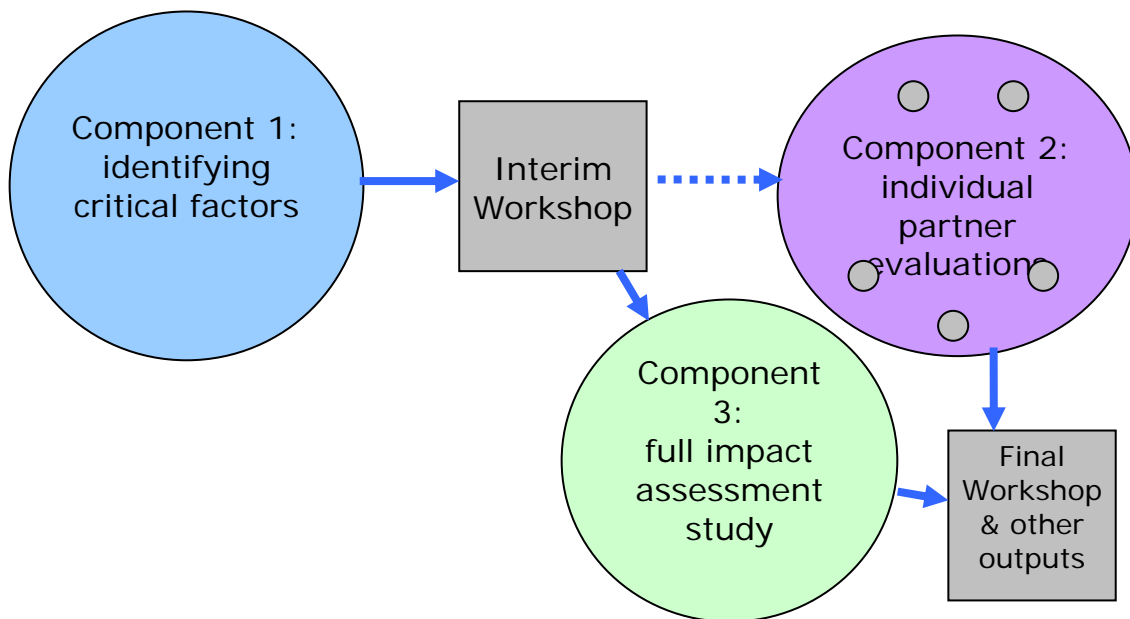


BUILDING COMMUNICATIONS OPPORTUNITIES (BCO) IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Progress report, 31 October 2006

The Building Communications Opportunities (BCO) Impact Assessment (IA) study is being undertaken by *ict* Development Associates *ltd* (*ictDA*), through a contractual arrangement between *ictDA* and the Association for Progressive Communications (APC), which is acting on behalf of the BCO Alliance. The *ictDA* consultant team for the study is made up of David Souter, Tina James and Kate Wild, with James Deane of the Communication for Social Change Consortium engaged for work concerned with a proposed communication strategy. The structure of the study is set out in the diagram below.



Component 1 of the study focuses on the identification and assessment of work by BCO partners which has already been documented, particularly work which has already been evaluated or the subject of impact assessment. A report on Component 1 is scheduled for submission to BCO partners on 27 November 2006 ahead of a meeting of BCO scheduled to be held in Johannesburg on 4 and 5 December.

This document is the first bi-monthly progress report on BCO activities, covering the period from the BCO meeting held in Den Haag on 29/31 August to 31 October 2006.

Contractual arrangements

The contract between *ictDA* and APC relating to the study was signed with effect from 19 September 2006, following discussions on detail resulting from meeting with BCO partners in Den Haag at the end of August. These discussions focused in particular on

establishing a timetable to meet BCO's desire to bring forward the workshop scheduled for the end of Component 1 from late January (as proposed by the IA team) to the beginning of December.

