

AfricaLink Assessment Report

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Executive Summary

AfricaLink is a successful activity that addresses a significant gap in available programs for enhancing the networking and collaboration capabilities of African agricultural and environmental organizations. Both AfricaLink partners and USAID staff indicated that the AfricaLink program is a worthwhile and useful support activity. The Internet and telecommunications environment has changed considerably since the inception of AfricaLink, both in terms of progress with better developed infrastructure and the availability of technical expertise in the region. During the course of this assessment, no one disagreed that AfricaLink has served and can continue to serve a necessary function in the development of networking capabilities in the region and that it plays a valuable role in assisting USAID and its development partners in using information communication technologies (ICT) more effectively.

Though it is difficult to estimate the exact number of organizations and individuals who benefited from AfricaLink, the last time an actual count was taken was in 1997, when it was found that AfricaLink assistance had been used by approximately 25 regional networks. There were 375 members in these networks and 1500 scientists were provided access in the assisted institutions. These numbers have no doubt grown substantially since they were generated.

This assessment makes several recommendations:

- The AfricaLink program should be continued, with its operations more clearly defined and accessible to others who may wish to tap into its resources.
- Combine or coordinate AfricaLink activities with the Leland Initiative to take advantage of the strengths of each program. The Leland Initiative's strengths are in establishing a favorable climate for the Internet to take hold—with policies and technical capabilities in place—as well in developing a user base ready to take advantage of the technology. AfricaLink's strength is in assisting the implementation of specific Internet technology applications.
- Track AfricaLink activities more effectively so that the program's accomplishments can be clearly demonstrated and organizations that have received support are more aware of others' activities.
- Focus on the human side of networking/facilitation—helping to foster relationships among organizations doing similar work
- Use local and African expertise as much as possible, instead of relying on Washington based consultants, to help build African ICT capacity.

We also suggest that attention be paid to the recommendations made by the first AfricaLink coordinator in his report: *AfricaLink Program Assessment and Recommendations*, revised January 8, 1999, at <http://www.info.usaid.gov/regions/afr/alnk/reports/Assessment.052998.htm>.

These recommendations include:

- To facilitate greater networking among agricultural and environmental scientists, each scientist should have direct Internet access (at least e-mail), as opposed to having to go through an intermediary (usually a receptionist). This could be accomplished through the purchase of a dedicated open-access workstation, which all scientists at a facility could use to send e-mail and do research on their own. AfricaLink should fund the purchase of the equipment needed to provide this minimal level of networking.
- AfricaLink should continue to provide the initial capital investment to establish connectivity, and avoid paying ongoing running costs.
- Technical support resources should be focused on key information management individuals in the national research institutions and regional network leaders. A series of regional workshops should be held to assist these key resource people to formulate national (or network) information management plans.
- AfricaLink support for networking (as opposed to connectivity) should be channeled through a more diverse group of major international research institutions. There should be more emphasis on research networking and a willingness to foster information sharing.

Regardless of the scope of the next phase of AfricaLink, the program should continue to focus on helping organizations think through technology resources and serve as a catalyst for the use of ICT in development.

The assessment also pointed out there is need for greater coordination among AFR/SD ICT activities and that there needs to be greater awareness among SD staff involved with these activities about what other ICT activities do/have done.

Introduction

The departure of the first AfricaLink coordinator, Jeff Cochrane, in July afforded an opportunity to revisit the reasons for creating the AfricaLink program as well as the methodology used and specific activities supported by AfricaLink during the time the coordinator was here. At the request of Division of Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Rural Enterprise of the Africa Bureau's Office of Sustainable Development (AFR/SD/ANRE), R&RS project staff? David Wolfe and Patricia Mantey? undertook the assessment. They first worked with Jeff Hill and Tim Resch, the staff in SD/ANRE most closely involved with information and communications technology (ICT) and agriculture and natural resources issues, to define why the assessment was needed and which issues the assessment would encompass. They then conducted in-person and telephone interviews or sent an e-mail message with a series of open ended questions to AfricaLink partners and USAID staff who were selected based on their involvement with the AfricaLink program.

As stated in the original scope of work for the assessment (see Appendix I), "The purpose of this assessment is to provide recommendations to assist AFR/SD's Strategic Objective 3 (SO 3), Strategic Objective 5 (SO 5), and special strategic objective for the environment (SSO) teams in determining the future of the AfricaLink activities, with specific reference to future of the AfricaLink coordinator function and whether the need for the coordination function is primarily in the area of assistance with working out technical connectivity issues, or more along the lines of identifying ways to use ICT more effectively. The assessment team will also examine and address the related issues of whether there is need for greater coordination and consolidation of ICT support functions among and within the three strategic objectives, and whether this would yield efficiencies and better performance. It will also make high level recommendations for the next two years of AfricaLink activity, and will offer pertinent related observations with respect to other ICT support activities within AFR/SD."

Though the amount of input from most individuals except those most directly involved in USAID Washington with AfricaLink and other parts of AFR/SD was disappointing, we feel that this assessment exercise succeeded in getting many of the actors with an interest in ICT in Africa talking together about how ICT activities should be handled within AFR/SD. The assessment also pointed out that: 1) there is a valuable role for AfricaLink to play in assisting USAID and its development partners in using ICT more effectively; 2) there is a need for greater coordination among AFR/SD information and communications technology activities; and 3) there is a lack of awareness on the part of people involved with these SD ICT activities of what other activities do/have done.

As per the original scope of work, the assessment team compiled a list of questions to solicit information based on the main objectives of the assessment (see Appendix IV). These questions were used as the basis for an informal survey to collect field as well as Washington administrative input. The survey was sent to a total of 37 AfricaLink partners and USAID staff. The selection of individuals contacted was based on recommendations from SD/ANRE staff. Only eight responses to the survey were received, seven of which

were from AfricaLink partners, and one from USAID (SD/ANRE). In addition, 12 USAID staff in Washington and one Regional Economic Development Service Office (REDSO) staffer in the United States. on TDY agreed to be interviewed in person or over the telephone. To increase the amount of input received for this report, follow-up messages were sent to selected individuals, offering one last opportunity to comment on AfricaLink. This effort yielded the one USAID e-mail response.

Because of the minimal response from the field, we received little first hand testimony about whether and how AfricaLink is helpful at the implementation and beneficiary level. However, most AfricaLink partner respondents and staff in SD/ANRE, the Information Resource Management Office (IRM), and the Global Bureau said that it is a worthwhile and useful support activity.

