**EUARD Project Component Report**

**COMMUNICATION & NETWORKING**

By Seniorl Anzu – Component Leader

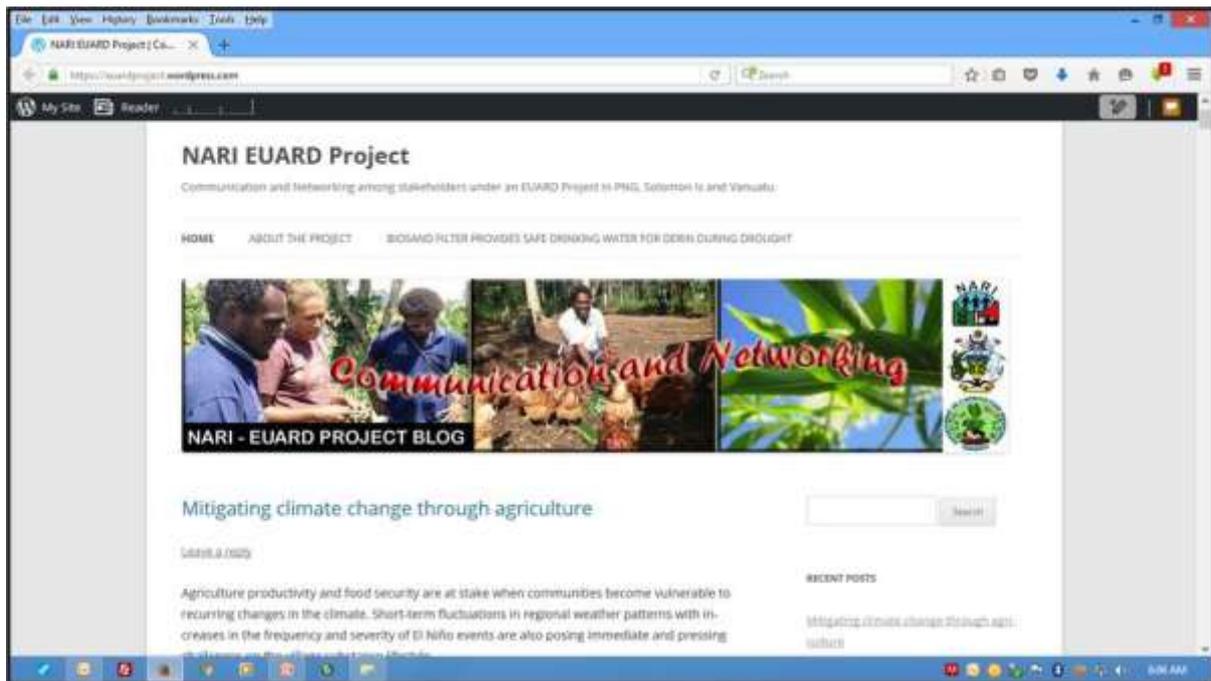| Component/ Expected Project Result: | Improved information exchange and networking among stakeholders for increased research and dissemination of technologies in PNG, SI and Vu |
|---|---|

The Communication and Networking component of the NARI-EU ARD Project was about establishing and/or strengthening linkages and information/knowledge sharing mechanisms between researchers, extension providers and smallholders; providing suitable conditions for smallholder participation/input in the research process and for dissemination/out-scaling of new research-based technologies to smallholders in PNG, Solomon Island and Vanuatu.

The component was integral and dependent on the other five components in networking and communication and therefore its outputs were partially determined by the progress or success of the other components in terms of reporting, generation of research information and their availability. The activities under this component were only undertaken between 2014-2015 across the three Western Pacific Countries based on agreed annual work plans. The other components were in crop improvement, crop diversification, livestock development, soil and water management and socio-economics.

## OUTPUT 1: Online Collaboration, Information Sharing and Knowledge Management

### 1.1 Blogging
With the increased use of simple and open source internet-based applications and services for development, a project blog site was established and maintained between 2014-2015. The rational was not only to enhance increased online collaboration and networking but also for increased visibility of project activities across all components and sites, and promote internet-based discussion forums on research and development; establish multi stakeholder forums; disseminate proven adaptation options, and share information on positive achievements. The approached supported the project in enhancing increased online (blogging) collaboration and sharing of information, resources and experiences on crops/cropping systems, livestock, and soil and water management. Up to 50 items, including stories and pictures, were posted on the project blog site, whose URL is https://**euardproject**.wordpress.com.

