

Providing Communication Support to G-rap

The Strategic Framework

Submitted to:



By:



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

G-rap is an innovative attempt at pooling together donor funds to enable Research and Advocacy organisations (RAOs) to be effective in undertaking research and advocacy activities that will facilitate pro-poor policies and hold government accountable. The programme started on 31st August 2004; first disbursement of grants to RAOs took place in July 2005.

A well-conceived and comprehensive strategy for communication is important for the attainment of G-rap objectives such as RAO objectives advocacy programs and relationship building activities (including the media). It is also essential for promoting harmony and effective coordination among stakeholders of G-rap.

Background

From the onset of G-rap therefore, a communication framework to guide the work of the various actors, including the management of the programme the RAOs as well as, the key programme beneficiaries, was acknowledged as necessary and has been frequently mentioned in G-rap discussions and documentation, including the Logical Framework. However the managers of the programme saw the need to review the communication approach of G-rap and enhance it as necessary.

The Assignment

Stratcomm Africa was therefore engaged to support the review of the current communications activities, processes and materials as well as the communication needs of the G-rap programme and use the results to assist in the development of a communication framework for G-rap. The communication framework was expected to have a two fold purpose as follows:

- To facilitate coherent and positive inter-stakeholder communication around the G-RAP concept.
- To develop a communication framework for governing bodies and management.

This communication framework is also meant to allow for optimal transparency in relations with beneficiary organizations and the public whilst ensuring a positive image for the programme.

Approach to the Assignment

To achieve this, Stratcomm Africa reviewed existing communication channels and processes against existing communication needs through:

- A knowledge attitude perception survey.
- Audience/Channel analysis.
- Content analysis of all G-rap communication related documents.

From reviews of documentation on communication activities since the inception of G-rap, a number of specific communication needs of G-rap both for the realization of RAO objectives for promoting harmony and effective coordination among stakeholders of G-RAP are stated. Existing G-RAP channels and processes are then identified. The recognition that the existence of these channels and processes does not constitute a communication strategy leads to a consideration of communication challenges and concerns that are reflected even in the review reports of G-RAP.

Results

From a consideration of the surveys conducted among stakeholders eliciting their perspectives on G-rap, the following broad conclusions are drawn:

- It is evident that a shared vision is yet to be achieved among the different stakeholders about G-rap. Being a new and innovative programme, it is still subject to different interpretations and some changes in mode of operation are still underway.
- G-RAP from its inception recognized the need for communication and to evolve communication channels for meeting the need.
- The absence of a communication strategy within which to employ the various communication channels limited their effectiveness.
- Being a young programme with varied audience, stakeholders developed different perspectives about how the project should meet their respective communication needs.
- In some respects the stakeholders have not had a shared vision.
- Some of the actors of the programme have been too busy to be effective in communicating G-rap to relevant audiences.
- While there has been some communication with the media and communities, a lot more could be done to promote increased support for the programme and make it relevant for its broader stakeholders.

Though much communication work has been undertaken through a variety of channels, especially by the PMT, the survey enables an evidence-based approach to sharpening the communication focus for the future. A systematic matching of particular communication needs of particular stakeholders, with the communication materials required to meet those needs, using channels that enable effectiveness in information delivery, is the essence of the development and implementation of communication strategy. The elements for a communication policy to guide the work of G-rap are outlined.

Recommendations

From the analysis of the survey results and review of communication activities and channels used, a strategic framework is outlined for the development of a communication strategy in the next phase of the programme.

This framework among others recommends the following:

- Need for a G-RAP communication policy.
- Identification of G-RAP stakeholders.
- Evolution of G-RAP key messages and sub messages.
- Identification and use of appropriate channels of communication.

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Ghana Research and Advocacy Programme (G-RAP) has been established to support Research and Advocacy Organisations (RAOs) in Ghana with funding to make effective inputs into government policy-making to ensure pro-poor policy.

DFID, DANIDA, the Royal Netherlands Embassy and CIDA initiated G-RAP with commitments of US\$7 million to support the programme over the first three years. This enables multi-annual core funding to be provided to a group of the most established RAOs, selected on a competitive and needs-assessment basis, together with one-off grants and technical assistance to emerging RAOs.

The programme started on 31st August 2004; first disbursements of grants to RAOs took place in July 2005 and a second round of beneficiary selections for the periods 2006-2007 and 2007 -2008 occurred in June 2006 and June 2007. Provision of services for capacity development of beneficiary organisations took off fully in January 2006 but will be phased out in 2007 due to a change of focus in the programme. A total of about 19 organisations are now benefiting from the programme which involves an annual grant making budget of approximately US\$ 2,500,000. It is anticipated that this budget may grow from 2008 onwards.

1.1 COMMUNICATION IN G-RAP

From the onset, the importance of coherence in inter-stakeholder communication around the G-RAP concept has been recognized, especially as the innovative nature of G-RAP was likely to generate a variety of perspectives from stakeholders. The need for a communication framework to guide the work of the various actors, including the management of the programme as well as the RAOs, the key programme beneficiaries, has been acknowledged and is frequently mentioned in G-RAP discussions and documentation.

1.2 THE ASSIGNMENT

Stratcomm Africa has been engaged to assist in the development of a communication framework for G-RAP (See TOR attached as Annex 1). The expressed purpose of the assignment is two-fold: to facilitate coherent and positive inter-stakeholder communication around the G-RAP concept and to develop a communication framework for governing bodies and management allowing for optimal transparency in its relations with beneficiary organizations and the public.

The assignment is to lead to the development of a communication strategy with guiding principles ensuring a positive image for the programme and its beneficiaries, and for its governing and managing bodies.

1.3 G-RAP AND THE NEED FOR COMMUNICATION

The structure and objectives of G-RAP as outlined in the Logical Framework present two levels of communication need, namely:

- Communication for the realization of RAO objectives
- Communication for promoting harmony and effective coordination among stakeholders of G-RAP

Presented below are specific communication needs derived from these two levels outlined in the G-RAP Logical Framework.

1.3.1 Communication for the realization of RAO objectives.

Effective Inter RAO Communication

- Improved cooperation between RAOs

Effective social mobilization

- RAOs build up strategic set of relationships with CBOs

Effective Advocacy

- RAOs build up a strategic set of relationships with government, Parliament and the Multi-Donor Budgetary Support (MDBS) donors

Showcasing and reputation Management

- Improve credibility and legitimacy of RAOs

Effective Communication Skills

- RAOs package evidence- based research and use it to undertake advocacy activities

In seeking to review progress in RAO performance, the G-RAP 2006 Mid-Year Progress Report identifies various areas of the work of RAOs with communication aspects which, if pursued, can lead to greater effectiveness in the work of RAOs and, thus, maximize the support G-RAP seeks to provide. The Report refers back to the Logical Framework itself as the basis for its review of what has happened and outline of what is expected to happen. The need for RAOs to package their research and use it in advocacy activities is highlighted and it is recognized that messages need to be tailored to different audiences. Various information products need to be developed over time and used at appropriate times. It is anticipated that RAOs will be sharing more and more information with each other and will increasingly cooperate in a number of ways, including putting up joint funding proposals, undertaking joint advocacy campaigns and drawing even non-G-RAP-funded RAOs into collaborative approaches. Getting more gender-focused RAOs involved and ensuring that gender issues are highlighted and advocacy activities reflect such gender focus are also expressed as tasks requiring particular attention.

In emphasizing the need for RAOs to build up strategic relationships with CBOs, the 2006 Mid-Year Progress Report also anticipates that such relationships and partnerships are developed in a planned manner and are part of the strategic outlook of the work of RAOs. It is expected that RAO agendas will encompass local and regional issues, not just national level issues and that grassroots CSOs will be able to draw on RAO analysis for advocacy work. The range of RAO communication requirements is thus appropriately located in the total national context, making the communications requirements more holistic.

Progress in RAOs building up a strategic set of relationships with Government, Parliament and Multi-Donor Budgetary Support (MDBS) donors is also anticipated in the 2006 Mid-Year Progress Report. Increased credibility and legitimacy of RAOs in the eyes of the Government and the Ghanaian public are among expectations for RAO work; documents from RAOs are to be authoritative enough to be cited increasingly in Government publications with the services of RAOs also being contracted by Government and Parliament for the conduct of studies. RAOs being increasingly invited to debate policy issues on radio and TV is also recognized as a measure of the growing RAO significance hoped for by G-RAP.

For all the advocacy and relationship building activities (including with the media), as well as the showcasing anticipated in this progress report, clearly, the RAOs require a systematic approach to communication.

1.3.2 Communication for promoting harmony and effective co-ordination among internal and external stakeholders of G-RAP

Effective Relationship Building

- G-RAP promotes and facilitates relationship between RAOs and other stakeholders

Effective Stakeholder Education awareness creation and promotion of support for G-RAP

- G-RAP publicity communicates G-RAP objective, achievements, information resources, issues to participating stakeholders, etc.

G-RAP Identity

- G-RAP establishes a distinct identity for itself as a brand that promotes effective use of the work of RAOs in Ghana for pro-poor policy-making.