We hope that the following recommendations and observations will be helpful in determining how the AfricaLink program should direct its efforts in the future. These observations are based on our conversations with people directly involved with the AfricaLink program in Washington, the AfricaLink assessment focus group that met on October 1, and the few field-based individuals who responded to the request for input on the future of AfricaLink (see Appendix II). The people we received input from are experts in their respective areas of development in Africa, and they are aware of the issues concerning ICT in these areas. We feel that their opinions can be considered as valid sources of input regarding the need for and future of the AfricaLink program based on the strength of their knowledge and experience, even though not all of them can be considered experts in ICT.

As part of the assessment process, we did an inventory of ICT activities in AFR/SD/ANRE in order to identify areas of overlap or redundancies between and among them (see Appendix V). Though there are about a dozen activities that may be considered ICT activities, AfricaLink and the Leland Initiative stand out as the only two that were specifically designed to improve access to the Internet and integrate ICT (specifically the Internet) into development activities. Although the attached inventory of these activities is useful, these activities are not further considered in this assessment since they differ so much in scope from the Leland Initiative or AfricaLink. The other SD/ANRE ICT activities appear to be aimed primarily at facilitating collaboration and coordination among Africa Bureau and missions, and are good examples of how ICT/Internet can be used effectively to enhance development goals, but they were not specifically designed to further the use of ICT. The new AfricaLink coordinator should, however, be familiar with all these other activities, since they provide valuable services and resources to AFR/SD and its development partners.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Continue the AfricaLink activity in a more clearly defined form and ensure that information about all aspects of AfricaLink is more readily available. The concept of AfricaLink has much potential, and the time is right to move it farther along. Some groundbreaking work in electronic networking among African researchers has

already been done, and the program should continue to pursue this type of assistance, keeping in mind the changes that have occurred in ICT in general and accessibility in particular while planning the new approach. In addition, there are some lessons learned from previous AfricaLink work to consider.

Regardless of the scope of the next phase of AfricaLink, the program should continue to focus on helping organizations think through technology resources and serve as a catalyst for the use of ICT in development. A number of assessment respondents suggested that an AfricaLink-like entity could help the technology leaders get ahead of the curve, helping them learn about resources, skills, and training opportunities. Several respondents indicated that AfricaLink should focus its efforts, when possible, on building and strengthening ICT activities already in place. One respondent noted that while it is important to make seed resources available to start up new networks, there are many networks already established—operating at many different levels—that could benefit from an AfricaLink that acts as a resource/information broker, able to help organizations identify technology solutions and new ways of working together.

For example, there are established and newly established networks that need help in focusing their purpose and objectives in order to keep their members interested and productively engaged in information sharing. They may be in need of new ideas such as how to use the web more effectively for research and how to establish website conferencing.

Another respondent recommended that the objectives—and accomplishments—of AfricaLink be more explicitly defined and widely known. The program should have a clear agenda and strategy, along with a range of available options in approaches. It was also recommended that the overall process and mechanism for the program's grant-making be more clearly defined and transparent. This individual indicated that he was aware of colleagues who gave up trying to access AfricaLink funds due to confusion about exactly who does what in this process.

A USAID respondent also commented that AfricaLink needs to better articulate how it fits in with USAID Mission programs and how its activities support the overall AFR/SD strategy.

Recommendation 2: Two options for the continuation of the AfricaLink activity have emerged. Option 1 involves combining AfricaLink with the Leland Initiative to obtain synergy from the vision of Leland and the practical implementation strengths of AfricaLink. Option 2 is to keep AfricaLink organizationally independent, but ensure that part of AfricaLink's mandate is to closely coordinate and track its activities in order to leverage the advantages and outcomes of its activities with others that utilize ICT in the same areas.

Option 1: AfricaLink and the Leland Initiative could be consolidated for better coordination between these activities and to take advantage of the strengths of each, yet at the same time ensure that AfricaLink's constituencies? the agriculture and natural

resources management communities? continue to have the local/activity level assistance they require. AfricaLink could act as the implementing arm of Leland, serving to broker specific implementation of ICT activities in the agriculture and natural resources management arenas. Leland generates many focused concepts and overall ideas that need to be helped a step further to get to the implementation/operation stage. AfricaLink could do this in the agriculture/NRM areas, with Leland providing training and other idea generating activities. AfricaLink would still need to do the coordination activities described in Recommendation 3 below.

Option 2: Continue AfricaLink as an independent activity, paying special attention to Recommendation 3 in order to make its activities better coordinated, more measurable, and easier for all groups eligible for assistance to take advantage of. This would provide the benefits of better coordination, which would benefit all of AFR/SD in general, while avoiding issues related to formal consolidation with other activities.

Recommendation 3: Tracking activities and successes is one of the aspects of AfricaLink that could most benefit from change. AfricaLink should make a serious effort to track the activities it supports in a way that will contribute to greater awareness of the results that the program has achieved and the effectiveness of those results. A simple database (or even a regularly updated list) describing the different organizations that have worked with AfricaLink, what their activities were, and what results were achieved would be very helpful for more effective communication about AfricaLink's activities as well as for any follow up evaluation activity.

One respondent suggested that a country by country survey should be done of what AfricaLink has done in terms of connecting groups and individuals—who is connected and who still needs to be connected.

The program should also take advantage of the many opportunities for sharing information about what is going on with ICT in general within AFR/SD, rather than assume any kind of controlling/coordinating function, which would require considerably more authority than is likely to be given to AfricaLink.

Opportunities for sharing information include:

- Have one consolidated AFR/SD ICT web interface to point to and introduce people to the full range of SD's ICT activities. This would be valuable both as a forum to generate ideas regarding the use of ICT and to let others know about the different ICT related activities underway. A basic requirement could be a link to the ICT component of any AFR/SD activity. This would also act as a much needed inventory of all AFR/SD ICT activities.
- More advertising of—or better access to—the results of AfricaLink to projects that could use its services, so potential users are aware of all that can be done. The current AfricaLink website is good as far as brochureware for the activity goes (i.e., telling program managers, the public, etc. what it does), but this is not enough to keep all groups adequately informed and to generate ideas on how to tap into the program.

The AfricaLink website also could benefit from enhancements in its overall design and organization. The IDRC's Uganisha site (<http://www.idrc.ca/unganisha>) is a good example of an informative, well organized, and user friendly ITC website. Presentations, personal contacts, and regular directed network mailings that are clear and concise about what AfricaLink has done and can do would go a long way to better inform USAID and its AfricaLink partners. The former AfricaLink coordinator did a good job of this among certain constituencies, but the fact that some of the AFR/SD staff identified as key players as well as a number of AfricaLink partners were not fully aware of how to use AfricaLink within their programs and activities illustrates the point that communication, though difficult, must be constant and utilize multiple channels.

