's approach to communications is driven by the following observations:

- It is a high-visibility project with a wide range of audiences and stakeholders.
- The client, USAID, wants regular news of the project's activities.
- Though much work is accomplished through one-on-one contact, the project must increasingly rely on common, well-conceived materials to ensure synergy among components and individual team member efforts.
- Team members are eager to take advantage of communications tools to maximize their effectiveness and leverage coordination among each other.

Given the project's goals and communications environment and drawing from Chemonics' standard approach to project communications (see annex A), we summarize the project's communications goals as follows:

- Align team members around the project's core messages and provide them with communications tools to facilitate their work with colleagues, clients, and beneficiaries
- Achieve greater consistency in project branding and messaging
- Use more strategic and more consistent communications practices to reach project goals
- Use communications to leverage project successes and enhance its standing in the region

This communications plan describes numerous tools now in place to meet these goals. These tools will serve as a strong foundation and framework for those still to be developed and as an anchor for improved internal and external communications.

2. Target Audiences

The following target audience list was developed by team members with input from USAID. In developing the list, we asked: Who are our audiences? What motivates them? What do they care about most? How can we make our interventions helpful to them? If we're targeting buyers, for example, what's in it for them?

Target audiences are listed in order of priority, remembering that internal audiences or stakeholders — our team members — come first.

We grouped audiences into four categories: internal, origin, market, and other. All are defined according to the actions we want them to take and the information that might motivate them to take those actions. The list is preliminary — it should be refined by the team as part of regular project planning exercises — but it will be useful for developing communications vehicles going forward.

Quality Coffee Project Audiences

Group	Actions Needed	Information They Need
Internal audience		
Project team members	Effective messaging, coordination.	Updates on project activities, market info.
USAID, ministries, other “stakeholders”	- Leverage and share project success	Same, especially to clarify scope of project for other missions and to generate stories for <i>Frontlines</i>
Origin Groups		
Public institutions (Anacafe)	- Become entry point to each country - Identify qualified producer associations - Support policy reform and regional trade initiatives	- Information on project initiatives - Country information to support cohesion - Market trends
Specialty coffee associations	- Include more producers - Support regional trade initiatives	Same as above plus: information on quality norms/standards, commercialization strategies via training
Producer associations (cooperatives)	- Improve quality and business administration - Become proactive in the market - Adopt value-added social & environmental standards	Same as above but simpler, i.e., fact sheets, Web site links, trend information, pricing, and marketing intelligence (i.e., how to produce and sell better)
Exporters	- Support sales transparency - Support producer initiatives	Information on new market trends that support transparency
Market Groups		
Trade associations (SCAA, National Coffee Assn.)	- Lead norms and standards definition - Define market needs	- Create norms and standards that can be adopted by producer groups - Promote transparency - Promote sustainable coffee prices
Buyers	- Buy coffee at sustainable price - Initiate contracts with growers	- Information on production costs - Information on value-added certifications and qualities
Other Groups		
Certifiers	- Become more accessible to producers - Raise consumer demand for certified products	Producer information and consumer trends
Media	- Cover regionalization	Coverage requested by USAID; need to

Group	Actions Needed	Information They Need
	initiatives - Report good coffee news	determine scope, objective

3. Core Message

Core messages help the project connect to the bigger picture, to development, and to project goals. They need to be simple to resonate effectively with audiences. The fewer and more succinct they are — the more jargon-free — the more useful they are.

A core message is not a tag line or slogan. Tag lines, slogans, and other devices are tactics we develop for specific audiences. The core message is the lesson, the “net take-away message” we want to leave with people. A core message speaks directly to the audience and lets them know what’s in it for them, that is, why they should care.

To arrive at core messages, the most critical question is: Once we have communicated our core messages, what exactly do we want people to do? Do we want elected officials, for example, to support policy reform? Do we want business leaders to run coffee trials? Do we want producers to increase their understanding of grades and standards?

Project team members considered these questions in developing the project’s core message, which has since been shared with USAID:

“Quality Coffee for New Markets” or “Nuevos Cafés para Nuevos Mercados”

Every communications vehicle we use will carry this message, whether expressly stated or not. The message is the same whether we are talking to buyers, producers, or government officials. Consistent core messages are part of what makes our communications package an integrated whole.