Beyond the communication needed by RAOs to package and put forward research results or advocate policy, there are communication requirements for enabling effective co-ordination in G-RAP and promoting harmony between its stakeholders. The review of G-RAP embodied in the 2006 Mid-Year Progress Report recognized that G-RAP is expected to promote and facilitate relationships between RAOs and other stakeholders. Specifically, for instance, RAOs are to provide feedback on their findings to, at least, a number of participants in their surveys. This would be through the holding of collective events which are anticipated to be with the aid of G-RAP. At least one RAO convention is also anticipated to be held every year.

G-RAP itself is expected to communicate publicly its objectives, achievements, participating stakeholders etc, so as to gain increasing attention among Ghanaians and internationally. Information resources created through G-RAP, such as newsletters and the website, are to be made widely known and used. International NGOs, donors, parliamentarians and others are expected to be on mailing lists for the distribution of newsletters to RAOs. The G-RAP office, it is anticipated, would be receiving and responding to increasing requests for information.

All these stakeholder relationship objectives require not only some communication input but a well-conceived and comprehensive strategy for communication as an integral part of G-RAP.

CHAPTER TWO

2.0 MEETING THE COMMUNICATION NEED – G -RAP EXISTING CHANNELS AND PROCESSES FOR COMMUNICATION

Recognizing the various communication needs outlined in the preceding section that are to be addressed for the success of G-RAP, the stakeholders of G-RAP have employed a number of communication channels and engaged in various communication activities for the purpose of meeting the internal and external communication needs of the programme. A mix of mass communication tools as well as group and one-on-one communications have been in use.

Internally, e-mail, letters, telephone and face to face communications are used for communicating mainly administrative information on the G-RAP. A website, newsletters and the holding of RAO conventions have facilitated programme information-sharing among both internal and external constituents. CBO networks, interactions with policy makers as well as the media and various reports by the Programme Management Team (PMT) have been primary communication channels for external constituents.

The PMT, as the co-ordinator of the G-RAP, has, generally, initiated the communications activities and developed the communication tools. Indeed, the PMT is the major channel of communication within the governing bodies and between the governing bodies and the beneficiaries i.e. RAOs and has been facilitating communication with the diverse stakeholders.

The brief notes below on the communication channels and activities that are in use set the stage for the consideration of a strategic framework within which specific channels and activities are to be given their particular roles and tied to the others.

2.1.1 Telephoning

Verbal communication on telephone has been a major part of the PMT's channels employed in disseminating and receiving feedback between and among stakeholders.

2.1.2 E-Mailing

For both formal and informal communications between the PMT and its diverse stakeholders this channel has been frequently used.

2.1.3 Letters

Letters are employed to communicate formal interactions

2.1.4 Website

The website provides detailed information about G-RAP. It is a good reference point and serves as a data bank for any information about the Programme. Layout is excellent and the website is easy to access and navigate. Information provided on the site is detailed and relevant to the programme. Information is broken down into different segments to facilitate easy access and retrieval. There are easily identifiable segments that provide information about G-RAP, Research and Advocacy Organisation (RAOs), facilities available to the RAOs, Governing Bodies of G-RAP, Rules and Regulations for accessing funds and how the RAOs are managed. There is detailed information about eligibility for core funding and reporting requirements.

The website also provides linkages to individual RAO sites.

2.1.5 Regular Reports: A number of reports are produced on a regular basis. These are:

- **Annual reports**
- **RAO Progress Reports (financial & narrative)**
- **Quarterly/half yearly reports**

They are accessible on the website.

- Annual Report

This is another detailed document which reports on the activities of the G-RAP for the particular year. It gives information about grants to RAOs and the activities of the funded RAOs, as well as some details on the management of G-RAP, including Achievements and Progress of the programme, lessons learnt and issues and planning for the programme in future.

There is considerable amount of information and discussion of the grant processes and of the financial issues relating to RAOs and not so much about the pro-poor policy research and advocacy activities of the RAOs. The report is prepared by the PMT in the manner of a corporate management report and gives an official PMT perspective on the activities undertaken that year with some future projections. Information is provided on the work of RAOs drawn from the reports they submit to the PMT bi-annually. There is, however, limited information, for instance, on activities between the PMT and the Advisory Board or between the PMT and the Funders Committee. Information in the Annual Report is accompanied by tables, graphs, pie-charts, diagrams, especially in Annexes.

- RAO Progress Reports

RAOs funded by G-RAP submit bi-annual reports that outline their progress in a narrative summary as well as a financial summary that provides a breakdown of revenues and expenditures. These reports are then compiled by the PMT. This is where the most detailed information on the RAOs can be found. With the increasing number of RAO grantees engaged in a variety of activities, these reports are becoming increasingly bulky. The narrative reports are analysed and compiled into a concise format by the PMT and both the original reports and the PMT compilations are submitted to the donors. A copy of the compilation is sent to each grantee.

- Quarterly/half yearly Progress Reports

In the beginning the PMT had to report on a quarterly basis to the donors but that soon changed to biannual reporting. Although with lesser detail, compared to the Annual Report, these Progress Reports set out what the PMT is doing with respect to its mandate as the coordinator of G-RAP activities. The Logical Framework is used as the reference point and the reports also seek to provide some concrete indicators of progress. There is a lot more showcasing of RAO activities as well as activities with the Funders' Committee and Donors in these reports, compared to the Annual Reports. No diagrams and illustrations are used.

2.1.6 Newsletters

The PMT has produced and made available 8 newsletters. In 2006 four newsletters were published, one per quarter. The newsletter provides brief, current information promoting the activities of G-RAP. The newsletter for the quarter ending March 2006 had a focus on the second call for applications and on grant assessment processes as well as the remainder of the budget to fund advocacy opportunities. The issue for the quarter ending June 2006 also focused on the decisions of the Funding Committee and the opening of the new G-RAP office. The newsletter for the following quarter focused on the mid-term review of G-RAP and on the RAO Convention, while the last quarter 2006 newsletter gave highlights of the year and looked forward to the following year. The newsletters have given attention to a range of stakeholders of the G-RAP.

There is inconsistency in the design of the newsletter in terms of layout, colours, number of pages, use of pictures, language, focus of stories, and regularity of issue and this could affect its effectiveness as a communication tool. Consistency in design will facilitate easy identification and relationship with stakeholders and audiences and communicate a message consistent with the image of the G-RAP. Consistency in the production of the newsletter should be encouraged. Stories in the newsletter could also be grouped into sections to make the document more reader-friendly.

2.1.7 Events And Consultations

- **RAO convention:** There have been two RAO conventions -in May 2005 and in October 2006. The RAO convention is an annual forum that enables RAOs to discuss issues about their work, how they seek to engage other constituencies for effectiveness in the policy arena. The 2006 Convention, for instance, had participation from G-RAP grantees as well as many other NGOs, a few donor representatives, representatives from Parliament, most of the G-RAP PMT and a strong media presence. The capacity of G-RAP to create such a platform is a definitive aspect of what G-RAP is about and has great significance for communication strategy development. Reports of the convention are made available on the website and through the other publications.
- **Management meetings:** Management meetings that involve the FC and the AB are organized by the PMT. These are held periodically besides the separate meetings by the individual groups making up the governing body.

2.1.8 Media

For events such as the RAO convention, the active involvement of the media, both electronic and print, is striking. There are various relations between individual RAOs and various media houses and the media are invited to various events by RAOs, for instance, launch of reports.

2.2 COMMUNICATION CHALLENGES

While the above shows that various communication channels exist through which information is being circulated about G-RAP, there has also been explicit recognition in a variety of contexts that much more needs to be done to improve communication in the G-RAP.

Significantly, the 2006 Annual Report observes that: “After two years of G-RAP, its central hub position needs a boost in the approach to communications”. It goes on to acknowledge that “initially, instruments were developed along the line of upcoming needs with a rather ad-hoc conceptual process.” The need for comprehensiveness in addressing the communication issue is recognized as follows: “The complexity of the multi-stakeholder environment of G-RAP could do with a more sophisticated approach, meeting the diversity of targets. The challenge is to meet the potential hub role of G-RAP (co-)servicing a multitude of communication lines, both at the horizontal level (e.g. groups of beneficiaries, of donors, of service providers) and in the vertical dimension, linking sub-regional and national actors with district level and grass-roots actors and linking civic engagement in Ghana at the international level”.

In the final paragraph on Communication in this report, it is indicated that “in order to play the role of hub, a direct stakeholder survey and public relations analysis should boost the awareness of the PMT on how to better approach that role and with what tools. It is considered that professional advice would assist in developing a phased communication strategy for the implementation as well as for a modus to stay abreast with changing circumstances and/or demands”.

Other issues in G-RAP communications that were noted in this document as needing to be addressed are “public image, media contacts, production of more video material for historical memory, the communication channels and styles, knowledge management and information transfer.” “The latter focuses on the format of newsletters or e-bulletins and the continual upgrading of the website function.” Reference is also made to “the problem of a growing information overload via the internet” as something that “should inform future development of tools and channels.”