- When possible, work more closely with the Leland Initiative to find ways to use AfricaLink's services. Leland has been successful at country and region-wide introduction of the Internet. It has been less successful at ensuring that individual organizations have the kind of access they need, and more importantly make use of the Internet and ICT in ways that will help them succeed in implementing their programs. AfricaLink can help with this process.
- Coordination with Leland training activities would be beneficial to both programs and enhance their overall impact. AfricaLink could help identify partners in the agriculture and NRM areas to participate in training, and could help develop specific ideas identified in the training.

Recommendation 4: The person(s) chosen to coordinate AfricaLink activities should focus on identifying and encouraging opportunities for similar interest groups to use the Internet and ICT to foster communication, as well as on helping them to use ICT more effectively.

Most people with whom we spoke feel that this type of network building/facilitation is a primary need, instead of technical expertise, which is available in most places in Africa. The AfricaLink coordinator should understand the needs of requesters, know the resources available, and be able to generate ideas on how to approach activities and resolve issues. The range of technical expertise potentially needed is so broad (requirements analyses, website development, network setup and configuration, conference facilitation, training, etc.) that it is unlikely that one person would ever have all the skills necessary to do it all.

Recommendation 5: For situations requiring technical expertise, AfricaLink should focus more effort on identifying African groups and individuals capable of providing the needed technical services and refer the groups in need of services to those African companies or individuals. AfricaLink's comparative advantage should be its ability to pull together and leverage resources and to provide guidance on higher level ICT issues and solutions.

It was noted that in certain areas of Africa, particularly central Africa, necessary technical expertise is simply not available. This clearly increases the challenge of connecting organizations that need highly technical assistance with this type of expertise. In short, the primary need is for someone who knows African ICT issues and the actors involved and can help to bring them together to make the best use possible of resources and expertise in Africa.

Recommendation 6: There are a series of useful observations and recommendations made by the first AfricaLink coordinator (Jeff Cochrane)—based on visits and consultations with AfricaLink’s implementing partners—in his report *AfricaLink Program Assessment and Recommendations*, June 3, 1998, revised January 8, 1999, at <http://www.info.usaid.gov/regions/afr/alnk/reports/Assessment.052998.htm>.

These include:

- To facilitate greater networking among agricultural and environmental scientists, each scientist should have direct access to at least e-mail, as opposed to having to go through an intermediary (usually a receptionist). AfricaLink should fund the purchase of computer equipment that would make this level of direct access possible. This does not necessarily mean that everyone should have a wired terminal on his/her desktop. But this could be accomplished at a minimal level through a dedicated open-access workstation, which all scientists at a facility could use to send e-mail and do research, etc. on their own.
- AfricaLink should continue to provide the initial capital investment to establish connectivity only, and avoid paying ongoing running costs.
- Technical support resources should be focused on key information management individuals in the national research institutions and on regional network leaders. A series of regional workshops should be held in order to address issues of national and regional importance among these key resource people. The principal output of these workshops would be to complete national (or network) information management strategy.
- AfricaLink support for networking (as opposed to connectivity) should be channeled through a more diverse group of major international research institutions (ICRAF, IITA, ICRISAT, SACCAR, etc.). There should be more emphasis on research networking and a willingness to foster information sharing and the integration of information resources into African network systems. (Networking is defined here as the regular sharing of information among a defined group of individuals working toward a common objective.)

Observations

The following observations, though not strong enough to be considered recommendations, offer some further suggestions as to how AfricaLink could be improved.

- The help desks that AfricaLink supports are an excellent idea and could, in combination with tracking other available technical expertise, go a long way towards

helping to provide the technical expertise needed to implement many AfricaLink activities. It seems that the SangoNet help desk was the most successful (certainly the best known), and it would be a good idea to find out more about their activities and effectiveness. The previous AfricaLink coordinator noted in his January 8, 1999 assessment report (see Recommendation 6) that the “regional” help desks were most effective in the country where they were based, rather than on a regional basis. IDRC’s Uganisha Connectivity Project (<http://www.idrc.ca/unganisha/helpdesk>) acknowledges the AfricaLink project as the pioneer for the concept of ICT help desks and that its own help desk model was developed using AfricaLink as its basis. The Uganisha project also offers other ideas that AfricaLink could draw from.

- Though the network development aspect of AfricaLink (the network member directory) was recognized as uneven (the contact information was entered by people with the networks, and anyone could enter this information; but once entered, only the person who entered the data could change it), this database could serve as useful tool for communicating information about available resources. This is one area that could be enhanced considerably by taking advantage of what is known of existing networks, establishing linkages, and developing activities with these resources.
- Some specific feedback regarding the usefulness of the AfricaLink advisor position as it was previously configured was that it created a Washington dependency and did not rely enough on African resources. There were certainly good reasons for the extensive reliance on this one individual at the time, but now that more African resources are known and available, it should be possible to do more with less on-site assistance from a Washington-based AfricaLink coordinator, and there should be less dependence on U.S.-based and other outside experts.
- An interesting issue that came up during the interviews is that networks of agricultural researchers and practitioners are generally better developed and more mature than those in the environment field and have different needs. Since they are related, this may be an opportunity for AfricaLink to seek ways to enhance cross-fertilization of these networks to create more synergy between them through the use of the Internet, while at the same time addressing their individual needs to allow them to progress as quickly as they can.
- More active participation by the NARS (national agricultural research stations) themselves was suggested by one AfricaLink partner, in order to ensure greater sustainability of AfricaLink’s investments. He recommended that the NARS should take over most of the AfricaLink responsibilities. “AfricaLink can be successful only if the local institutions and people take responsibility to ensure that they maintain the service and are prepared to pay for it in the long term.”
- According to current AfricaLink administrators, specific activities are only determined by the regional agencies responsible for disbursing funds and overseeing the project. These regional agencies were not responsive to the request for input. We

did hear generally that support is needed and that some significant partner projects were depending on the availability of AfricaLink in their mid- to long-term plans.

Ongoing and Past AfricaLink Activities

Activities that AfricaLink has supported in the past include:

- Small grants of equipment and connectivity facilitation for partners;
- Internet related training/workshops for partners;
- Technical support (regional help desks);
- Electronic network and discussion group facilitation (websites, listservs, etc.);
- Rural telecenter (UWCA) in northwestern Ghana;
- Radio e-mail access for remote rural connectivity; and
- Internet based directories of agricultural, natural resources and environmental networks and partner organizations and researchers in Africa.