This message is reinforced by the project name, Quality Coffee, or Café de Calidad, and the following themes or message “doorways”:

The “opening doors” message

To improve competitiveness, producers must have links to new markets.

1. We open doors for producers by creating understanding.
2. We provide access to opportunities.
3. We create strategies to penetrate and expand the market.
4. We are a tool for producers and buyers alike.

The “building on tradition” message

The region’s strong tradition in quality puts it ahead of the coffee competition.

1. We leverage that tradition in the service of business opportunity.
2. We build on what works.
3. We provide tools to develop businesses.
4. We provide information to properly market the product.

The “region matters” message

A regional approach to building coffee sales puts everyone at an advantage. We offer regional knowledge about coffee spanning:

- Experts
- Market knowledge: certification, quality and type, selling on line
- Market intelligence

These message doorways need to be vetted and approved by team members.

4. Suggested Communications Activities

The following activities derive from the analysis of project goals and stakeholders. Many are underway; others need to be initiated.

The project should take advantage of the “database/Web-site management specialist” specified for 2.5 years in the contract for immediate assistance in many of the elements of the tasks below. Specifically, this position could lend assistance with translation, editorial aspects of newsletter and Web site production, and other tasks within the framework of the position as described in the contract.

Activities to Support Communications

Task	Why	Status/due	Notes
Project name and message	Create consistent identity, brand	Done	Team needs to agree on message “doorways”
Letterhead, business cards, report covers	Create consistent identity, brand	In process, Chique handling	
Templates for letter, reports, fact sheets	Reinforce consistent identity, brand	Installation planned, training by Ana	
ChemNet addresses for all staff	Reinforce consistent identity, brand	In process, Liberty coordinating	Standard e-mail “signatures” are also needed
Group e-mail account	Improve internal communication	In process, Chiqui handling	
Create anonymous e-mail address	Mechanism for feedback, queries	Done (Chiqui manages account)	- On letterhead - Newsletter is sent from this account
Maintain, update PMP	Setting goals and meeting them is key to good communications	Ongoing, part of quarterly reporting	PMP submitted to USAID in mid-July
Staff meetings	Improve teamwork; track PMP	Every Monday at 9 a.m.	
Monthly “Regional Coffee News” (see annex B)	Create consistent voice about project activities	- July 25 issue underway - Distribution list in development by Chiqui	English and Spanish versions
News “flash”	Share wonderful accomplishments	- Liberty will develop prototype with Chique for team approval	300-word maximum, Same distribution. as above
Project fact sheet	A simple tool for project business	- Draft to be approved by team July 21 - Translate, print in-house	English and Spanish versions
Project brochure English and Spanish	- Replaces fact sheet	- In draft; team to finalize week of July 21 - Print in August	English and Spanish versions 500 copies each
Web site (see annex C)	- Share information on project, coffee - Reinforce project’s regional approach and credibility	- Design firm chosen - Version 1 underway - Staff contributing links	English and Spanish

ANNEX A

CHEMONICS' COMMUNICATIONS PRINCIPLES

The Quality Coffee communications plan is based on the following five communications principles, which are directly tied to Chemonics' business and communications goals.

1. We invest resources to make everyone in the company a communications force.

- Everyone — from leaders based outside the U.S. to entry level staff in the home office — has a key communications role to play.
- Strong communications skills are a valued part of being a versatile Chemonics professional.
- Commitment to effective communications is a leading measure of performance.

2. Communications are always circular.

- Communications involve both telling and listening — in equal measure.
- We communicate. We receive feedback. We respond to feedback.
- Telling without listening is inconsistent with teamwork and interdisciplinary principles.

3. Communications are comprehensive and form an integrated whole.

- Communications play a strategic role on every project, reflecting and shaping business decisions.
- At the strategic level, all communications at Chemonics add up to an integrated whole.
- All activities derive from the same core messages and show consistency in vision and execution.
- At the tactical level, we use a wide range of tools and practices to complement and leverage one another and reach our diverse audiences.

4. The audience is the driver in developing messages and tactics.

- Communications begin with the process of understanding our audiences: what they know; what they need to know; and how they communicate.
- Understanding audiences comes before identifying tactics (i.e., logos, print materials, Web sites).
- Internal stakeholders — our staff are our most important audience. They are our communications window to everyone else.