While this progress report highlights communication tools and channels particularly, the earlier stakeholder review in September 2005 and the G-RAP Mid-term review of October 2006 highlight the relationship-building aspects of G-RAP within which communication has great significance.

2.3 STAKEHOLDER REVIEW REPORT SEPTEMBER 2005 – COMMUNICATION CONCERNS

In the Report of the Stakeholder Review that took place in September 2005 after one year of programme implementation, for example, stakeholders identified some of the challenges that G-RAP had faced, highlighting areas in which communication could be a large part of the solution. This was after recognizing the following two major achievements:

- a. Development of a framework and structure for dialogue among RAOs, emergence of a platform/ forum for dialogue.
- b. Platform for meeting and collaboration of RAOs built.

The challenges were then acknowledged as follows:

- Communication had not been as good as expected.
- RAOs had been frustrated over lack of clarity in contracting and reporting language.
- Clarity of the roles of PMT and Advisory board had not been established.
- Dialogue and consensus building are crucial. Time needs to be invested in the dialogue process.
- More consultation is needed in designing the programme.
- RAOs were not properly introduced to the PMT and the G-RAP processes.
- Openness in the communication is a must.
- Communication risks becoming unnecessarily bureaucratic, with RAOs passing information through the PMT or the Advisory board (AB).
- Quality communication among all players (PMT, RAOs and AB) needs to be enhanced.
- Definition of the relationship between and among the various players needs to be made clearer.
- There is a lot of complexity inherent in the G-RAP objectives of providing funding and engaging in some social engineering at the same time.

Stakeholders at the end of the review had two main items on the agenda going forward:

- Utilize the platform of collaboration among RAOs, and
- Improve communication among all players.

Stakeholders recognized that for G-RAP to go forward from that point it was vital to have better consultation and communication among various players and even clearer definition of roles. Information sharing among RAOs was particularly highlighted.

2.4 MIDTERM REVIEW REPORT–OCTOBER 2006

The Midterm Review report in October 2006 considers it to be the role of G-RAP “to offer funding to support...dialogue” across certain “interfaces”. These “include the NGO/broader civil society interface and the class interface between middle class NGO interpreters of local interests and the underlying working class and rural interests themselves.” There is the recognition in the report that “while the RAO/government interface is clearly an important one, other interfaces may take priority.” Funding to promote such dialogue is identified as the role of the PMT but it is stressed that such funding must be “in response to perceived need of the wider stakeholder community (particularly the RAOs), and on the basis of a process of prioritization. Primary responsibility for the institutional development of the sector should lie within the RAO community, and the PMT’s role is to provide support.” The lead role for “dialogue” across “interfaces” is ascribed to the RAOs. Though communication is not specifically addressed, there are implications for a communication strategy of this primary role of RAOs as proposed in the report. A suggestion is made for additional G-RAP Conferences along the lines of the existing convention with a broader and less specific role for networking, underlining the proactive role envisaged for RAOs. An annual G-RAP Strategic Issues Meeting is also proposed, “to function specifically as a forum for strategic thinking beyond the confines of individual RAO interest—allowing RAOs, government, donors and others to debate the future funding priorities...Ideas would then be fed to, and filtered by, the governing body.”

The steps being taken towards evolving a systematic communication strategy for G-RAP show both the continued awareness of the importance of communication for the success of G-RAP as well as a determination to address concerns that have arisen regarding existing communication practices.

CHAPTER THREE

3.0 REPORT ON STAKEHOLDER SURVEYS

3.1 SCOPE OF SURVEYS

The surveys conducted by Stratcomm Africa for the assignment were designed to obtain the perspectives of stakeholders. They involved the following key stakeholders:

- a. Research and Advocacy Organisations (RAOs)
- b. Project Management Team (PMT)
- c. Funders' Committee (FC)
- d. Advisory Board (AB)
- e. Strategic Partners (SPs)
- f. Policy Makers (PMs)

The surveys were to:

- a. Determine the level of satisfaction with information flow among stakeholders
- b. Determine perception of Project Management Team among various stakeholders
- c. Determine appropriate channels of communication among stakeholders
- d. Determine information needs of G-RAP stakeholders, and
- e. Determine current showcasing approaches (if any) of G-RAP by the PMT and RAOs

Using both a structured questionnaire and in-depth interviews, Stratcomm Africa obtained from the various stakeholders of G-RAP their perspectives on the programme. As the Research and Advocacy organisations are the main target for the G-RAP, the surveys conducted among these organizations were the most intensive and took the most time.

The communication strategy proposed here will seek to be responsive to various issues that emerged from the surveys.

3.2 SUMMARISING THE SURVEY RESPONSES

A summary of responses from the survey is here provided under two broad headings:

- a. Information Channels on G-RAP and Stakeholder Information needs
- b. G-RAP Reputation among stakeholders

In providing these summaries, it is recognized that the responses represent perceptions of stakeholders which provide important raw material for distilling insights that are relevant for communication strategy development. Some responses may not represent accurate or complete statements about what the survey sought to ascertain. Analyzing these responses points the way to possible avenues for improved communication and future directions in respect to communication channels and activities that would be beneficial to the progress of G-RAP.

It should be stressed that presenting these survey responses in no way implies that they represent reality. Indeed, there will be instances where responses from stakeholders even within the same group reveal contradictions. All this is recognized and is taken account of in the process of deriving the appropriate lessons from the sum total of the responses.

It was evident from the previous section that there has been much communication work undertaken, especially by the PMT, through a variety of channels. The different channels of communication that have been used are assessed in terms of their appropriateness and effectiveness for addressing the needs of different stakeholders. Through analysis of the survey responses, particularly the communication needs of stakeholders that emerge, it is intended to sharpen the communication focus for the future. A systematic matching of particular communication needs of particular stakeholders with the material required to meet those needs using channels that enable effectiveness in information delivery is the essence of the development and implementation of communication strategy. The survey enables an evidence-based approach.

3.2.1 Information Channels on G-Rap and Stakeholders Information Needs

▪ RAO Responses

Out of 30 RAO respondents interviewed, 35% indicated that they got to know about G-RAP through the newspapers, while 29% said through friends and colleagues. 22% said through seminars/symposia. The rest got to know of G-RAP through newsletters/brochures/flyers (4%) or other channels such as website and sign-posts (10%). 88% of respondents had to seek further information after their initial knowledge in order to have access to G-RAP's support. It is clear that much information is circulated among members of RAOs and that the RAO network is one of the most important channels to reach RAOs. That may put newer RAOs which are not so plugged in to the existing RAO network at a disadvantage as to information about G-RAP. Strikingly, the website has not been acknowledged as being that significant a channel of information to the RAO community.

Furthermore, after first getting to know G-RAP for the first time through the above-mentioned channels, further information was generally sought by the RAOs, which led 55% of the respondents to the G-RAP office. 25% of respondents obtained additional information about G-RAP from seminars/symposia. Significantly, a total of about 76% of respondents rated access to information explaining ways of accessing G-RAP support as very good and good, with 16% giving an excellent rating (RAO Survey Report Figure 4). Only 6% rated access to information as only fair. 46% of RAO respondents said that the regularity of information delivery by G-RAP is good. 42% of respondents said it was very good. The rest rated it fair (10%) with only 2% rating it as poor.

Timeliness of information delivery about disbursement of funds was given by 53% of respondents as the reason for the rating given, a clear indication that information on funds disbursement is what is of greatest interest to the majority of the RAO personnel. Other reasons given for the ratings on regularity of information delivery were “Availability of information from secretariat” (by 29% of respondents), and “Quality of what is delivered was given” (by 12% of respondents). Only 6% referred to frequency of website updates as a reason for the rating, again reflecting a relatively low level of resort to the website for further information.

A large majority of the respondents (70%) described information they receive from the PMT as very useful. The rest either rate it useful (27%) or fairly useful (3%). Reasons given for these ratings are that the information ensures satisfactory feedback for planning and budgeting (43.8%), enhances the possibility of funds application (12.5%) and provides explanations relating to the state of information flow (12.5%). Other reasons given for satisfaction with information from the PMT include the fact that the information i) helps in understanding the mode of funds disbursement, ii) enhances openness and information-sharing, iii) explains the overload on the PMT and iv) gives a fairly good idea about the RAOs’ performance.

Sixty five percent (65%) of the respondents indicated that they make the PMT aware of their information needs. Respondents indicated that these requests are made mainly through e-mail (37%), telephone (42%) and in some cases meetings with staff at the secretariat (21%).

As to the main channel for communications between RAOs and the PMT, twenty five percent (25%) indicated it was the internet/e-mail while 21% said the telephone. Other channels of communication referred to in the responses were meetings (16%), reports (16%), letters (12%) and newsletters/brochures/leaflets (10%). These responses are consistent with information from both the RAO representatives on the Advisory Board and the PMT.