There are also a number of ongoing or planned AfricaLink activities that will require continued support from the AfricaLink program, including support to:

- NESDA, the Network for the Environment and Sustainable Development in Africa - small grant and technical assistance for NESDA's website and electronic conference;
- FoodNet (for IITA) – a network of East African agricultural researchers;
- CovercropNet (for IITA) – a joint agricultural and ICT experiment;
- CARPE/BSP – an Internet connectivity needs assessment for CA-SUSG members in Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Cameroon, and Congo;
- The Internet-based directories of agriculture, NRM networks, and partner organizations, and researchers in Africa: SPAAR, the Special Program for African Agricultural Research, directory (<http://209.135.244.139/spaar/directoryfind.cfm>); and the AfricaLink directory (<http://gemini.info.usaid.gov/afrialink/memberfind.cfm>).
- ASARECA, the Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in East and Central Africa, for its RAIN information activity.

AfricaLink Impact and Results

As was stated earlier, there was not a great deal of feedback offered during the assessment process about the effectiveness and impact of specific AfricaLink activities. However, AfricaLink activities are producing results that have enabled African partners to develop their ability to use ICT to communicate more effectively. Through the AfricaLink program, many organizations and networks obtained seed resources that enabled them to “crystallize their ideas about how technology can be best used,” and at the most basic level, African agricultural researchers in remote locations have been able to connect with the larger agricultural research community. The ASARECA program, for example, was able to connect 208 agricultural scientists to the Internet in 1997 in six African countries, and by 1998 that number had grown to 329. A 1997 estimate found that AfricaLink has assisted 25 regional networks and that 1500 scientists had some

degree of Internet access through their assisted institutions. Among the technologies that these scientists were able to share as a result of this new connectivity were agronomic practices, soil-organic amendments, new food products, pest management techniques, seed multiplication methods, and crop varieties.

Cover Crops Network

One of the most widely praised AfricaLink activities we heard about during the assessment process is the West African Cover Crops Information Technology experiment, funded through IITA (the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture located in Nigeria), which is actually two experiments in one. The agronomic experiment will collect data simultaneously throughout West Africa to determine if more effective use of two green manure cover crops can address many of the acute problems of sustainable agriculture such as soil infertility and noxious weeds. The information technology meta-experiment, which is supported by an e-mail discussion list known as CcropNet-cropnet@cgiar.org, will observe whether those scientists with good access to information technology are better able to undertake the agronomic experiment.

The cover crops experiment has greatly increased field evaluation of specific green manure cover crop options across a large region, and has resulted in the improved involvement of scientifically sound and clearly targeted methodologies, the involvement of a wide variety of organizations and individuals, and better reporting. On a technical level, this experiment allows for the first time the field evaluation of a cover crop phenology model—if successful—that will help guide the choice of cover crops for a variety of agroecological zones.

An associated activity that was inspired by the AfricaLink program is PEDUNet, a similar IITA electronic network intended to support fieldwork on sustainable approaches to integrated pest management (IPM) in cowpea. However, insufficient funds were available from AfricaLink for this networking activity to progress very far. Both CCropNet and PEDUNet are examples of what one respondent referred to as “goal-oriented networking” approaches, which have much potential to promote the exchange of experiences, information, and new technology among agricultural scientists with similar interests.

Appendix I Scope of Work

Assessment of Future Potential and Directions for AfricaLink Activity

September 16, 1999

Background

AfricaLink has been in operation since 1995. Its primary activities have been to assist AFR/SD SO3, SO5 and SSO partners in accessing and using information and communications technology (ICT) to achieve its development goals in Africa. It has been very successful at spreading the word about ICT, working at a grassroots level with partners to make connections among partners, resources and technical expertise to bring the benefits of ICT to partners. In addition, the USAID/Africa Bureau has also conducted a number of other ICT activities that contribute in different ways to the use of ICT in development. These include the Leland Initiative (AFR/SD SO4), and activities such as Knowledge Exchange and Learning Partnerships (KELP), Teams@work, TradeNet, and NRMtracker.

Finally there are also other related donor-supported activities external to AFR/SD that could impact on future AFR/SD SO3, SO5 and SSO support to ICT in Africa. These include SPAAR/FARA and REDSO/ESA Information Systems Assessment.

The recent departure of the AfricaLink coordinator (to REDSO/ESA) offers an opportunity to assess the progress and contributions made by AfricaLink, as well as to reconsider the direction that AfricaLink could take, if any, in its next phase, particularly with regard to the current work of current and potential AfricaLink partners and other programs and opportunities now available to them.

Purpose of Assessment

The purpose of this assessment is to provide recommendations to assist AFR/SD SO3, SO5 and SSO in determining the future of the AfricaLink activities, with specific reference to the future of the AfricaLink coordinator function and whether the need for the coordination function is primarily in the area of assistance with working out technical connectivity issues, or more along the lines of identifying ways to use ICT more effectively. The assessment team will also examine and address the related issues of whether there is need for greater coordination and consolidation of ICT support functions among and within the three strategic objectives, and whether this would yield efficiencies and better performance. It will also make high level recommendations for the next two years of AfricaLink activity, and will offer pertinent related observations with respect to other ICT support activities within AFR/SD.

Methodology

Questions for interviews and e-mails, as well as for background research, will be designed to determine whether there are information system development needs that exist for different stakeholders and what those needs are. Typical needs would include capacity development, backstopping activities to a definite problem, and mechanisms for solving

problems. Responses to the questions to be answered will also yield information on what has changed as a result of the various ICT activities, who are important entities to bring online/give assistance to in the future, and what are the alternatives that these entities could use in order to make that happen and why they might use one or another of these alternatives.

Some organizations that administer partner relationships will be asked to send the e-mail questions to three or four partners that have received direct assistance from AfricaLink.

Beyond the scope of the current task, are tasks such as 1) determine the impact of information technology on a AfricaLink's ability to carry out its mission; and 2) determine if inputs actually accelerated the incorporation of ICT into targeted programs, or if it would have occurred without assistance.

Team Composition

The assessment team will consist of:

David Wolfe and Patricia Mantey (outside team co-chairs)

Jeff Hill (ANRE/SO3)

Tim Resch (ANRE/SO5)

Special Resource Persons:

Greg Mrema (ASARECA) - pending acceptance

Other representative of African partner community (Nominated but not confirmed is BJ Humplick of the Tanzania SO2 team).

Wade Warren (as technical specialist - IRM) pending acceptance

Kebadu Belachew (interim AfricaLink coordinator, serving as resource for the team)

AFR/SD SO3, SO5, and SSO staff

SO4 representative - Lane Smith

Tasks and Deliverables

1. Form and convene assessment team.
 - SOW/purpose distributed to potential team members via e-mail and commitments to participate made.
 - Team members contribute questions they would like answered—either in phone/personal interviews or via informal e-mail questions/responses.
 - Format agreed on and questions selected.
2. Compile overall summaries of projects and accomplishments.