Awareness was made on the site's availability as an online discussion forum and source of information. The project team and stakeholders at large were invited to contribute and further share the forum content through their network. While followers enjoyed its content, hardly anyone attempted to engage in forum discussions as anticipated. However members of the project components utilized the platform in sharing their achievements, improved information and news stories.

## 1.2 Online Database System

As part of information management system, a project database was established and maintained throughout the project life. This online database system contained pages for components and activities, reports, people, organisations, library, calendar and discussions. It enabled the project management team to manage various inputs, monitor progress and generate appropriate reports as required. This simple and user-friendly platform also allowed instant access to and manipulation of data for various uses. Over 300 data was entered into the system with unaccounted reports generated from the database during the project period.

## OUTPUT 2: National Stakeholder Forums

The project encouraged wider stakeholder participation to enhance improved collaboration and networking in the participating countries. As such four National Information Sharing and Networking Forums were conducted in the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu in 2014 during the months of March (Solomon Islands and Vanuatu), June (Vanuatu) and August (Solomon Islands).

These engagements were unique in which the wider agriculture and rural development stakeholders were involved. They included agricultural organizations and divisions, disaster offices, educational institutions, development partners, the private sector, NGOs, the media, and lead farmers of various communities. The forums offered opportunities for advocacy and increased sharing of experiences as well as providing options for improved engagement and dissemination of climate change adaptation interventions.

### 2.1 Stakeholder Introduction

The initial consultation meetings in March 2014 were basically brief introductory sessions intended to meet with potential national stakeholders in SI (March 10) and Vanuatu (March 12); sensitize the need to establish and/or strengthen linkages and information/knowledge sharing mechanisms between researchers, extension providers and smallholders; establish networks; initiate planning of activities; and invite them to participate in the process. A NARI team comprising Dr Workneh Ayalew, Dr Norah Omot, Martin Lobao and Seniorl Anzu were on this mission.

The focus was on identifying current practices of information sharing and networking, perceptions of difference levels of stakeholders (researchers, extensionists, farmers, others), and some of the major challenges that hinder effective networking and information / knowledge sharing among actors.

The SI stakeholder consultation meeting on 10 March was attended by 28 representatives. The Vu stakeholder consultation meeting on March 12 attracted 24 participants. In both instances the participants agreed to formalize the establishment of national agricultural information exchange networks (forums) at least once in a year.

## 2.2 National Stakeholder Forums
In June 2014 the Vanuatu stakeholder workshop was conducted following the establishment of Terms of References. The event was replicated in the Solomon Islands in August.

The objectives of these workshops were to:
- Take stock of and document current practices on networking and information sharing in SI and Vanuatu
- Identify positive practices/channels in networking and information sharing that need strengthening
- Identify new/alternative mediums of networking and information sharing for consideration
- Develop a work plan for strengthening and establishing networking and information sharing practices for stakeholders for the next 12 months
- Agreeing on the terms of reference

## 2.3 Forum Agenda
The forums considered the following areas, besides others, in a bid to establish and strengthen information sharing and networking among partners. The main questions were: What is there currently? Who does them? How do we do better? What else can we consider?

*Information dissemination channels*
1. Publications – (eg. technical reports, scientific papers, training manuals, farmer guides/leaflets, proceedings, information bulletins, extension booklets, etc).
2. Communication and awareness materials – newsletters (eg. Talemaot – quarterly), posters, banners, pamphlets, video shows
3. Libraries /information centres
4. Public Events – trade show, agriculture show, yam festival (farmer exhibits), farm demonstrations, field days, commemorations (eg WFD), training
5. Mainstream Media – newspapers, TV shows, radio programs/talkback show
6. Online Spaces – websites, blogs, social networking
7. MAIS Resources – awareness, training
8. Resource centres – do we have some?
9. Communication – mobile coverage, cell phones, emails, etc.

*Human Resource Capacity*
1. IT skills
2. Library/Documentation skills
3. Communication/media skills
4. Knowledge management skills
5. Graphic skills
6. Capacity development
   [What is the current skills level, who is there? What qualification? What capacity support/development is required?]