▪ **Advisory Board Responses**

Advisory Board members said that there are currently no clearly defined systems for sharing information with other stakeholders on G-RAP. The AB tends to share information directly with the secretariat, i.e., PMT and, occasionally, in meetings with the Funders Committee to discuss management issues. The AB has some issues with their relationship with the PMT. For example, they indicated there are no institutionalized regular mechanisms for information sharing with the PMT. Main channels that are used for communicating with the PMT are e-mails, telephone and meetings.

Information sharing between the Advisory Board and the RAOs is also through ad hoc group meetings with the RAOs. In these meetings, the RAO representatives on the board relay decisions that have been taken by the board to RAOs and obtain feedback from them. Decisions taken by the AB are circulated by RAO representatives mainly through e-mails to RAOs, according to the AB.

The AB is supposed to share information with policy makers and government primarily through the two Parliamentarians on the Board, but this has not worked because they are mostly not available.

The AB observed difficulties of the PMT about regularly facilitating the production of the newsletter for stakeholders because of the staff strength at the PMT. They also had concerns as to the content and indicated a need to determine the content based on clarification of the priorities of the PMT. Information needs and how they would be addressed, the AB thought, depend very much on the PMT's conceptions about their role in G-RAP. For instance, whether the content of a newsletter has more to do with administrative issues or the outputs of RAOs depends, according to the AB, on the PMT's conception of its role.

The AB observed that though the RAOs are supposed to own G-RAP yet the PMT has been dominant over the process instead of facilitating it. At the same time, the AB is of the view that the G-RAP concept has been fairly participatory. The AB thought that the PMT should be better staffed to promote the work of G-RAP. They would like the reporting cycle for RAOs, already changed from quarterly to biannually, to be once a year. Obviously, this reporting by RAOs is for limited purposes and does not exhaust the communication requirements for the value of G-RAP to be better known among stakeholders.

▪ **Strategic Partners' Responses**

Strategic Partners, consisting of SNV, IBIS, Metercept and Ernst and Young, considered that there are clearly defined processes for sharing information with other donor organizations as stipulated in the regulations and requirements documents. The strategic partners said information processes are working to some extent although this could be more interactive.

Information sharing between strategic partners and funded organizations was described as top-down rather than participatory. However, there are clearly defined processes for information sharing with funded organizations. This is again clearly a reference to formal reporting processes rather than broader communication requirements.

Processes for information sharing were considered to be working. Respondents indicated that their organizations need information from G-RAP for their work. For example, it was considered necessary for frequent updates about the status of the G-RAP programme. Strategic partners said they would want to continue obtaining information about G-RAP quarterly but mainly through Meetings/Forums/Durbars instead of the website.

Channels for information sharing exist between their organisations and funded organizations, and these include the internet and telephones. Another channel listed was the NGO-forum, held periodically, for interactions. These channels were rated "very good". To maintain contacts with funded organizations, the telephone and internet were considered "good" while the forum was considered "very good" in understanding the needs of partners.

▪ Funders Committee Responses

Based on interviews with three out of the four donor organizations involved in G-RAP (DFID, RNE and DANIDA –the CIDA representative was unavailable) a picture emerged from the Funders as summarized below.

From the point of view of the Funders committee (FC), there are no clearly defined processes for information sharing in G-RAP. Words such as “random” and “evolved” were used to describe the process for information- sharing. E-mails, official letters, telephones as well as the website were the channels used and the use of a particular channel depended on the kind of information that was shared and its destination. Periodically, there are meetings and reports. These processes were rated effective since they have worked so far. Because the PMT acts as a secretariat for the FC, the FC is the closest to the PMT among the stakeholders.

There is no direct relationship between the FC and the Advisory Board (AB) apart from interactions with the Chairman of the AB who is a member on the FC and an appointed representative of the FC on the AB. The FC channels its consensus directly through the chairperson of the AB. The involvement of the 2 parliamentarians (Policy Makers) on the Advisory Board was again said not to have been particularly successful as, in most cases, they have not been available. According to the respondents, communication between the FC and potential donors about G-RAP would be appropriate when internal structures and the concept of G-RAP are adequately implemented.

The FC does not receive information directly from any Research and Advocacy Organization (RAO). It receives information through the Project Management Team (PMT) in the form of half yearly reports which usually contain financial accounting and narrative descriptions of the activities of the RAOs for the period under review. Clearly, there is little communication on the substance of the work of the RAOs to the Funders Committee. The respondents said that unless their operations are systematized they are unable to assess the performance of RAOs’ in relation to policy formulation and implementation. There is however, the perception among the members of the FC that RAOs have not followed through with policy implementation and their engagements with the government and civil society have not been sustained. The FC respondents indicated that more ought to be done to impact national policies. They also noted that the Parliamentarians, representing policy makers, have not participated effectively in the G-RAP dialoguing process.

Further, the FC respondents considered that the RAOs seem not to have opened themselves sufficiently to the media (journalists, editors, broadcaster, stringers etc.). They also observed that some of the media have specific areas of interest which affect how they project certain issues of some RAOs. It was also noted that some of the issues that RAOs advocate for ran counter to government policies and the tendency of some RAOs to be identified with specific media leads to them being sidelined by government and being left out in the government interaction processes.

Members of the FC indicated that their preference for communication channels would be determined by the kind of information being shared and the recipient of the particular information. Where there are contacts and invitations to attend meetings, the telephone and e-mail are preferred, whereas if there are management issues to be addressed, one-on-one interactions/meetings are preferred. The FC

indicated that to a large extent their feedback on issues has been used by other G-RAP stakeholders, for example in the change of the period for reporting from quarterly to half yearly. The FC indicated satisfaction with the timeliness in providing information to, as well as ease of obtaining information from, other G-RAP stakeholders.

- **Policy Makers**

There are two Members of Parliament on the Advisory Board who are the policy makers referred to here. According to the policy makers, there are no clearly defined processes for information sharing. They sit in Advisory Board meetings of G-RAP to discuss their policies and programs. They are not directly involved in G-RAP's activities since they play an advisory role. They are also not directly involved in the disbursement of funds.

With regards to how they rate the processes for communication, the policy makers were of the view that it is too early to assess the programme although the process is currently on track. The main channel of communication between the PM and the PMT is through direct contacts (one-on-one interactions) and sometimes through the use of the telephone. Another major channel of communication between PM and FC is through Board meetings which are held twice every year.

There are no channels of communication between the PM and RAOs, and they only get to meet when the 2 representatives on the board of the AB and themselves attend the AB meetings. There are no communication channels between the PM and potential donors. With regards to the involvement of RAOs in policy formulation and implementation, the PMs said there are no formalized ways of doing that, although seminars for MPs or select committees are organized to elicit valuable inputs necessary for decision making purposes. RAOs such as TWN, CEPA and CDD were mentioned as being part of such workshops. The PMs also said the RAOs are playing important roles in key developmental areas and were particularly impressed with Gender-based organizations and their high level of advocacy in the country. The PMs advised that the level of media interest in RAO activities should be critically assessed because the PMs expects the RAOs to educate the media so certain important discussions are disseminated accurately.

The PMs indicated that activities of the RAOs as well their annual reports should be made available to PMs so they get informed about the various engagements of the RAOs. The PMs said there was the need for them to be educated on the functions of the RAOs so that they can make good use of their inputs. They added that this kind of information should be made available every quarter or twice in a year.

- **PMT**

PMT respondents said that there are clearly defined processes for sharing information with other stakeholders regularly on structured basis and referred to phone calls and/or e-mails as mainly the channels. Occasionally, invitations to attend meetings are also disseminated to the

RAOs. Hardcopies of document such as contracts, periodic reports, event reports, as well as newsletters, are also made available to stakeholders by the PMT. Problems with internet connectivity were said to be the only hindrances to communication flow via the internet. Information on the website, it was acknowledged, has not been updated for six months. There was recognition of the need to develop other channels for information-sharing to facilitate information flow between the PMT and its stakeholders. It is also recognized that information flow between the PMT and RAOs usually concerns the regular financial and narrative reporting.

To some extent the PMT thinks there is too much documentation for the FC and AB. Some PMT respondents said there seemed to be no effectiveness in the established communication systems or channels between the PMT and both policy makers and potential donors. In addition, there is no formal structure for communication between the PMT and donors although members of the PMT communicate with donors such as USAID, World Bank, GTZ, UNDP and European Union. The PMT indicated that communication with the policy makers should rest with RAOs. The PMT said while the head of the PMT communicates a lot with the AB, the rest of the PMT hardly communicate with the AB.

The relationship between the PMT and the Advisory Board is viewed as cordial. Members of the PMT explained that, unlike the Funders Committee, who they see as the “bosses”, the Advisory Board interacts frequently with the PMT when they visit the G-RAP offices and when Board meetings are held. Similarly, staff relationship with the RAOs is described as cordial. The RAO convention was indicated to be a good forum for strengthening the established relationship between the PMT and the RAOs as well as other stakeholders. However, staff said there seems to be ineffectiveness in the established relationship with policy makers as well as potential donors. The inclusion of parliamentarians on the Board has also not been successful since they have sometimes not been able to be present at various events.