- Take stock of sector ICT activities, the range of partner groups and the types of consultation processes that have been held here and in Africa.
3. Interviews/questionnaires administered and input compiled.
 - Subjects for interviews and e-mail participants selected by ANRE. Suggested mixture of participants: 20 percent AfricaLink stakeholders; 80 percent from other programs (KELP, etc.)
 - Up to 20 in-person or telephone interviews conducted
 - Up to 50 e-mail solicitations for input, including surveys forwarded by partners to other partners.
 4. With input from the preliminary discussions, and the survey, common position within the division decided on and preliminary draft report prepared.
 5. Distribute draft and convene entire assessment team for discussion after Centers' week.
 6. Final report.

Responsibilities and Level of Effort

Team co-chairs will be primarily responsible for administering and compiling interviews/questionnaires, convening meetings, facilitating discussions and producing the final report. It is anticipated that this will take approximately 10 days of each of the co-facilitator's time. If possible, background research will most likely be conducted by R&RS research staff with assistance from ANRE staff.

Other team members will be responsible for providing input as indicated in the task section.

ANRE team members will offer overall guidance regarding desired outcomes, participate in the team discussions, provide input as indicated in the tasks section, review, and accept the final recommendations/report. Contribute to questions to be asked in interviews/e-mails, as well as approve final list of areas to be investigated.

Final Deliverable

The final report of the assessment team will consist of:

- Executive summary
- Discussion of the purpose and need for the assessment
- Assessment methodology
- Descriptive research about various ICT activities in Africa
- Results of interviews and e-mail questionnaire
- Recommendations
 - Ongoing AfricaLink activities that must be kept going
 - Answer to question: Is there a need to continue AfricaLink?
 - Directions for AfricaLink
 - Skills needed by AfricaLink coordinator, etc.

- Appendix of supporting documents (questions asked, responses, text of existing reports used in assessment, etc.)

Appendix II Individuals interviewed for AfricaLink assessment in person or via telephone, and respondents to e-mail questionnaire

Abou Bamba, NESDA
Paul Bartel, USAID/AFR/SD/ANRE
Kebadu Belachew, USAID/AFR/SD/ANRE
Jerry Brown, USAID/AFR/SD/ANRE
Robert Carsky, IITA
Carl Gallegos, USAID/AFR/SD/ANRE
Shaun Ferris, FOODNET Coordinator, Kampala
Jim Graham, USAID/AFR/SD/ANRE
Michael Hailu, CIFOR (formerly at ICRAF)
Jeff Hill, USAID/AFR/SD/ANRE
Walter Knausenburger, USAID/AFR/SD/ANRE
Carol Levin, USAID/G/EGAD
Andrew Mapurisa, IUCN SA Regional Office
Richard Markham, IPM, IITA
Jonathan Metzger, USAID/AFR/SD/ANRE
Ray Morton, USAID/REDSO/RCSA
Fatou Ndoye, NESDA
Reena Patel, UWCA (Upper West Commerce Association, Ghana) coordinator
Tim Resch, USAID/AFR/SD/ANRE
Wade Warren, USAID/IRM
Dennis Weller, AFR/SD/ANRE

Appendix III AfricaLink Assessment Focus Group Agenda

November 1, 1999, Washington, D.C.

9:00 - 9:15	Coffee
9:15 - 9:45	Welcome, intro to the assessment, etc
9:45 - 10:45	AfricaLink: overview, activities & interactions Jeff Hill, Walter Knausenburger, Jonathan Metzger
10:45 - 11:00	Break
11:00 - 12:00	ICT programs in AFR/SD/ANRE David Wolfe, Patricia Mantey, Tim Resch
12:00 - 1:00	Lunch (on your own)
1:00 - 2:30	Preliminary findings of interviews; discussion on future direction
2:30 - 3:00	Wrap up and conclusions; next steps.

People whose names are listed under specific agenda items have agreed to speak for 10 to 15 minutes on these general topics. Others who are not listed will be encouraged to contribute, as well.

Participants

Kebadu Belachew, USAID/AFR/SD/ANRE
Jerry Brown, USAID/AFR/SD/ANRE
Tim Crean, USAID/M/IRM
Carl Gallegos, USAID/AFR/SD/ANRE
Jeff Hill, USAID/AFR/SD/ANRE/
Walter Knausenburger, USAID/AFR/SD/ANRE
Linda Leonard, Research & Reference Services Project and Leland Initiative, USAID
Patricia Mantey, Africa Bureau Information Center, Research & Reference Services
Mike McGahuey, USAID/AFR/SD/ANRE
Jonathan Metzger, Leland Initiative
Geoff Mrema, Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in Eastern and
Central Africa (ASARECA)
Tim Resch, USAID/AFR/SD/ANRE
David Wolfe, Research & Reference Services Project, USAID

Appendix IV AfricaLink Assessment Questions

As indicated in the assessment description, we are trying to get information to help decide the future direction of AfricaLink. Your thoughts on the following questions will be extremely valuable in helping to make these decisions. We need to have your responses to these questions by October 26, 1999, in order to provide input to discussions and decision-making regarding the future of AfricaLink at the assessment focus group meeting on November 1.

It would be very helpful if you could also distribute these questions to two or three of your partners whom you know have had dealings/interest in AfricaLink and other ICT related activities.

1. Do you have activities currently receiving assistance from AfricaLink for which assistance will need to continue? If so, please describe these activities.
2. How has AfricaLink helped you or your organization to achieve your program objectives? We are particularly interested in any success stories that show results or impacts that can be attributed to AfricaLink.
3. Considering other ICT-support programs that you know are available, how do you think AfricaLink can be most useful? By providing technical support? Helping identify appropriate ICT activities? Helping locate resources to implement ICT activities? Or helping to identify or start up forums linking groups or individuals in order to facilitate the sharing of resources and ideas? Please explain.
4. What type of assistance would you like from the AfricaLink program in the future?
5. Do you have any suggestions as to how AfricaLink could better coordinate with other ICT support activities?
6. Do you have any other suggestions on how to improve the AfricaLink program and make it more effective?

Appendix V Inventory of AFR/SD/ANRE ICT Activities

SO3

AFRICA-LINK <http://www.info.usaid.gov/regions/afr/lnk/welcome.html>

Purpose

AfricaLink facilitates effective African networking? the regular and routine sharing of information. It supports regional networks of African policymakers and scientists in agriculture, natural resources management, and the environment. AfricaLink focuses on the problem of access for members of specific, organized networks. AfricaLink assistance to network members is coordinated through formal network leadership and furnished through local and regional service providers in Africa, largely in the private sector. Problems of infrastructure development are generally addressed by other programs within USAID, especially the Leland Initiative.