*Infrastructure and Facilities/Resources*
1. Network and IT service/support
2. Hardware & software
3. Internet, websites, emails
4. Libraries (management, size, location, purpose)
5. Databases (library catalogue, agricultural statistics, etc)
6. Policies, guidelines, strategies
7. Risk management (virus, loss, etc)

The Vanuatu workshop was attended by 25 representatives from the wider community while 30 participated in the Solomon Islands meeting.



*Participants of the Stakeholder Workshop on Communication and Networking in Vanuatu*

*Participants of the Stakeholder Workshop on Communication and Networking in the Solomon Islands*

## 2.4 Quarterly Project Newsletters

For greater visibility, networking and sharing of technologies and positive news stories on project activities; a series of project newsletters were produced and circulated to project partners and stakeholders. Four newsletter issues were produced in 2015 – which was also the ideal timeframe of the project when most of the information relating to project activities and particularly the trial results and proven technologies were available for sharing with the stakeholders. They tend out to be consolidated and ready-made information resources easily accessible and enjoyed by the project team and stakeholders.

## OUTPUT 3: Improved Resources and Methodology

Information on appropriate interventions for different climate change vulnerabilities were re-packaged in various information resources and delivered to interested stakeholders at different project sites during the course of the project.

The contents and frequency of deliveries were determined by stakeholder priorities, types of technologies adopted and level of inputs. Information on the selected interventions were sourced from NARI (promising releases and recommendations), as well as new knowledge generated through field research at the project sites. They were re-packaged and/or communicated in the form of print publications, electronic dissemination materials and audio-visual products - booklets, posters, brochures, flyers, CDs/DVDs, thumb drives, email and online. Selected posters on drought coping strategies and NARI Toktoks were also printed and supplied.

Most information resources were re-packaged in simple English however there were instances where some of them were translated into local *Lingua Francas*, for instance *Bislama* for Vanuatu and *Tok Pisin* for PNG – which were accepted for ease of understanding by rural farmers.

### 3.1 Information Packaging and Sharing – Publications
A range of information packages in the form of print publications were developed for farmers and other stakeholders. These publications included posters, booklets and brochures. They were developed in consultation with subject matter specialists for ease of accuracy (scientific data) and presentation.

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*Brochures*


*Booklets*


*Posters*

List of print publications re-packaged under the EU-ARD project.

| No | Technology | Publication Type | | | Copies printed |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Brochure | Booklet | Poster | |
| 1 | African Yam | √ | | √ | 400 brochures, 2 posters |
| 2 | Cassava | | √ | | 25 booklets |
| 3 | How to grow your own capsicum | | √ | √ | 25 booklets, 2 posters |
| 4 | Drought tolerant banana | √ | | | 350 brochures |
| 5 | Sterilizing soil for nursery | | √ | √ | 20 booklets, 2 posters |
| 6 | Rope and washer pump | | | √ | 4 posters |
| 7 | Sweet potato silage for pig feed | √ | √ | √ | 400 brochures, 30 booklets, 4 posters |
| 8 | NARI broiler concentrate | √ | | √ | 400 brochures, 4 posters |
| 9 | Upland rice varieties for the lowlands | √ | | √ | 400 brochures, 4 posters |
| 10 | Taro management | | √ | √ | 30 booklets, 2 posters |
| 11 | Tomato | √ | √ | | 200 brochures, 20 booklets |
| 12 | Yard long bean | √ | √ | | 200 brochures, 20 booklets |
| 13 | Early maturing sweet potato for the highlands | √ | | √ | 100 brochures, 1 poster |
| 14 | Growing wheat | √ | | √ | 100 brochures, 1 poster |
| 15 | Growing vegetables - Sowing | √ | | | 350 brochures |
| 16 | Growing vegetables – Transplanting | √ | | | 350 brochures |
| 17 | Making banana chips | √ | | √ | 350 brochures, 1 poster |
| 18 | Making cassava chips | √ | | √ | 350 brochures, 2 posters |
| 19 | Making cassava crisps | √ | | | 350 brochures |
| 20 | Making flour out of sweet potato | √ | | | 350 brochures |
| 21 | Making jam from pineapples | √ | | √ | 350 brochures, 2 posters |
| 22 | Making sweet potato | √ | | | 200 brochures |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | doughnuts | | | | |
| **23** | Making sweet potato strips | √ | | √ | 350 brochures, 2 posters |
| **24** | Making noodles from cassava flour | √ | | | 200 brochures |
| **25** | Making sago pops | √ | | | 200 brochures |
| **26** | Making starch out of cassava | √ | | | 350 brochures |
| **27** | Mixed improved fallow | √ | | | 200 brochures |
| **28** | Rice preservation and storage | √ | | | 100 brochures |

Several other posters on priorities and interventions were developed for the evaluation exercise in all the sites and the final project closing workshop.