Information needs mentioned include the need for the Advisory Board to make themselves available for meetings and the need for the RAOs to be prompt with their reporting. At the same time, timeliness in providing information was rated very good. The PMT, however, said they have difficulties in getting the views of RAOs on pertinent issues.

3.2.2 G-Rap Reputation Among Stakeholders

- **RAOs**

On a scale of 1 to 5, 5 being the highest, most of the RAO respondents (80%) ranked the relationship between RAOs and PMT 4. To improve the relationship, the RAOs said the PMT should inform them promptly about administrative changes that take place in the secretariat. Some RAOs said communication with the PMT was sometimes poor and not satisfactory and needed to improve.

On the other hand the relationship between RAOs and the Funders’ committee is virtually non-existent, with the 10 out of 30 respondents (35%) ranking it 2 on the same scale. RAOs suggested that the FC should be a little visible and show interest directly in the work of the

RAOs. The RAOs expect the PMT to facilitate this process through group and one-on-one meetings with the FC. The FC's perspective, on the other hand, as discussed below, is that their relationship with the RAOs is through the PMT as per the Terms of Reference. The FC did recognize that their relationship with RAOs could be enhanced if the PMT could create a site for RAOs to post summaries of research findings or register advocacy engagements for easy access by all stakeholders. This they explained could get them to know the technical aspect of RAOs (not merely financial reporting) as proposed by some RAO respondents.

Regarding ownership of G-RAP, less than half (45%) of respondents ranked the RAOs' sense of ownership with regard to G-RAP 4, on a scale of 1 to 5. Another 23% ranked RAOs sense of ownership 3.

Fifty percent (50%) of the total respondents think that the current structure of G-RAP is appropriate. The other half either did not know or said it was inappropriate. Notable among the reasons given for those who do not know (35%) whether the structure is or is not appropriate are that i) they have no knowledge of the current structure, ii) complexity of the structure and iii) the structure being one of its kind. Those who said the structure is inappropriate (15%) stated that there is work overload which would reduce when the FC and AB are merged and the PMT is less intrusive as a core funding agent.

Majority of RAOs (67%) described the G-RAP engagement approach as very participatory; the rest (33%) rated it as fairly participatory.

▪ **Advisory Board**

Responses from the AB generally showed concern about the effectiveness of G-RAP governance structures, with indications that there would be changes to the structures within the next six months and that these would affect communication strategy as well. The AB considered that the lack of clarity about the role of the Advisory Board leads to all kinds of confusion, thus the need for a review of the governance structure to ensure clarity of roles.

Members of the AB also felt that there is no need getting support from other potential donors when the current concept has not been well implemented. They thought it prudent to ensure that G-RAP functions appropriately before considering recourse to more donors for additional funds.

AB respondents considered the ineffectiveness of Parliamentarians' participation on the AB as an example of the inappropriate governing structures of G-RAP.

▪ **Strategic Partners**

The SPs commended G-RAP for its good work and, significantly, as compared to the views of the AB, advocated greater participation by other donors. IBIS, for example, indicated that although the organization does not subscribe to the MDDBS programme, it has directly funded the activities of some RAOs.

The Strategic Partners also suggested building relationships between themselves and the RAOs for mutual trust and respect.

- **Funders' Committee**

Members of the FC highlighted the absence of direct relationships between the FC and the AB and between the FC and the RAOs and thought that ways of improving the relationship with the RAOs could include informal meetings in the form of send-offs for G-RAP stakeholder staff members who have completed their term of service and similar get-togethers. Formal joint meetings that bring the FC and the AB together to address some management issues could be established for all stakeholders periodically.

FC members thought a re-launch of the whole G-RAP concept is needed for the effectiveness of the governance structure. Their assessment of the current governance structure was that the AB looks more executive (decision making) than advisory. The role of the chairperson of the Advisory Board as a member of the FC is also seen as inappropriate since the FC holds discussions about the size, fluidity, timeliness etc. of funds for RAOs. The involvement of RAO representatives on the AB was also considered out of place as there would be conflicts of interest for RAO members when it comes to the selection of organizations for allocation and approval of funds. The FC respondents suggested the formation of a Steering Committee, which would include RAOs, separate from a Grants Committee without RAO representation.

The PMT is seen as doing more in trying to qualify RAOs for core funds rather just facilitating the process. The FC thinks they are not getting enough of the really significant knowledge about RAOs from the contents of reports from RAOs via PMT (perhaps because of its form and the details provided or the report presentation). The FC's focus is on management issues, roles, communication with other donors, different mechanisms for transferring funds etc. The FC indicated that the change in the reporting period from quarterly to half yearly has given the FC enough time to focus on the contents of reports from RAOs.

The FC respondents see a wide gap between policy-making and research as there is weakness in effective dissemination of information from research that is undertaken by RAOs. If information on the work RAOs undertake is not very widely circulated the desired impact of G-RAP will not be achieved and this is a concern for the FC.

On the issue also of ownership of G-RAP the FC indicated that the RAOs have a high sense of ownership of G-RAP and explained this in terms of how providing funds for the overhead costs of the RAOs should free RAOs to take ownership of the processes of G-RAP by helping them to concentrate on their core roles/functions. As the FC also indicated not having any direct links with RAOs except through the PMT, it is understandable that this answer did not really address whether the RAOs actually do have a sense of ownership in the actual operation of G-RAP. Clearly, the FC itself had occasion to be concerned about the quarterly reporting requirements distracting RAOs from their main business.

- **Policy Makers**

The Policy makers involved in G-RAP activities recognize there are issues about their effectiveness in the current governance structure. They indicated they have never had the opportunity to address Parliament about G-RAP. They saw their presence as basically to ensure that the Advisory Board acts credibly in order to generate support from the funders/donors and not to play any effective role between Parliament and G- RAP. They expressed the opinion that the G-RAP reporting system is too meticulous and demanding although they admitted that the criteria for selecting RAOs for funding are very necessary since G-RAP involves the disbursement of money.

The PMs believe the Advisory Board is not playing its role effectively and recommended revision of the governance structure. The PMs however mentioned the Funders Committee as very influential because they fund the activities of the RAO whilst their positions impact the activities of G-RAP and cannot be overturned by the Advisory Board.

The PMs indicated that they would like to be involved in the approval of funds because all activities currently revolve around the PMT and information on how many RAOs receive funding and how much money is given to each RAO are not made known to them. On a scale of 1-10, 1 being excellent, the PMs rated G-RAP's engagement approach, particularly with regards to the RAOs 3.

The PMs said the sense ownership of G-RAP rests with the Funders committee and not the PM or AB. This, of course, contrasts with the perspective of the FC. The PMs also said that what they like about the G-RAP is the way funds are made available to the RAOs because it is very difficult for the RAOs to source funding to facilitate their work. The PMs said one thing they would like changed is the composition of the Advisory Board which they said should be reviewed to make it more effective so as to own and drive the programme.

The PMs thought that modifying the criteria for RAOs funding can promote the G-RAP's work as only the big RAOs currently benefit from the programme.

- **PMT**

For some PMT staff, the suggestions from the Mid-Term Review to have a steering committee may not be necessary, looking at the composition and the role of the existing structure. Others believe that the AB should be changed into a Board of governors to include, maybe, G-RAP-committed parliamentarians and eminent Ghanaians but exclude representatives of RAOs. RAO representatives would belong to the steering committee that would be responsible directly to the Board of governors, according to these others. Then there would be a separate donor group- the FC, the PMT -and the RAOs, on the other side. With only core funding being offered, there would be the need for investment in effective communication of messages about that to the different stakeholders involved after the review.

The PMT respondents indicated that they showcase to the RAOs to keep them updated on the activities of G-RAP and to enable them have access to information. Showcasing is also used to address the concerns of, and to give feedback to, stakeholders. PMT respondents generally indicated that it is also the responsibility of the RAOs to showcase themselves more than they are currently doing. The PMT would be seen to be too dominant instead of facilitating the work of the RAOs. The RAO conventions, for instance, were recommended as one of the potential showcasing channels.

On a scale of 1 to 10, 10 being the best, the PMT ranked itself 9 in terms of their sense of ownership of the G-RAP concept though members were of the opinion that it is rather the RAOs that should own the G-RAP concept. The responses here show the extent to which the PMT has been preoccupied with information dissemination to RAOs to ensure that procedures for funding and reporting requirements are complied with. Important as these are, they should not overshadow the main objective of G-RAP which is to do with the work of the RAOs. Establishing a framework for communication about RAO activities is clearly a challenge for G-RAP.

What PMT respondents liked most about G-RAP included the core grant concept, availability of funds for research and advocacy organizations to engage policy makers, the quality of the people involved in G-RAP activities and changes in pro-poor policies. Internally, some staff said there may be a need for a change in the management of the PMT to allow for the inclusion of new ideas into the G-RAP concept.

Members of the PMT highlighted the following as external factors could promote G-RAP activities:

- Additional showcasing of G--RAP by RAOs besides the annual convention
- The availability of more funds by the donors for disbursement to the RAOs

In referring to the showcasing by RAOs as an “external factor”, the PMT members were again giving expression to their focus on their internal, administrative functions more than the facilitation of RAO activism and effectiveness.