Clients:

Primarily research communities in Africa working on environmental and agricultural topics, but also USAID employees, partners, NGOs, government officials and others who might want to benefit from this information.

In practice assistance is targeted generally at the leadership of national networks, who represent their countries on regional committees

For funding purposes, networking (as opposed to connectivity) support should be targeted to major international research institutions (ICRAF, WARDA, IITA, ICRISAT, SACCAR, etc.) that demonstrate a capacity and a willingness to foster greater information sharing among their related regional research networks.

Main Activities

- *Remote Connectivity:* African scientists urged AfricaLink last year not to forget about those among their colleagues at electronically remote sites with no connectivity. ASARECA was awarded a grant from the African Development Bank that will enable it to focus resources on at least some of those remote sites. The experiment with wireless networking for remote sites in Uganda is still in progress, with fiscal operational hurdles still to be overcome, but e-mails are indeed flowing. The experiment with a rural telecenter in northeastern Ghana is also in its final stages, and conversations have begun with the U.S. Peace Corps to determine if this low-cost model might be replicated in other electronically remote areas as an alternative to the very high cost models many donors are now considering.
- *Professional Facilitation:* There is substantial evidence of scientists using e-mail to communicate with donors and major universities in Europe and North America, but little evidence of scientists using e-mail to communicate among each other in a coordinated fashion to do the real business of their research networks. AfricaLink is

urging East and Southern African research network coordinators to consider professional facilitation services to help them as a regional network “do” better science over the Internet.

- *Local Technical Support:* In many countries, simply making basic use of the Internet can be problematic. E-mail is in principle accessible at an organization, but for one reason or another, scientists find themselves unable to use it effectively. Technical support help desks are now available in Burkina Faso, Kenya, Malawi, Senegal, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zimbabwe, and can be initiated anywhere that demand is sufficient. If network coordinators or their members need help, they should make their needs known and resources will be sought to provide help-desk support wherever they are.

Types of Communication Activities

Works on connecting agricultural and natural resource activities.

What Is Essentially Different

- Focus on networking and connectivity of agricultural and NRM research stations in Africa.
- Information largely for research community.

AG-NET <http://www.afr-sd.org:8000/agnet/>

Purpose

Agnets - Africa is an electronic forum for networking and information sharing among agribusiness professionals and trade associations in Eastern, Southern, and West Africa.

Clients

People working in the African agribusiness community. This is a controlled subscription listserv, with members selected for participation by AFR/SD.

Main Activities

Agnets-Africa facilitates communication among African agribusiness associations and their clients through the use of information technology. This agribusiness and agricultural electronic information network brings together African and United States agribusiness and commodity associations to demonstrate the importance and potential impact of information technology to clients in order to change the way they do business.

Type of Communication Activities

Agnets-Africa enables African agribusiness associations and clients to access technologies that increase their capacity to compete in the global market place through: 1) news brief (in French and English); 2) commodity listservs; 3) discussion groups, regional and global African agribusiness trade information; and 4) workshops.

What Is Essentially Different

- Focus on a select group of individuals.
- Focus on agribusiness activities.
- As a listserv, the range of activities is limited to group discussion.

Regional Trade Analytical Agenda Webpage <http://www.afritrade.org>**Purpose**

USAID's Regional Trade Analytical Agenda (RTAA) project is a series of analytical activities formulated to address some of these key trade issues and the impact of regional trade on agricultural production, comparative advantage, and food security in eastern and southern Africa. These analyses are intended to identify the impacts of evolving trade and agricultural security. The results of these analyses are currently being used to inform policymakers. RTAA's objectives are to determine the impact of "informal" cross-border agricultural trade on regional food security; analyze implications of changing agricultural comparative advantage resulting from political and economic liberalization for trade and food security; and enhance information sharing and dissemination among African researchers and policymakers by means of an electronic communications network.

Clients

Policymakers and researchers.

Main Activities

One of the program's early achievements was to set up an electronic network that links all the collaborators. Now researchers and policymakers are linked through the Internet and are not only able to exchange data, information, and papers but also discuss their implications. To facilitate communication and dissemination, RTAA has established a website. By publishing research findings, structural adjustment policies, workshop proceedings, and research methodology, RTAA collaborators hope to effect meaningful changes in the way regional trade is conducted in eastern and southern Africa, thereby improving food security. Two initial studies on economic reform and structural adjustment programs provided a baseline for RTAA and helped inform USAID and other donors about the current state of policy reforms in the subregions. The program is now in the final phase of dissemination, dialogue, and facilitation of policy reform implementation.

Type of Communication Activities

Internet.

What Is Essentially Different

- Regional Focus on Southern and Eastern Africa.
- Focus on trade information
- Replaced TradeNet

SO4

Leland <http://www.info.usaid.gov/regions/afr/leland/>

Purpose

The Leland Initiative hopes to achieve the following results:

- Improving connectivity within Africa
- Increasing access by Africans to people and information for sustainable development
- Enhancing African ability to find solutions to African problems
- Making African-produced information available to the world

Clients

Specific African governments and organizations working with the Internet.

Main Activities

- Training development partners on Internet applications relevant to USAID
- Providing trade and investment promotion information
- Facilitating new electronic networks
- Encouraging partnerships between primary and secondary schools worldwide.
- Compiling Internet best practices for reference
- Providing technical assistance for national telecommunications staff and local Internet Service Providers. Facilitating community-based decision making
- Applying potential Internet solutions to current needs
- Linking research networks electronically for improved effectiveness
- Strengthening problem-solving methods among urban decision-makers through Internet use
- Creating open markets for Internet Service Providers
- Liberalizing information policies

Type of Communication

Activities: Internet, training, training of trainers, listserv.

What is Essentially Different

- Focused on improving Internet communication in Africa.
- Improving Internet capacities in specific countries.
- A non-sectoral focus.

SO5

CARPE <http://carpe.gecp.virginia.edu/>

Purpose

CARPE's 20-year goal: To reduce the rate of deforestation of the tropical forests of the Congo Basin and conserve the biodiversity contained within them. Thus, in the long term, avert potentially negative changes in global and regional climate. Comprising numerous scientific and advocacy partners and USAID, CARPE seeks to help identify and establish conditions and practices that will reduce deforestation and biodiversity loss in the Congo Basin. CARPE arose in response to both local and international concern about the consequences of the current pattern of unsustainable resource use in the region.

- Regional perspective
- African participation
- Capacity strengthening
- Good science information
- Sharing donor complementarity

Clients

Donor community working on Central Africa environment issues, African governments and NGOs, and citizens of Central Africa.