5. Communications connect to the bigger picture.

- Communications always serve larger business and international development goals.
- Communications help us achieve leadership in our industry.
- Communications linkages to project outcomes are demonstrable and direct.
- Positioning Chemonics staff as effective communicators will also help our client.

Annex B Tips and Guidelines Café de Calidad Regional Project News

The project will produce a newsletter in Spanish and English. Because of resource constraints in the field, the PMU has agreed to do much of the “reporting” with team members. The first issue is due in early August.

Each content element should relate to the project’s core messages. A prototype appears on the next page.

Details

- Distributed as e-mail (not as an attachment to e-mail)
- At least one picture for each issue
- Persistent headers and footers in each issue

“Notes from the project”

- Identified and collected by Mike at weekly project staff meetings
- Drafted by team members
- Ideally, each contains a link
- Critical topics: coffee trials, alliances and MOUs, buyers we’re talking to, roaster and coffee trials, signing ceremonies, anecdotes, certification, tours of fields by buyers, farm-level stories, collaboration with Coffee Corps

“Market intelligence”

- Link to FHIA biweekly report on coffee prices
- Implications of US joining the International Coffee Association

“Press accounts”

- USAID loves! “Shows we’re paying attention”
- Summarize article in one-two sentences: Say why it matters or how it related to work of the project.

“Events”

- Coffee on the Hill, cups of excellence, conferences and meetings, and so on.

Distribution (USAID’s request)

- AID Ag officers, wbrands@usaid.gov, Claudette Washington in USAID/DC.
- Business partners, coffee institutions, grocery stores.

ANNEX C WEB SITE GUIDELINES

USAID has asked that a Web site be developed quickly. To guide this activity, we have outlined the elements of the Web site that can easily go up now as version 1. The COP has required that the content on this site be refreshed every three days at a minimum.

Faye Campos is coordinating this effort and has begun work with the firm of choice. Initial cost is estimated at \$1,800, with a monthly hosting/management fee of \$130. The project should also employ the “database/Web-site management specialist” specified for 2.5 years in the contract for assistance in this task.

Version 2 outlines elements of the project’s vision of a more strategic and sustainable Web presence, possibly involving the coffee federation emerging in Costa Rica. Timing for Version 2 should be specified as part of the third quarterly report.

Version 1

Project description (brochure text)

Project newsletter (see annex C)

Market intelligence and commentary (“story behind the numbers”)

Links to audience groups, country resources (see next page)

News on cupping competitions

Basic information on wet milling

Information on specialty coffees

Links to Brazil weather

Calendar

Pictures

Version 2

Links to pricing data, updated every three days, with introduction: “Prices change all the time, here’s the story behind the numbers.”

Market intelligence and commentary (“what the experts say” and links to their Web sites)

News on what real players are doing, information they use to make decisions

Information on certification, grades, and standards

Information on auction systems

Directory of coffee players

Tips, educational material

Standardized terminologies and definitions (as tools to prompt change in regional practices)

Long-term trends

Secure Intranet for project staff, USAID: activities, quarterly reports

Links Suggested by Staff

From Christell

Industry Trade Associations

General information on market and market trends and entry port for other resources

ncausa.org National Coffee Associations

scae.org Specialty Coffee Association of Europe

scaa.org Specialty Coffee Association of America

bsca.com.br Brazil Specialty Coffee Association

ico.org International Coffee Organization

Research and Training Resources
For training material and consultants
bootcoffee.com
bellissimocoffee.com
coffeecorps.org
coffeeinstitute.org

Publications
Monthly publications with numerous interesting articles
teaandcoffee.net
freshcup.com
specialtyretailer.com

From Heather
Global Technology Network (<http://www.usgtn.net>)
Coffee success stories on Frontlines and USAID mission Web sites

from Robert
Certification standards
1. www.rainforestalliance.com/programs/cap/get-certified.html
2. www.starbucks.com/aboutus/sourcingcoffee.asp
3. www.fairtrade.net/sites/standards/spanish/standards.htm (Spanish only)
4. ocia.org/members/services/documents/index.asp (organic certification, US and Japan)
5. naturland.com (organic certification, Europe and US)

Market reports (all in English)
www.drwakefield.com
www.hencorp.com/web/html/futures/default.htm (\$25/month)

Coffee prices (all in English)
www.futuresource.com/quotes/quotes.asp?symbols=kc&type=future

Coffee Organizations
www.coffeecorps.org
scaa.org
www.ncausa.org