The PMT indicated that the RAOs have so far done well in terms of policy formulation and implementation. According to them, access to information from public institutions as well as the private sector is generally cumbersome but the RAOs have been able to develop links and networks through which they are able to access information.

The level of media interest in RAO activities is also recognized as high, with almost all the RAOs having partnerships with the media through which they advocate and engage the government on pro-poor policies. Most RAOs know how to engage the media; they indicate they currently pay for this.

The PMT rated their engagement approaches with particular reference to the RAOs as very good due to the fact that there is frequent feedback from the RAOs in terms of providing information to facilitate the work of the PMT. Other responses from the PMT (referred to earlier) about not obtaining enough feedback from RAOs would appear to be at variance with these observations.

3.3 DISTILLING SOME LESSONS

3.3.1 Role Of PMT

As these are still early days in the development of G-RAP, it is understandable that the PMT is the major point of communication, liaising between the governing body and the RAOs and responsible for producing the various communication materials such as newsletters, annual reports and also the website. Responses in the survey, including from the PMT itself, generally acknowledged this dominant role of the PMT, which must not be interpreted simply as criticism of the PMT. The Mid-term review recommendation on “allowing the PMT to function more as a secretariat” reflects this perspective.

Given also the pre-occupations of the PMT with issues such as disbursement of funding and ensuring accountability for use of funds. there is a tendency for the communication activities to have slightly lower priority and, therefore, to lag. The focus of the PMT –RAO interactions has been financial reporting rather than co-ordination in, for instance, developing messages about G-RAP and ensuring coherence in communication about G-RAP. This is not surprising though it is also significant that the issue of improving communication has regularly featured in discussions about the future development of G-RAP. It is obvious that the PMT recognizes the importance of a communication strategy into which G-RAP communication activities will fit and also recognizes that it should not be the lead actor in G-RAP communication. The process of having other players, notably the RAOs, take up the communication space requires pro-active strategic perspectives in communication, as the PMT has initiated. If the PMT were to pull back on its initiatives in respect of achieving stakeholder coherence about G-RAP on the basis of the recommendation in the mid-term review report about “limiting the roles of the PMT primarily to administering grants and allied activities”, there is every likelihood that even the important recommendations of the review report regarding G-RAP offering funding to support dialogue across the NGO/broader civil society interface and drawing more RAOs into strategy development, including, it might be suggested, communication strategy development, will not be effectively addressed in the current context of G-RAP. The need is for more interactive communications between the PMT and the RAOs particularly. PMT withdrawal would create a vacuum. Rather, the purely administrative aspects of G-RAP need to have less dominance in defining G-RAP, meaning that the PMT, as the “dominant” face currently, should give greater expression and projection to the underlying G-RAP objectives through as many channels and activities as possible, thereby sending clear signals to RAOs about the need for their increasing activism as generally articulated by stakeholders. It is not surprising that RAO respondents expected the PMT to facilitate the process of the Funders’ Committee showing interest directly in the work of the RAOs through group and one- on- one meetings. Similarly, FC respondents also made reference to the PMT assisting them to know more about the technical aspect of the RAO’s activity and not just their financial reporting.

3.3.2 RAO Ownership

Considering that G-RAP seeks to empower RAOs, there will, indeed, need to be more involvement of the RAOs in all aspects of its future, including the development and implementation of the communication strategy. It can be expected that the PMT will act as a catalyst to the process of RAOs taking on ownership of G-RAP. Again, it must be noted that the RAOs are focused on their research and policy analysis activities and may often lack skills in communication. They may even downplay needed advocacy activities precisely because of a lack of know-how. PMT notes that internal communications is a challenging issue for the majority of the RAOs with information often not circulating between colleagues of the same organization, attendance at events not being consistent and experiences or information from learning events not always sufficiently shared internally.

For the RAOs to begin to set the tone in respect of communicating G-RAP, they will have to recognise the importance of a systematic and professional approach to communication and confront whatever internal limitations they have. In respect of the G-RAP goal of pro-poor policy taking centre stage in Government policy-making, RAOs will need to be conscious of the barriers as well as the facilitating factors in working to attain that goal. Communication, as an important aspect of the future of G-RAP, could be a specific focus of a meeting of RAOs –such as an RAO Convention. Integrating this communication focus into the work of the RAOs, especially those that are well-established and with a sense of having gained recognition already for their work, will require systematic work with RAOs in collective contexts such as the strategy development dialogue sessions recommended in the mid-term review report.

3.3.3 Participation Of Policy Makers

It emerged clearly from the survey that the expectation that the involvement of a couple of Parliamentarians on the Advisory Board would establish a link with policy makers has not worked out. Busy schedules of these individuals have proved challenging and it has also become clear that little attention has been paid to date to the communication needs of policy makers. The goal of G-RAP makes it essential to consider what specific material from the work of RAOs needs to be made available to policy makers and how such material should be packaged. Important information on the website of G-RAP, for instance, will not necessarily be available to policy makers and ways may need to be found to engage their attention with some of this information being put in a different format. Indeed, instead of expecting a couple of Parliamentarians to carry the message of G-RAP to their colleagues, it is likely that having the “owners” of G-RAP as the bearers of the message will achieve more impact. In this context, the owners will also include the Funders of G-RAP who are also funders of Government and, therefore, have a certain amount of leverage with Government in that capacity. It would be appropriate for them also to put their weight behind RAOs whose research is showing the way to achieve goals that Government and the donor community have agreed on. This will also require addressing internal communication issues within G-RAP and creating more scope for RAO work to be communicated to the Funders Committee, again in ways that can be disseminated beyond the Committee to other organs of the funders.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 SKETCHING FUTURE DIRECTIONS FROM LESSONS FROM THE PAST–GUIDING PRINCIPLES

4.1 PUTTING THE COMMUNICATION STRATEGY IN CONTEXT

The existence of the Logical Framework and documentation about G-RAP objectives are important to achieving stakeholder coherence. However, being a new and innovative programme, it is still subject to different interpretations. Ambiguities and unclarities remain and changes in design are still being effected. Stakeholder responses from the survey showed clearly that a shared vision is yet to be achieved among the different stakeholders. Concern was expressed by representatives of funders about, for instance, RAOs not following through with research results and with engagements with government and civil society on a sustained basis. Coherence, especially from the perspective of the RAOs, must, indeed, be through focus on the role that G-RAP seeks to have RAOs play in ensuring pro-poor policies. Proactively engaging Government based on empirical research must be among the hallmarks of RAOs that are recipients of funding from G-RAP. Common articulation by RAO grantees of these pro-poor perspectives, drawing from research findings of the RAOs, is a crucial element in developing G-RAP coherence.

More appreciation among stakeholders of each other’s perspectives is also critical to achieving coherence. This requires contexts being created for sharing information about each other. In addition to the contexts, the content of information from stakeholders must meet the information needs of others.

The G-RAP web-site is an important context for information-sharing among G-RAP stakeholders and must have content related to the requirements of various stakeholders. The website provides an opportunity for showcasing the activities of the different RAOs through a single medium as part of facilitating inter-stakeholder coherence around the G-RAP concept. Linkages to the websites of various RAOs are important but a medium such as the website is an important aspect of building coherence as well as establishing an identity of G-RAP. The RAO-focused nature of G-RAP will need to be reflected on the website for the development of coherence around that.

This important G-RAP tool must give scope for encounters with RAOs and their output. RAOs could be more involved in the website content as part of a process of increasing ownership of G-RAP. This is not meant to sideline RAO individual websites but to project a common context as essential to coherence-building. Challenges involved in co-ordinating involvement from different RAOs cannot be underrated but must be confronted.

Newsletters must also reflect the RAO focus. Success stories of various RAOs could be used to make the newsletter appealing to the RAOs and engage them more in the activities of the PMT. The justification for the establishment of the PMT would also be greatly enhanced when the successes of the RAOs are showcased, since the programme is fundamentally to facilitate their activities. Human interest stories of the impact of RAOs in respect of the people whose lives they are intended to affect can be reflected in the newsletters, again requiring significant co-ordination between PMT and RAOs.

4.2 OVERALL G-RAP GOAL

To support Research and Advocacy Organisations RAO's and enhance their ability to hold government accountable for its policy choices and the use of public resources.

4.3 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

- Promotion of pro-poor policies.
- Facilitation of increased participation of civil society in policy making.
- Grounding of policy proposals in empirical research.
- Enhance capacity of research and advocacy organisations and their contributions to national policy making.

4.4 COMMUNICATION OBJECTIVES

- To facilitate mutual understanding of each stakeholder's perspectives in relation to the project.
- To facilitate the pooling of information and ideas from the various stakeholders and also facilitate continued dialogue without necessarily having all stakeholders at one place.
- Evolve and communicate messages that help to refocus attention of G-rap stakeholders on the shared vision.

