EMERGING TECHNOLOGY & PRACTICE
FOR CONSERVATION COMMUNICATIONS
IN AFRICA
A REPORT ON THE STATE OF THE ART AND TRENDS
WITH RECOMMENDATIONS FOR USAID

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Study Approach

• Desk studies
• Key informant interviews
• Focus group discussions
• Online survey
Evolution of ICTs
[Emerging] Trends

• Open data
• Open source software
• Cloud computing
• Social software
• Mobile
• Mash-ups, bar camps and hackathons
Examples from Beyond Conservation
Financial services

• M-Pesa – Kenya
  • Started in 2007 – approaching 15 Million users
• Mobile banking without formal services
Agriculture

- Esoko (Tradenet) West Africa
  - Started in 2005 – working in more than 16 countries
  - Value chains for transparency and organizational efficiency
Health

• TRAC Plus – Rwanda
  – Started 2005 – ARV adherence – grew to a national program for Malaria, TB and more
CARPE

• Central African Regional Program for the Environment (CARPE) is a USAID initiative to promote sustainable natural resource management in the Congo Basin

• Aim to reduce the rate of forest degradation and loss of biodiversity by supporting increased local, national, and regional natural resource management capacity
CARPE Communications and ICT

- Information Management Tool (IMT)
- CARPE Data Explorer
- Satellite derived maps
- Document repository
- Video and community participation
STEWARD

• The Sustainable and Thriving Environment for West African Regional Development (STEWARD)
• A joint effort between USAID and the US Forest Service to:
  – increase collaboration, improve regional natural resource management, promote transfer of knowledge among countries at a regional level, and initiate trans-boundary development projects at select sites within the Upper Guinean forest region of West Africa.
STEWARD Communications and ICT

- Newspaper articles
- Radio broadcasts
- Screenings of documentaries
- Chimpanzee Theater Outreach Troup
- Video documentaries
- Database of GIS/Maps of Sustainable Livelihood activities
- Television interviews/reports
- STEWARD quarterly bulletins
- FRAMEweb.org
- Weekly STEWARD FORUM
- Murals on NRM
Conclusions from CARPE & STEWARD

• CARPE
  – Standard methods for project planning and management and adaptive management are vital for integration
  – Radio for REDD, biodiversity conservation, bushmeat and trafficking will help extend the project’s reach
  – Updating the web platform is an important investment to extend access/reach
  – Solar will be a source to watch for both
Conclusions from CARPE & STEWARD

• STEWARD
  – Partnership with FRAMEWeb is important – additional staff will help extend social media reach
  – Expected move into wider use of newspapers, radio and theater for local communications is a logical extension of early successes – Building broad staff engagement helps sustainability
  – Exploration of alternatives for video and mapping could boost access and usability
Focus Group

• What different forms of communication exist in Africa (e.g. radio, dramas, newspaper, posters, Internet). How are they used?
• How has the concept of “Mobile Money” been realized in various projects in various countries?
• How are we using emerging tools and how can we better plan for soon-to-be emerging tools in communication?
• Do solutions like low-bandwidth versions of websites offer useful options?
Focus Group Takeaways

• Conservation is fundamentally different from other development practices. The scale and scope can be vastly greater.
• It is important to identify how best to connect partners with appropriate ICT tools.
• Consider ICT in Africa against emerging energy options – solar etc.
• Improved ability to conduct effective needs assessments will help adapt to local settings.
Online Survey Results

Please indicate the extent to which you use the following information and communication technologies (ICTs) (a range of electronic technologies) for your environmental conservation work.

- Computers
- Email
- Websites

[Bar chart showing usage frequency for various technologies]
My organization currently USES SOCIAL MEDIA to build networks, maintain relationships and share information about work across its many geographic and organizational boundaries.
Principle Recommendations

• Use collaboration and partnerships to fill gaps in access to ICTs
• Include ICTs in initial design – not as afterthought – in local contexts
• Think standards and inter-operable – plan to capture and connect data
Program Approaches

• Adaptive management to learn while doing
• After Action Reviews and Peer Assists to help manage complex situations
• Iterative ICT development to build from small successes
• Use existing networks like ABCG to connect practitioners
Thank you!

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