Main Activities

- A lot of research generated.
- CARPE is helping scientists link together electronically for a sustainable environment.

Type of Communication Activities

Website with many posted articles, newsgroups.

What Is Essentially Different

- CARPE is primarily a research/conservation project, with a secondary focus on coordinating research.
- CARPE focuses only on Central African environmental issues.
- CARPE is of most interest to researchers or environmental practitioners.

FRAME <http://www.afr-sd.org:8000/frame/>

Purpose

FRAME is a FRAMEwork for the strategic analysis of USAID's environmental investments in Africa. Its purpose is to support better decision-making in environment and natural resources in Africa by increasing the effectiveness of already existing

information. It gives USAID a variety of tools to validate and improve the mix of programs within its overall portfolio.

FRAME does not determine priorities, strategies or program funding. Instead, it is designed to facilitate a process to identify priorities and strategies with stakeholders.

FRAME focuses on answering the following strategic questions: What is USAID's existing environmental portfolio and how can we strengthen it? What are the emerging trends and challenges that should influence the allocation of USAID resources across sectors? How does the existing USAID portfolio fit within this context and how might it evolve for enhanced impact? Are there opportunities to optimize resources?

Clients

USAID and its partners, particularly environmental practitioners.

Main Activities

The core processes of FRAME are learning, monitoring and assessment. FRAME supports improved environmental decision-making through activities in three areas: knowledge, networks, and "lenses."

- **FRAME Knowledge Base:** The interactive and evolving knowledge base brings together core information generated by FRAME with a growing body of relevant information provided and shared by FRAME users who are directly in touch with the latest developments in their fields.
- **FRAME Networks:** Networks (physical and electronic) of African specialists provide knowledge and experience that can make a vital contribution to planning and implementing environmental strategies. FRAME's support of the contact group provides a cost-effective way for African specialists to share experiences and solutions, and can significantly improve USAID's access to long-term partners and stakeholders.
- **FRAME Lenses:** Analytical methodologies provide "lenses" through which sector dynamics can be understood and influenced. FRAME's support of interdisciplinary analytical engines facilitates improved decision-making by USAID and other decision-makers, and helps create a common strategic frame-of-reference across funding and implementation sources.

Ongoing FRAME activities include FRAME reports. Two new reports are currently underway: an inventory of USAID's environmental activities in West Africa and an assessment of emerging opportunities related to natural resource management in Africa.

Types of Communication Activities

The FRAME Website (located at: <http://www.afr-sd.org/frame>) is the organizational lynchpin of FRAME. It serves two main functions: to facilitate access to existing information and to stimulate information exchange. It houses FRAME reports, information on USAID's country-level NRM activities and other relevant USAID documentation, such as country programming documents, strategic assessments, and evaluations. It also contains several analytical tools to assist with analysis, including a

locator of community-based natural resource management (CBNRM) activities and a wide variety of maps. The website encourages dialogue through topical discussion groups involving contact group members. Preeminent African scholars, policymakers, and others who work closely in this field chair the discussion groups. Highlights of these discussions are synthesized regularly in order to provide easier access to the wealth of expertise of participants.

What Is Essentially Different

- Research tool for USAID and partners.
- Emphasis on practitioners.

KELP <http://www.kelp.org/>

Purpose

Achievement of KELP objectives will contribute to the vision and long term goal of AFR/SD to accelerate African capacity to sustainably manage development through strategic objectives SO relating to agriculture (SO3), natural resources management (SO5), environmental review (strategic support objective), economic growth (SO2), and development information (SO4). Ensuring success towards meeting this goal requires improvements in African education, training, and research systems. The challenge is to make post-secondary institutions more relevant, skills training more widely available, and knowledge networks more integrated. In doing so, Africans will be better positioned to take advantage of economic growth and trade opportunities while ensuring sustainability.

Strategy

KELP will act as a catalyst for knowledge exchanges and learning partnerships that are based not only on face to face interaction but also on judicious use of information, communication, and knowledge technologies, including the Internet, CD-ROM, videoconferencing, and traditional print media.

Clients

The direct beneficiaries of KELP are a broad array of individuals? faculty, researchers, and students who will benefit from training in AFR/SD's priority areas; African institutions with an improved knowledge base that is relevant to 21st century jobs; and African networks with improved policies for knowledge exchanges and learning partnerships within the continent and between African and American institutions.

Main Activities

KELP will support a series of multiple partnerships between American and African institutions, which will develop and share knowledge in priority subject areas related to sustainable development? environment, natural resources management, sustainable agriculture, public policy, and development information. By FY 2003, KELP will catalyze knowledge exchanges and learning partnerships between African and American post-secondary institutions that will create learning and research opportunities not

possible from institutions on their own and that will have mutual benefit. It is also expected that support for these efforts will be broadened to a wide range of donor partners

Type of Communication Activities

Internet, CD-ROM, video conferencing, and traditional print media

What Is Essentially Different

- KERP focuses on post-secondary institutions and is of most interest to students.
- KERP takes a focus on exchange and cross-sectoral dialog.

NRM Tracker <http://www.nrmtracker.org> (under construction)

Purpose

The NRM Tracker application has been developed with the overall objective of facilitating information capture and sharing among those interested in improving resource management through work with local communities in Africa.

Clients

Natural resource management workers and researchers.

Main Activities

Tracker is a database that allows users to enter their own experiences from local resources management or learn from the experience of others. This information is then reviewed by a panel of African resource management experts to ensure that information entered is complete and authentic.

Type of Communication Activities

Internet, CD-ROM database

What Is Essentially Different

- NRM Tracker is geared to be of use for all NRM practitioners in Africa.

RESON <http://www.afr-sd.org:8000/reson/default.htm>

Purpose

RESON has been operating for more than two years under AFR/SD/PSGE management. Since October 1996 it has been funded through a buy-in to the Implementing Policy Change 2 Project (IPC2), with implementation assistance provided by Management Systems International, the International Resources Group, and Abt Associates. RESON provides technical and analytical services to support the following objectives: Improve the management of the Office of Environment and Natural Resources Programs at both the bilateral and national levels; develop clear and measurable program design and management plans; clarify the development hypotheses of USAID ENR programs; and

set up information systems to measure and report the results achieved by USAID/Africa ENR programs; collect, analyze and disseminate information to assist USAID/AFR in managing the reengineering process within the ENR sector.

Clients

The RESON activity has provided assistance to help USAID/Africa missions make an effective transition to the Agency's reengineered management system. To date, RESON assistance has focused on providing reengineering training to USAID missions and its many development partners (including international private voluntary organizations, contracting firms, African regional institutions, NGOs, and universities). Over 300 people have been trained using the material available on the website under "training materials."