**3.2 Public Awareness through Mainstream Media**

For advocacy, public awareness and visibility; the mainstream media was extensively used in sharing positive developments arising from project activities in all the three countries. NARI used the two daily newspapers (*Post Courier and The National*) for regular reporting – not only on stories from PNG sites but also from the other two countries. The weekly Farming pages in *The National* newspaper ran most of the stories however the NARI Focus Column in *The National* and weekender features of both dailies featured a lot of the details of the project objectives, activities and achievements. In the Solomons; *Solomon Star* and *Sunday Isles* captured a lot of the project activities as public good while in Vanuatu, *Vanuatu Daily Post* did a fantastic coverage on project activities which went on for a while.

# Scientist: Most experts are not good communicators

## .... NARI-EW ARD stakeholders strengthen information sharing mechanism

By Anita Roberts

A FORUM RECENTLY HELD IN Port Vila aimed to strengthen linkages and information sharing mechanisms between stakeholders of the NARI-EU ARD Project in Vanuatu.

NARI–EU ARD (Agriculture and Research Development) is a European Union (EU) funded project in three western Melanesian Countries of Papua New Guinea, Solomon and Vanuatu and network and information sharing is one core component.

In Vanuatu, the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) in partnership with the PNG National Research Institute (NARI) is are implementing the project.

While a lot goes on in agriculture research and development of the country, it is unclear on the level of networking and how information sharing is facilitated among stakeholders. Seemingly most organisations operate based on their own objectives and mandates.

Researchers, extension service providers, development practitioners, private sector, rural communities and even farmers participated in the process of disseminating information.

The NARI Senior Scientist working for agriculture and also other sectors are experts in their fields but are not good communicators and as well as not good in networking so to disseminate expertise to others to adopt.

The skill to disseminate the farmers is a challenge.

This forum brought stakeholders together to share experiences and took note of current practices of networking at the same time, had identified new and alternative medium of networking; an activity information sharing in the implementation of the project.

In Vanuatu the NARI EU ARD project sites are Malafau and Siviri on north Efate and middle bush, Tanna, according to the NARI-EU ARD Country Coordinator in Vanuatu varies along the component of crops, livestock, and soil and water management.

Workshop outcomes and resolutions are to be implemented after the forum in close consultation with the project office at DARD in Port

Vanuatu, PNG and Solomon are implementing the project "Generation and adaption of improved agricultural techniques to mitigate climate change imposed risks on food production within vulnerable small holder farming

Participants of the NARI-EU ARD Network and Information Sharing Workshop at the Melanesian Hotel

### 3.3 Electronic Dissemination Materials

The television and radio technologies were utilized as mediums to disseminate climate change adaptation information. Radio programs and news packages were popular in Vanuatu on the project. Television stations in PNG and Vanuatu telecast a series of public awareness on climate change and related stresses and what actions the communities need to take to be resilient and better still the efforts and interventions of the project in addressing those environmental challenges.

Similar stories and news packages were published online on the NARI website (www.nari.org.pg) and other online news sources such as the PNG LOOP news (www.pngloop.com).

### 3.4 Video Production

Audio-visual information packages were produced through the video technology for distribution to stakeholders learning resources. Three video resources were packaged on water management and livestock feeding practices as demonstrations through step-by-step processes. The videos describe how farmers can develop and use innovative technologies in managing resources and adapt during extreme conditions such as drought when water and food resources become scarce. The video resources are on the:

1. Rope and washer pump technology,
2. Sweet potato silage technology for pig feed, and the
3. Biosand filter technology.

Other videos were produced on field activities of some of the project sites in PNG and Vanuatu.

1. Project field activities in the Vanuatu, and
2. Project field activities in PNG with prominence to Hisiu and Yule Island.

