

BRANDING STRATEGY

Project Title:.....West African Cotton Improvement Program
Agreement Number:624 A 00 07 00008
Period of Activity:December 2006 – November 2009
Implementing organization: .IFDC, An International Center for Soil Fertility
and Agricultural Development

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Introduction

The branding strategy for this project is unique because USAID/WA had already established the umbrella West African Cotton Improvement Program (WACIP) and brand before implementation of this project began in early 2007. The IFDC-implemented project works under the WACIP rubric which is widely recognized as a response by USAID, and the United States Government (USG) more broadly, to the concerns about the cotton situation in West Africa.

Our strategy aims to reinforce the USAID message about and sponsorship of WACIP to the governments and stakeholders in the project countries of Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad and Mali (know as the cotton-four, or C-4); and more generally to the West African and regional organizations. Examples of USAID-initiated branding of WACIP include:

- USAID published a brochure in July 2006 describing the purpose and background of WACIP, which emerged from an earlier USG funded study and a workshop in Cotonou in January 2006.
- USAID issued press releases in January 2007 in each of the countries announcing the start of the project.
- USAID sent letters through US Ambassadors to the leaders of the four project countries announcing the start of the project.
- The project, and IFDC team, was introduced by a USAID representative to Ministers of Agriculture, senior USG officials, and other key players during visits to the four countries in the initial phase of the project in early 2007.

Another unique aspect of the project is the larger than usual share of project funding allocated for sub-grants to West African partners and other organizations. The WACIP project spans an especially broad range of intervention areas focused on increasing productivity, adding value, and improving the institutional and policy environment for cotton. Thus the grants program involves a very broad array of stakeholders in inter-professional organizations, government agencies, research institutions, cotton companies, and, in particular, cotton producers.

The IFDC branding strategy takes advantage of these multiple grants to publicize USAID funding support and promote the WACIP project brand to an influential audience, and through them to tens of thousands of West African farmers and public.

1. Positioning

USAID is referred to as the owner of the project, which is called, and widely recognized, as the lead manifestation of the West African Cotton Improvement Program (WACIP).

In all public communications the project will be referred to as “USAID’s West African Cotton Improvement Program (WACIP)”. In French, the project is referred to as: « Programme de Renforcement du Secteur Coton en Afrique de l’Ouest et du Centre (WACIP) de l’USAID».

2. Program Communications and Publicity

a) Promotion of the project among host country citizens

The primary and secondary audiences for this project include:

- Senior government leaders of the C-4 countries
- Cotton farmers and their national and regional producer organizations from the C-4 countries
- National research and extension organizations dealing with cotton
- Regional public organizations, including CILSS, CORAF, ECOWAS, and WAEMU,
- Regional private sector producer and trade associations, including APROCA and ACA
- Private sector input dealers, cotton processors and other cotton industry service providers
- Donor and private sector entities which can invest funds to leverage the impact of WACIP
- The general public who are interested in what the USG is doing to help the region.

b) Main Program Messages

The intended general message of the project is – USAID is helping cotton farmers to improve their livelihoods through a series of interventions requested and developed in the region.

Message to cotton farmers - WACIP is promoting improved agricultural techniques, strengthened value chain, institutional capacity and more favorable policies that can lead to higher incomes.

Message to national and regional partners – WACIP is a joint endeavor that helps accomplish objectives in West Africa and Chad.

Message to C-4 public and private sector leaders – USAID is helping respond to the cotton crisis

c) Communications or program materials that will be used to explain or market the program to beneficiaries

- Informational brochures on the general objectives and components of the WACIP project
- Technical papers, manuals and other materials for training programs and workshops.
- A website (wacip.org) and regular updates on activities
- Grant application guidelines
- Success stories, case studies, and lessons learned that result in best practices
- Technical brochures and field demonstrations aimed at farmers
- Studies generated by the project in all 9 intervention areas

d) Promotion of the project among host country citizens

- A full time communications specialist on the project staff, whose job it is to promote WACIP
- Posters and brochures that explain the program.
- A website (wacip.org) and regular updates on activities
- Promotion of the project at major meetings of partners such as APROCA, ACA, etc.
- Project staff participation in the National Advisory Committee meetings
- Success stories made available through the USAID/WA and WACIP web sites and the media
- Banners at training and other public events with the WACIP and USAID logos
- Use of the media as a partner to promote the project, e.g., national advisory committee meetings, the Cotton Outlook Conference, and visits by USG officials to project sites. The project will organize videos and media events in the C-4 countries in 2008 and 2009 that describe and visit activities, and include presentations by USAID to promote WACIP and the work of USAID in the countries and region.
- WACIP grant recipients in the region will follow the “flow down” branding and marking requirements in their activities that are funded by the grant program.

e) Conveying the Message “From the American People” through Public Communications

At each public event, including conferences, seminars, training events, outlook conferences, and other events, USAID and the support from the American people will be verbally acknowledged in the following way: *“This assistance is from the American people”*.

The project will use the USAID identity in all public communications (events and materials likewise). Additionally, relevant publications will include the following note:
The WACIP is one of the many assistance projects supported by the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

All public printed, video, and audio materials will include a disclaimer (text included in the marking plan) to identify parties responsible for the contents.

f) The use of the USAID identity

The project will use guidance set in the USAID Graphic Standards Manual related to the use of the USAID identity.

3. Acknowledgement of other organizations

Many activities are jointly organized with and by West African partners through the sub-grant and other mechanisms, and the organizations are acknowledged as co-sponsors. When describing an activity that was implemented in cooperation with a West African partner the project partners are mentioned in written documents that are related directly to them. Partner logos will be displayed on the right hand side of all the materials related directly to them. Partners will be referenced as partners and given credit in communications and promotional documents as appropriate. When partners take the lead in organizing an event that is partially supported by WACIP, such as through a grant, the USAID logo will be featured.

4. Coordination with USAID on publicity and project promotion issues

The project will submit any press releases, media events, and media interviews for comments to USAID (to the CTO and/or outreach coordinator) and follow other relevant guidance from the Mission.

Throughout the project implementation, IFDC will provide to USAID:

- a) An updated quarterly list of public events to be organized by the project during the coming three months, including approximate date, location, and audience. The project will coordinate with USAID about participation of USAID/USG representatives.
- b) A success story in 2008 and 2009 for each country where the project is implemented with an accompanying photograph. The success stories will be provided in a Word Document format, using a standard USAID success story template (available at www.usaid.gov/templates.html).
- c) A CD with a collection of minimum 20 photographs a year that illustrate project achievements in *.jpg format. The photographs will comply with a guidance provided in the USAID Graphic Standards Manual, and be at least 500kb in size each. Each photograph will have a brief explanation about its subject, and identify: the author and his/her organization, person(s) featured in the photograph, and the location where the photograph was taken.
- d) Clippings of press articles that mention the project.
- e) At least 2 copies of all public communications materials produced by the project.

In the event of changed circumstances for implementation of this Branding Strategy, IFDC, through its CTO, will submit to USAID a request to modify this plan and/or other related documents, such as the Marking Plan.

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