Main Activities

- Designing results packages for approved results frameworks;
- Clarifying program management responsibilities and processes, including the development of strategic objective and results package teams;
- Designing and utilizing program performance information systems, including the use of customer surveys to validate strategies and performance;
- Increasing the role of partners and stakeholders in policy reform and implementation using a nexus framework approach to understand the implications of trends in environment, population and economic development in regard to strategic planning;
- Strengthening institutions responsible for managing national environmental action plans;
- Developing host country ENR strategic management capability;
- Enhancing PVO/NGO capabilities in strategic planning and management.

Type of Communication Activities

Internet based Training modules (mostly in PowerPoint) and documents about ENR activities in USAID.

What Is Essentially Different

- RESON is geared towards USAID missions and partners with a focus on strategic planning and restructuring.
- Unlike Teams at Work, RESON it is more a collection of PowerPoint training tools and articles, and less a forum for discussion.

Teams at Work (WebOPS) <http://www.afr-sd.org/sos/SO5/teams@work.htm>

Purpose

Objective is to provide both missions and development partners with sufficient capacity? through a web-based suite of software programs? to achieve more collaborative interactions at the expanded strategic objective team and results package team levels. WebOPS' extranet linkage offer partners opportunities for sharing information, planning collaboratively, and managing adaptively with other team members within an "electronic work space."

Clients

Missions and partners

Main Activities

- Must be operated or accessed using a web browser
- Consists of a suite of software “applets” that are based on a website
- Constitutes a shared team desktop or workspace that will encourage team members to get together on their own because they want to do it (i.e., check in on a daily basis so as to keep abreast of events)
- Improves analytic capability at expanded SOT and RPT levels by promoting real-time awareness of the interconnectivity of related activities
- Provides team members with access to shared documents in their most updated versions
- Allows team members to access and view archived changes to planning documents such as the Results Framework
- Ultimately, will be able to “feed” or draw upon USAID’s NMS database, or any possible successor
- Enhances the capacity to develop lessons learned through regular dialogue
- Provides a menu of collaborative software that team members can customize to meet their particular needs. Mirrors several of the capabilities currently found on the CARPE and RESON home pages
- Ensures privacy during the team’s “gestation periods” by limiting outside access to draft documents or working group chat sessions, thus facilitating freedom of expression
- Provides both upload and download capabilities for missions and partners, with alternative transmission procedures to accommodate “technological handicaps” (e.g., “sneaker nets,” CD-ROMs)
- Facilitate training activities surrounding the new OPS system, especially with partners.

Type of Communication Activities

Extranet-work space.

What Is Essentially Different

- Teams at Work focuses mostly on USAID protocol and procedures, and is meant for those working on USAID projects, and in this case on S05 issues, to facilitate discussion and information sharing.

Selected Other AFR/SD ICT Activities

FEWS <http://www.info.usaid.gov/fews/fews.html>

Purpose

The project's goal is to reduce the incidence of famine throughout sub-Saharan Africa. By helping to anticipate potential famine conditions and lessen vulnerability, FEWS helps save lives, while also promoting a more efficient use of limited financial resources. Information gathered by FEWS is directly useful to related programs in food security, agriculture, and poverty alleviation. In a time of declining development assistance budgets, the project's multidisciplinary products are a sought after resource among international development professionals and researchers. Appropriate famine preparedness and mitigation strategies can lead, over the long-term, to reduced famine risks, increased incomes, and economic growth. FEWS deliberately seeks to reinforce the conceptual and operational links between relief and development efforts. The project provides an information bridge between partners at all levels and at both ends of the relief-development continuum.

Clients

Famine relief and food security practitioners working in sub-Saharan Africa; farmers who benefit from that assistance.

Main Activities

FEWS offers a full range of tools and services designed to provide decision-makers with up-to-date information.

- *Bulletins*: The FEWS Bulletin is produced and distributed monthly to all interested users of FEWS information. The bulletin is the project's primary vehicle for disseminating early warning information.
- *Vulnerability assessments*: Periodic bulletin supplements identify local populations that are vulnerable to famine, and provide insight into the root causes of vulnerability.
- *World Wide Web*: Many FEWS publications are distributed through USAID's website at: <http://www.info.usaid.gov/fews/fews.html>
- *Food security updates and briefings*: Regular and ad hoc updates and briefings provide African decision-makers, USAID, and other groups with the latest information on potential drought conditions and famine threats.
- *Data dissemination and analysis*: Remotely sensed and ground-based early warning data are collected, analyzed, and disseminated on an ongoing basis. Data from the official FEWS archive are available through the U.S Geologic Survey's Africa Data Dissemination Service.
- *Capacity development*: Sub-Saharan Africa's national and regional early warning systems receive technical assistance in early warning techniques and tools, organizational management and networking, and sustainability analysis and planning.

- *Cooperation and methodology improvement:* FEWS collaborates with USAID, USGS, FAO, WFP, and other agencies to improve early warning and vulnerability analysis methodologies.

Types of Communication Activities

Website with many posted articles, data also used by ADDS, capacity development of regional early warning systems.

What Is Essentially Different

- Focus on food security and famine warning; very specific purpose goal and clientele.
- Focus on high-risk areas.
- Focus on ICT only as it relates to getting information to the people who need it.

Non-USAID ICT Activities of Interest

AFRIK-IT (ANITEP)

http://www.info.usaid.gov/regions/afr/alnk_971117/nets/partner/afrik-it.htm

Purpose

ANITEP (Afrik-IT) is a network of IT experts and professionals involved or associated with the African IT/telematics field and industry. It was set up to serve as a forum for all those involved in the African IT/telematics scene

Strategy:

Because of the vastness of the African continent and the world-wide membership structure of ANITEP, the ultimate goal is to set up ANITEP as a virtual (human) network with all communications and interactions between members conducted electronically via e-mail and other electronic means (e.g. electronic notice boards, discussion lists etc.).

Clients

ANITEP membership is open to non-Africans as well as Africans worldwide. All that is required to be part of the network is, that one should be in some way involved in the African IT field or industry/

Main Activities

Conduct collaborative IT/telematics projects, initiatives, studies and research; promote and influence IT/telematics-related issues and policies on the continent; organize IT/telematics-related seminars, campaigns, workshops and conferences; promote IT awareness and literacy campaigns on the continent; provide and support IT training and education and support other continent-wide IT/telematics-related issues, campaigns, projects and initiatives that will further promote and advance the technology and its usage on the continent. AFRIK-IT has been used to disseminate information about the AfricaLink program

Type of Communication Activities

Listserve forum.

What Is Essentially Different

- As a listserve, the range of activities is limited to group discussion.
- AFRIK-IT focuses on IT practitioners.