### 3.5 Methods of Delivery

The information materials were shared with partners and stakeholders including farmers through a number of avenues such as farmer trainings, field days, farmer visits, workshops, and other engagements. Soft copies of the publications were shared with two partner countries for printing (with translation where possible) and distribution to local development partners, extension agencies and farmers.

Information on early maturing and drought tolerant crop varieties formed the basis of the contents, while interventions on improved cropping and livestock systems were paramount. Technologies relating to value addition and optimal use of local food resources were equally considered as they become handy in climate stress situations, when food supplies get scarce. Providing options for crop diversification and engaging in farm activities for cash income will support communities in harsh times thus such information were packaged for the selected sites under this initiative.

Much of the information materials were distributed during field days - such as those that were held in Hisiu and Yule Island sites (PNG) and in Port Vila (Vanuatu).


*Information posters attract Yule Island farmers*


*Farmers enjoying information displays at Hisiu*


*Vanuatu farmers collecting information*


*Vanuatu farmers display posters*

## OUTPUT 4: Capacity and Support Services

### 4.1 On-the-job Competency Skills Development
Human capacity development through on-the-job training attachments was identified as a key input under the project for organizations capacity development and sustainability. Three officers involved in information and communication activities in the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu were engaged with PNG NARI's Information and Knowledge Programme in July 2015 as part of capacity development support by the project.



From Solomon Islands were Ben Rakai and Obed Senipitu of the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, and Mark Vurobaravu from Vanuatu's Department of Agriculture and Rural Development. They were active members of this project's field information activities back in the two countries.

The week-long engagement was about experience sharing, exposing the participants to NARI's information and knowledge

strategies, and having a brief hands-on training in selected competency areas. The activities were delivered based on NARI's existing practices, particularly in the production, management and sharing of information and knowledge.

The program covered NARI's policies and standards, publication process, library and information systems, audio-visual production (video, radio), concepts and techniques of writing for the presses, graphics, media practices, selective information packaging, and community engagement. Team members of the NARI I&K Programme at HQ contributed in delivering this program successfully.

The team also visited The National newspaper's printing plant in Lae in which they learnt about the daily operations of the media agency and its complete printing process.

### 4.2 Improved Capacity with Technology – Video Editing Software
For improved and ongoing in-house production of audio-visual information materials, the project supported the Solomon Island and Vanuatu partner organizations with licensed video editing software packages each - Adobe Premiere Pro CS 6. Premiere Pro is one of the professional software package widely used in the industry all over. NARI already has the same software and therefore didn't require one.

Television and video technology was highly prioritized as an important tool for public awareness in the two countries. Traditionally agriculture and other development partners utilize this technology to engage with the masses. The project partners already have video cameras but lacked the editing tool, and therefore were out-sourcing editing jobs to the private sector which has had financial implications. During the on-the-job training attachment in PNG, the SI and Vu participants were introduced to the software and briefly demonstrated on the basic editing process. The sourcing of the software enables them to produce their own appropriate information packages for television broadcast, DVD distribution to stakeholders and communication through other collaborative interfaces such as online, telephony, etc. The partners were impressed with this support which will enable improved production of audio-visual productions with improved quality and presentation.

### 4.3 Communication Strategies for Partner Organizations
Despite improvements in the way DARD and MAL engage with stakeholders and disseminate information, much of these are undertaken without having in place specifically defined frameworks for networking and communication efforts. Under the project, communication strategies were proposed and initial consultations were held. However the development of these strategies is now work in progress due to further developments.

For Vanuatu, a suggestion was put forward for a ministerial strategy (rather than an agriculture strategy for DARD only) which should also incorporate communication requirements for fisheries, quarantine/ bio-security, livestock, and forestry. DARD requested that this exercise be delayed and taken up through another regional initiative with CTA/SPC partnership. Dialogue is still on-going

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*Consultation on communication strategy in Vanuatu*

on this contribution involving NARI.

With Solomon Islands, change in leadership at PR/Communication division has had some delay in picking up on the schedule however dialogue is ongoing and progress will be made when MAL communication plans are finalized, which will capture how and when this activity can be factored in.

At project conclusion, the development of communication strategies is work in progress which NARI will continue to follow up and conclude before the end of September 2016.