4.5 A G-RAP COMMUNICATION POLICY

The diversity of the stakeholders perspectives mentioned earlier makes it more urgent to establish a policy framework for G-RAP communications. The fact that G-RAP has existed for some time without such a policy could create problems, as introducing a policy now might be seen, especially by RAO's, as yet another imposition on them. Clear reasons, rooted in the shared vision, will need to be articulated for the need for this communication policy to be appreciated and accepted. Unfortunately, the situation so far with G-RAP may have reinforced the tendency for communication to be treated as an after- thought in the establishment of such programmes. Out of the experience of G-RAP, as revealed in the survey, lessons about the value of communication for integrating stakeholders' perspectives can be drawn and used to explain this need for a G-RAP communication policy. The communication policy will require G-RAP stakeholders to share information about their activities widely and regularly and in a manner that is accessible to as many other stakeholders as possible.

The policy statement should have the following elements:

- Introductory section that sets out the context for the policy
- Vision of G-RAP and need for information-sharing.
- G-RAP activities about which information should be widely shared.
- Communicating with respect to day to day administrative activities in G-RAP.

- Approaches to promoting information -sharing and dialogue to strengthen G-RAP- channels and activities.
- Roles and responsibilities with respect to G-RAP communication.

4.6 AUDIENCE SEGMENTATION

Effectiveness in communication requires addressing communication needs of specific groups through channels that are related to their way of life. Segmenting the various audiences in terms of their situation - from a communication point of view - is a critical element in communication strategy development.

Externally, achieving the goal of G-RAP requires identification and segmentation of audiences so as to ensure different kinds of information generated by G-RAP are made available to relevant audiences. For instance, the circumstances of government officials and policy makers, generally, will require pointed briefing documents whilst the general public can benefit from more discursive treatment of available information.

Amongst G-RAP stakeholders themselves, appreciating the different perspectives of stakeholders will enable packaging for targeted audiences and choices to be made about the most effective channels of communication to meet the communication needs of different stakeholders.

Key Players

- Research and Advocacy Organisations
- Strategic partners
 - SNV
 - IBIS
 - Ernst and Young
- Advisory Board
- Funders Committee
- Policy Makers
- PMT

4.7 MESSAGES

There is the need for a common message that resonates among all the stakeholders and gives expression to the common vision. In addition, sub-messages that are more related to the situation of each group of stakeholders will also be drawn out of the broader message.

The evolution of these messages must be through a participatory process among stakeholders and must not be seen as purely a technical function of communication specialists. In the process, stakeholders will also be able to identify with these messages.

The message development and audience segmentation required for G-RAP can be presented illustratively in the tables below:

4.7.1 KEY MESSAGE

Addressing the needs of the poor in society is a national priority.

▪ Internal

RAOs	Effective communication is critical to achieving desired impact in RAO work.
Funders Committee	Effective communication is essential for promoting the common goal of government and of donors to reduce poverty in Ghana.
Advisory Board	Effective communication is essential for promoting the common goal of government and of donors to reduce poverty in Ghana.
Policy Makers	Adopting policies in favour of the poor is beneficial for Ghana's development.
Strategic Partners	Effective communication is essential for promoting the common goal of government and of donors to reduce poverty in Ghana.
PMT	Coordinating and promoting effective communication is essential for the success of G-rap.

▪ External

Policy	Adopting policies in favour of the poor is beneficial for Ghana's development.
COBs	You are partners in promoting policies in favour of the poor.
Potential Donors	Your support promotes the common goal of government and donors to reduce poverty in Ghana.
Media	You are partners in promoting policies in favour of the poor.

4.8 COMMUNICATION CHANNELS AND ACTIVITIES

4.8.1 A G-RAP Identity

It is important to have a distinctive identity for G-RAP that all stakeholders relate to and project. This includes not only symbolic representations, such as the logo, but also more intangible elements such as the shared vision, roles of its constituents and categories of actors.

4.8.2 What Should Inform Choice Of Communication Channels?

The survey results indicate clearly that G-RAP stakeholders use channels such as telephone and e-mail and letters for day to day communication. The use of these channels seems widespread and acceptable among stakeholders.

There seems to be a gap in relation to mass communication among G-RAP stakeholders. Programmed production of newsletters, factsheet and regular update of the G-RAP website, intranet etc are required to be more participatory and interactive. These characteristics of such channels should be leveraged to promote dialogue and consensus around G-RAP. The use of all these channels has to be done in a systematic manner to facilitate the achievement of the goal. The use of these channels should also reflect the goal and priorities of G-RAP.

Even in the publication of reports such as the Annual Report, particularly certain portions such as The Lessons Learnt and Challenges Section, for example, the RAOs can be encouraged to submit contributions, features, articles and success stories of their own. Not only would this add to the credibility of the report, but it would encourage the RAOs to associate themselves with all aspects of the programme and not only in accessing funds. This could facilitate ownership of the G-RAP concept by RAOs and improve communication.

While there are costs involved in such an approach to using these channels the failures that result from not ensuring a shared vision of G-RAP as part of effective implementation of the programme are likely to be even more costly. The more internal elements of communication highlighted above in terms of the need for a shared vision of G-RAP etc provide a necessary foundation for the external aspects that relate to communicating with audiences other than the governing structures and the RAOs who have a relationship with these structures.

4.8.3 Communicating To Influence Policy

Greater impacts are more likely to be achieved through ensuring cumulative impacts from the work of various RAOs on policy making. The internal cohesiveness of G-RAP that can be achieved through systematic communication is therefore its self likely to translate into a more effective external impact.

The survey showed limited contexts for coordination amongst the RAOs. G-RAP should seek to establish regular fora for interactions and exchanges of experiences amongst the RAOs. There is also a need for programmed opportunities for RAOs and policy makers to interact.

The production by RAOs of briefs on their research work in a manner that engages the attention of hard-pressed policy makers should be an essential element of the effectiveness of RAOs work.

Structured Advocacy

Structured advocacy is required to help influence decisions of policy makers. This involves, for instance, both using research findings of RAOs as well as leveraging the relationships of donor representatives with governmental agencies. Such an approach, rather than uncoordinated lobbying of government officials, will be more effective in the political process.

Because of the interest being shown by donors in policy related research and advocacy, communication with participating as well as potential donors has to be part of the structured advocacy. The G-RAP should evolve an advocacy plan among the RAOs and link that with the role of policy makers as well as donors. That plan should itself emerge from the platform that is to be provided for the RAOs to develop their communication about their work.

4.8.4 Media Partnership

RAO -media interactions cannot be seen just in terms of individual relationships between particular RAOs and particular media. The relationship with the media has to be within a broader context in which the media see information generated from RAO research activities as newsworthy and participate in the advocacy both with policy makers and the general public.

The media (journalists, editors, broadcasters, stringers etc.) should be helped to see the improved quality that is capable of being achieved in their work from the inputs that are available from RAOs.

4.8.5 Engaging the Public

Arming the public with the results of research by RAOs can be a powerful contribution to influencing policy makers. The medium of radio has become important for generating public discussion. Attention needs to be paid to the effective use of this medium, especially to communicate in local languages and through a variety of radio stations selected on the basis of likely impact. Feedback obtained from the public through radio programmes can inform the conduct of research by RAOs and highlights areas of public interest. Such feedback will make their research activities of RAOs more meaningful for the public as well as policy makers.

The wider public needs to be included in the communication materials and activities that are part of the G-RAP communication framework and strategy. In this context the role of the media is particularly critical and the development of media relations is an important aspect of G-RAP and RAO engagement with the public. Other institutions such as universities and research institutions are important sub-groups within the general public as regards dissemination of research findings.

Achieving what the mid-term review report refers to as a “dialogue” across “interfaces”, such as exist between different social strata, also requires community for a in which RAOs, networking with CBOs, can make research findings meaningful at local and community levels and not just at national levels.

Deliberate efforts are needed to package the work of RAOs in an attractive manner for the various publics. Professional expertise is required for this purpose since RAOs are not typically able to do this themselves and communication skills training for RAOs can enhance their effectiveness.

4.8.6 Showcasing

Showcasing, especially of the work of RAOs, needs the active involvement of all the structures of G-RAP. It should not only be seen as an RAO responsibility. The Funders committee, the Advisory Board, the PMT and RAOs must cooperatively develop common themes and activities for showcasing the achievements of G –RAP. Even the current effort to improve the operations of the various governing structures provides an opportunity to showcase what has been achieved, whilst projecting the likely impact from improvements in governing structures. Otherwise, there is a danger of the adjustments to governance being seen as ends in themselves and/or mere bureaucratic tinkering with form rather than aimed at improving substance.

4.9 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

All the communication efforts being proposed for G-RAP are intended to achieve the goal of the programme. This goal and related objectives are therefore the basis for monitoring and determining the impact that the various elements of the communication strategy are having.

A monitoring and evaluation framework will also enable gaps to be identified and addressed. Room must be made within the governance structure of G-RAP for monitoring the communication- related performance of RAOs and G-RAP in general. This will be part of the accounting for the programme in terms of achieving the vision and set objectives.

4.10 SUGGESTED STRATEGIES

While developing a communication strategy for G-RAP must be a collaborative activity among stakeholders, for the purposes of this assignment, we suggest some strategies to be considered.