The second phase of Component 1 of the IA study project therefore began on 19 September. Subcontracts were issued by *ictDA* to team members immediately after completion of the main contract. Subcontracts with *ictDA* associates (Tina James and Kate Wild) are agreed and signed. BCO partners also asked *ictDA* to include the lead agency of a competing bid, the Communication for Social Change Consortium, in the final contract, with specific responsibility for work relating to a communication strategy. A subcontract was also issued to CSCC by *ictDA* to CSCC in mid-September but a signed copy of this contract has not yet been returned by CSCC; its return is being pursued as a matter of urgency.

The scheduled programme of activities in this contract is summarised in Annex A. As noted during contract negotiations, the rescheduling of the Component 1 workshop to early December, together with prior commitments of IA team members to other clients during October, meant that the B2 (interview and analysis), B3 (communication strategy) and report-writing phases of work would need to be tightly concentrated into the period between 6 and 27 November. While feasible, this tight schedule is not ideal and will require commitment from all parties.

Component 1

There was considerable discussion of the aims of the IA study in meetings held in London in June 2006 and Den Haag in August 2006. The consultants subsequently developed the workplan now incorporated in the project contract on the understanding that the study should include three related aspects of assessment:

- a) assessment of the impact of the BCO programme itself, as a collection of activities and a distinct body of work, including collaborative activities;
- b) assessment of the impact of the activities of BCO partners during the BCO period, including activities which are within the BCO programme and other activities which BCO partners wish to be considered alongside these;
- c) assessment of the impact of ICD activities in general, including BCO activities and evidence from other sources, in particular on the three themes identified in the original project terms of reference, *i.e.*:
 - i) mainstreaming, ii) voice and iii) poverty impact.

The value of the study as a whole will depend significantly on the inclusion and inter-relation of these three aspects.

The purpose of Component 1 of the study is to establish the evidence base which is available in the existing work and materials of BCO partners. This will enable the IA team to make a preliminary assessment of a) and b) above; to recommend further work required for a) and b) within Component 2 (to be undertaken by BCO partners themselves) and Component 3 (to be undertaken by the IA team); and to establish the basis for c) (the main objective of Component 3). BCO partners also asked *icrDA* to include preliminary work towards a communications strategy within Component 1, and James Deane of the Communication for Social Change Consortium has been added to the team for this purpose.

The detailed breakdown of Component 1 activities is as follows:

B1	Mapping and other follow-up activities to Hague workshop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mapping of project and other activities within the agreed scope of the Impact Study ● Preparation of promotional material concerning the Impact Study as the example of joint BCO activity ● Dialogue with DFID Impact Study and other comparable initiatives ● Compilation of all documentary materials for Component 1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Map/matrix of project and other activities ● Brochure concerning BCO Impact Study ● Report on dialogue with DFID Impact Study
B2	Review and analysis of materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Development of analytical framework through which to approach documents ● Interviews with BCO partners ● Development of Component 1 report including recommendations for Components 2 and 3 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Analytical framework ● Component 1 report - lessons learned
B3	Support for Development of Communications Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Development of questions to be addressed in a communications strategy which BCO coordination will distribute to partners b) Dialogue with partners to develop a preparatory document towards a communications strategy c) Recommendations for communications strategy (included in Component 1 report) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> d) Questions for communications strategy e) Component 1 report - recommendations
B4	Component 1 Workshop	<p>Two-day workshop</p> <p>Purpose: To review conclusions of Component 1 activities and agree on priorities and workplan for C3: themes, regions, levels of</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> f) Agenda for workshop g) Participant lists (BCO and non-BCO) h) Successful workshop with agreement on the broad Component 3 work plan and

		intervention, mix of programs etc; proposals for regional experts	final outputs i) Completed Terms of Reference for regional/thematic experts j) Completion of communications strategy
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B1: Mapping and other follow-up activities to Hague workshop

Work within this sub-phase has been the principal activity of the IA team since project initiation between 19 September and 31 October. It has focused primarily on a review by team members of the documentation provided by BCO partners, enabling activities which are or may be considered to fall within the IA study's scope to be identified and mapped, and a preliminary assessment made of the quality and range of impact assessment / evaluation resources available.

The following definition of the scope of activities to be included in the Component 1 assessment was included in the contractual agreement between *ictDA* and APC/BCO, and has formed the basis for documentation sought by the IA team:

- a) all activities of all BCO partner agencies on which those partners have reported, currently report or expect to report in future to DFID and/or other donors within their BCO reporting documents;*
- b) any additional activities of such BCO partners which have relevance to ICT/ICD, whose implementation overlaps chronologically to any extent with the BCO implementation period (beginning on 1 March 2004) and which the partners in question wish to be included in the study.*

Documentation has been made available by BCO partners during the period since the meeting in Den Haag in late August. The scope and scale of this documentation varies considerably. By the end of October 2006, an adequate – and in some cases substantial – range of documentation had been provided by most NGO partners, notably by APC, IICD, Panos and One World. Further documentation was being sought from Hivos, Bellanet and the government agency partners in BCO (DFID, DGIS, SDC). The IA team continues to encourage BCO partners to supply material on their work within the scope set out above, and such material will be incorporated in the review as and when received.

AMARC is a special case as its work during the BCO period is not funded by BCO resources, and it is currently engaged on a substantial impact assessment of its and other community radio activities, which is being undertaken outside the BCO framework. In addition to materials reviewed to date, the IA team expects to receive substantial additional material towards the end of November, once the AMARC 9 World Conference

and General Assembly is over. While the scope and scale of this material will contribute to the IA team's assessment of the evidence currently available through BCO, a full analysis of its content belongs more appropriately in Component 3.

The scope, scale and nature of documentation provided to date varies greatly, and the IA team is concerned about several issues which need to be explored during sub-component B2. Three issues in particular should be signalled at this stage:

1. It is not possible from the documentation currently available to establish a clear division between activities in group a) and group b) in the definition of scope above. In particular, it is not possible as things stand to establish clearly what activities are funded solely by BCO, what activities are funded partly by BCO (and to what degree) and what activities are funded by sources other than BCO. Some partners have included in documentation large programmes which have been funded through a wide variety of sources; while others have interpreted the scope more narrowly. This will make it difficult to assess the impact of BCO as a distinct activity, and also make it difficult to get a comprehensive picture of the work of BCO partners overall. (Some partners have suggested that this is not necessary, but the IA team believes it is essential to get a clear picture of this, at least as background, in order to enable effective interpretation of what has been achieved. The IA team will work with partners to clarify the relationship which various activities have to BCO as a programme and to BCO funding.)
2. It is difficult in some cases, from the documentation currently available, to achieve clarity about the "meaning" of BCO as understood within different partner organisations, and the impact outcomes that were sought during implementation. Discussions in The Hague and discussions since with individual partners suggest that there are still significant differences of interpretation regarding both BCO as a whole and the balance of objectives within the IA project. The IA team will explore the availability of further documentation relating to this with partners, and will also explore this question during interviews in sub-component B2.
3. Much of the impact assessment and evaluation work which has been provided in documentation received to date focuses on target beneficiaries, but does not address impact on wider communities. In addition, much of the BCO work included in documentation is still underway, and has not been in progress sufficiently long for impact to have been assessed; some, indeed, is only just beginning to be implemented. These factors will be significant in determining the recommendations which the IA team makes regarding Components 2 and 3. The IA team will raise issues concerning approaches to evaluation and impact

assessment in its report on Component 1 and these should form a substantial part of the discussions to be held in Johannesburg in December.

The following outputs have resulted from work in sub-component B1.

- a. A brochure concerning the BCO IA study was written by the IA team for print production and distribution by the BCO secretariat. This was printed and circulated at the World Congress on Communication and Development in Rome, 24–26 October 2006.
- b. A text map of project and other activities identified in documentation received from partners has been compiled, based on the division of objectives into a) mainstreaming b) voice and c) poverty impact identified by BCO partners. This text map will be used as a tool in the interviews to be conducted in sub-component B2.
- c. Dialogue has been initiated with the ICD Impact Study commissioned by DFID from Gamos. A meeting with Gamos was scheduled for 6 November, but has now been delayed by other Gamos commitments. Contact has also been sought with the ICT and rural poverty impact study commissioned by infoDev from ODI; a response on this is awaited.

An analytical framework for the review has also been completed (see below).