- **Internal**
 - Promote internal cohesion.

- Evolve and communicate messages that refocus attentions of G-rap stakeholders on the shared vision.
- Provide a clear framework for integrating communications into G-rap
- Respond to respective communication needs of stakeholders.
- Facilitate pooling of information and ideas from various stakeholders.
- Facilitate continued dialogue without stakeholders to be at one place
- Promote consistency in message and focus on G-rap vision.
- Enhance communication skills for PMT and RAOs
- To develop effective communication skills in PMT and RAOs
- Develop a G-rap identity.
- Reach the various audiences with the right information at the right time.
- Promote systematic use of mass communication channels among G-rap internal stakeholders

- **External**

- Advocacy
- Promote media partnerships
- Social mobilisation
- Monitoring & Evaluation

Annex 1. TERMS OF REFERENCE

COMMUNICATION CONSULT

Introduction

The Ghana Research and Advocacy Programme (G-RAP) is a pooled funding mechanism for supporting the institutional development of Research and Advocacy Organisations (RAOs) in Ghana. Ghana has a network of RAOs built up over the past decade, with a track record of carrying out evidence-based research in support of development policy and holding government to account for its policy choices and its use of public resources. However, the development of RAOs to date has been hampered by the short-term, projectised nature of their funding base. The intention of G-RAP is to offer multi-annual core funding to a group of the most established RAOs, selected on a competitive and needs-assessment basis, together with one-off grants and technical assistance to emerging RAOs.

DFID, DANIDA, the Royal Netherlands Embassy and CIDA have committed an amount of US\$ 7 million to support G-RAP over the first three years and it is expected that the first phase of the Programme will be extended to five years. The participating donors have developed G-RAP as a follow-up to their move towards a Multi-Donor Budgetary Support (MDBS) approach. MDBS entails greater reliance on government systems for policy making and resource allocation. To ensure that these systems deliver pro-poor policy, the participating donors recognise the need to strengthen and broaden the range of inputs into the policy process, in particular from civil society, based upon robust data and analysis.

G-RAP is led and managed by a Project Management Team (PMT) contracted by the LTS-UK led consortium in partnership with Ernst & Young Ghana. The PMT is the Secretariat to the Advisory Board and the Funders Committee, currently the two organs of oversight and decision making for G-RAP. G-RAP commenced on 31st August 2004 and the current first phase ends on 31st August 2007 but may be extended.

Current Situation and Developments

After an inception phase which has known its challenges, the first round of grants was disbursed in July 2005. Service delivery for capacity development of beneficiary organisations has been taking off fully since January 2006. Second round selections for the period 2006-2007 were concluded in July 2006, bringing the total beneficiary group up to 19 organisations and an annual grant making budget of approximately US\$ 2,500,000.

Part of the challenges stemmed from the innovative approach of the Programme and the lack of reference to precedents (donor pooled funding; core support to NGOs and the monitoring of research and advocacy). Furthermore, the design had not yet fully matured at the launch of the Programme. These challenges caused initial frictions between the different stakeholders. Experience shows there may be an issue with the initial G-RAP design, notably in the cohesion and ownership potential, and in decision making processes. A high quality and free flow of information between governors, managers and the beneficiaries to G-RAP will be essential to have the initiative mature effectively and constructively.

A Mid-term Review of G-RAP has taken place in September-October 2006; its findings and recommendations will form a starting point for a redress of inter-stakeholder communications.

Purpose of assignment

In line with the initial vision and objectives as laid down in the G-RAP Joint Programme Memorandum and its Logical Framework (www.g-rap.org), the purpose of the assignment is two-fold: to facilitate coherent and positive inter-stakeholder communication around the G-RAP concept and to develop a communication framework for governing bodies and management allowing for optimal transparency in its relations with beneficiary organizations and the public.

The two-phased assignment should lead to the development of a communication strategy with guiding principles and an implementation plan ensuring a positive image for the programme, its beneficiaries, and for its governing and managing bodies.

Objectives

Primary:

- Facilitate inter-stakeholder coherence around the G-RAP concept and stakeholder roles through a stakeholder survey.

Secondary:

- Develop a comprehensive outline for the internal and external communication strategy for G-rap
- Develop a list of guiding principles of the communication strategy
- Develop a multi-faceted and phased action plan to guide and direct the G-RAP Programme, its governing bodies, management and beneficiaries towards the finalization and subsequent implementation of the communication strategy
- Integrate the aspect of public show-casing of beneficiary deliveries and outcomes optimally into the communication strategy.

The Strategy should not only focus on the successful implementation in the short-term, but also show a vision reaching out to the middle-long term, e.g. in advising on how to present G-RAP as an attractive mechanism for participation by new donors and funding sources.

Key Questions to be answered

“Market” research and analysis on concept and stakeholder roles:

- What would be the preferred governance structure(s) according to stakeholders?
 - What are purpose and functioning of G-RAP as seen by its immediate stakeholders?
 - What advisory roles and bodies do they see for G-RAP’s strategic processes?
 - What role are the donors to play in the governance and guidance of G-RAP?
 - What role are Government and Parliament to play in this governance and guidance?
 - What role and position should there be for G-RAP beneficiaries for ensuring sufficient ownership and appropriate guidance inputs for governance and guidance of G-RAP?
 - What should be the position of the PMT in the Programme?
- Regarding the response to the above questions, what are the communication needs of each stakeholder group?

Change research:

- What has or has not worked in the current inter-stakeholder communication set-up?
- How can current stakeholder communication practices be adapted and/or improved for ensuring efficient and effective internal and external communications?

Deliverables

Phase 1 (object of this contract):

- A detailed report on a stakeholder survey that answers the questions raised in the section above.
- List of guiding principles for a comprehensive communication strategy reflecting the inter-stakeholder landscape as surveyed
- Sketched outline for the development of a comprehensive internal & external communication strategy for G-RAP and its appropriate toolkit
- A workplan and budget on the way forward

Phase 2 (extension yet to be contracted):

- A comprehensive communication strategy for G-RAP
- A detailed phased action plan for the implementation of the strategy

Time Schedule

The consultancy will cover a period of 16.5 (sixteen and a half) working days within the period 26th February -11th April 2007. Final draft is to be presented on Friday 23rd April 2007.

Payment Schedule

First tranche of 30% at start of assignment fieldwork (planned Monday 26 February)

Second tranche of 70% within 28 days of receipt of an invoice, following the completion of the assignments and the acceptance of the final report.

Documents (made available by PMT; see also www.g-rap.org)

- G-rap Joint Programme Memorandum, April 2004
- Revised Logical Framework, June 2005
- Minutes of the 27 September 2005 Inter-stakeholder Work Session
- G-RAP 2005 Annual Report
- G-RAP 2006 Mid-year Report
- G-RAP-MandE M&E Report, July 2006
- G-RAP Mid-Term Review, December 2006
- Other documentation available at request

Annex 2. LIST OF RESPONDENTS INTERVIEWED FOR THE SURVEY.

Name of person interviewed	Organization	Form of participation
1. Mrs. Edna Kuma 2. Nana Oye Lithur	AWLA	Questionnaire
3. Mr. Kwaku Antwi-Bosiako	ABANTU	Questionnaire
4. Mrs. Angela Dwamena-Aboagye	ARK	Questionnaire
5. P. Owusu-Donkor	CDD	Questionnaire
6. Abubakari Yussif	FOSDA	Questionnaire
7. Francisca Darko-Asare	WANEP	Questionnaire
8. Eric Akyeampong	ASDR	Questionnaire
9. Dr. Ellen Bortei-Doku, 10. Dr. Ahadzi, Dora Owusu	CSPS	Questionnaire
11. Richard A. Agyapong	ILGS	Questionnaire
12. Prof. Ernest Aryeetey, 13. Dr. George Owusu, 14. Mrs. Ophelia Ankrah	ISSER	Questionnaire
15. Dr. Yao Graham	TWN/ Advisory Board	In-depth interview
16. Hon. Sallas Mensah	MP/ Advisory Board	In-depth interview
17. Miss Jane Quaye	FIDA	Questionnaire
18.	IDEG	Questionnaire
19.	CEPA	Questionnaire
20.	ISODEC	Questionnaire
21. Mrs. Benice Sam 22. Chief Accountant 23. Assistant Accountant	WILDAF	Questionnaire
24. Isaac Yanney 25. Anthony Baah 26. Gilbert A. Donkoh	TUC	Questionnaire
27. Jake Tetteh	DFID / Funders Committee	In-depth interview
28. Raymond Danso	RNE / Funders Committee	In-depth interview
29. Karina Johansen	DANIDA / Funders Committee	In-depth interview

30. Cherub Antwi-Nsiah	SNV/ Strategic Partner	In-depth interview
31. Esi Johnson	IBIS / Strategic Partner	In-depth interview
32. Kwodwo Brentu	Ernst & Young / Strategic Partner	In-depth interview
33. Peter Evans	Metaccept/Strategic partner	In-depth interview