B2 – Review and analysis of materials

The IA team has completed its documentary review of materials received to date from BCO partners.

An analytical framework has been developed on the basis of this documentary review, and will be used as the basis for interviews to be conducted by IA team members with BCO partners. This interview phase will be crucial to the IA team's ability to develop recommendations which fully meet the needs of BCO partners. It is hoped that interviews will be conducted either in person or by telephone with key BCO personnel in each partner agency between 6 and 20 November. Outline questions will be forwarded in advance by email in order to facilitate this process.

The Component 1 report will be completed for electronic delivery to BCO partners on 27 November, one week before the scheduled Johannesburg meeting.

B3 – Support for development of communications strategy

BCO partners asked the IA team to include provision for the development of a communications strategy in the Component 1 phase of the IA study. James Deane of CSCC was included in the consultant team in order to meet this request from BCO.

Discussion of the objectives, target audience and modalities for a communications strategy during meeting in Den Haag was inconclusive, and BCO partners at the meeting decided not to undertake a point-by-point discussion of the aims and nature of the exercise in the form proposed by the communication strategy consultant. Further dialogue is needed between the communication strategy consultant and BCO partners in order to achieve a better understanding of partners' objectives, target audience, *etc.* This will take place during November 2006.

The report prepared by the IA team for the Johannesburg meeting in December will include a section concerning these communication strategy issues. The content of this section will be harmonised with the analysis which the core IA team makes following its review of documentation and interviews.

B4 – Component 1 workshop

The IA team initially proposed that the workshop following Component 1 should be held in late January 2007. At BCO's request, this date was brought forward to early December. The workshop has now been scheduled for Johannesburg on 4 and 5 December.

This meeting will provide the opportunity for discussion between BCO partners and the IA team on the implementation of Component 3, including the outputs that will ultimately result from the IA study as a whole. It will also provide an opportunity for partners to discuss the IA team's recommendations for Component 2, work which is to be undertaken by partners themselves. These are important issues, and full and detailed discussion will be needed to maximise the value of the IA study to the BCO partnership and partners.

The IA team is disappointed that one BCO partner has so far indicated that it will not be attending the Johannesburg meeting. While the IA team believes the loss of one partner from this process is manageable, it also feels that it would be difficult to reach general agreement on the overall approach to Components 2 and 3 if there were to be significant further absences, and that the BCO secretariat will need to consider what action to take should that situation seem likely to arise.

David Souter, Tina James, Kate Wild
31 October 2006

ANNEX A

	Activities														
	1 June 2006	2 Jul 2006	3 Aug 2006	4 Sept 2006	5 Oct 2006	6 Nov 2006	7 Dec 2006	8 Jan 2007	9 Feb 2007	10 Mar 2007	11 Apr 2007	12 May 2007	13 Jun 2007	14 July 2007	15 Aug 2007
A. Preparatory Phase	■ ■	■ ■	■ ■												
A1 London workshop	X														
A2 Inventory of materials		■ ■	■ ■												
A3 Completed work plan			X												
A4 Indicators			■ ■												
A5 The Hague workshop			X												
B. Analysis of existing evaluative materials (Component 1)				■ ■	■ ■	■ ■	■ ■	■ ■	■ ■						
B1 Mapping and other follow-up to Hague meeting				■ ■											
B2 Review of materials				■ ■	■ ■	■ ■									
B3 Support for development of communications strategy				■ ■		■ ■									
B4 Workshop							■ ■								
C. Impact Assessment (Component 3)								■ ■	■ ■	■ ■	■ ■	■ ■	■ ■	■ ■	
C1 Detailed work plan									X						
C2 Consultations									■ ■	■ ■					
C3 Framework development										■ ■ X					
C4 Regional studies									■ ■	■ ■	■ ■ X	■ ■			
C5 Global analysis											■ ■	■ ■			
C6 Development of outputs													■ ■ X		
C7 Workshop														■ ■	■ ■ X
Project Coordination & Liaison	■ ■	■ ■	■ ■	■ ■	■ ■	■ ■	■ ■	■ ■	■ ■	■ ■	■ ■	■ ■	■ ■	■ ■	■ ■