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# Ideas for Other Potential Support Initiatives

As the Design Team gathered information which led to the selection of the final twelve initiatives to develop into tentative planning proposals, many other ideas which are worthy of further consideration were generated. Below is a partial list of more than 50 such ideas.

**Women**

1. Explore opportunities to encourage and support women to undertake independent smallholder production in farm and non-farm areas.

2. Explore emerging market opportunities for women, for instance small-scale dairy operations, processing, and marketing.

3. Increase the number (as a percentage of total) of women extension workers, and set them up for success at the community level.

4. Assess information and education implications for developing local processing options, especially for women.

**Enhancing Access to, Sharing, and Use of Information**

5. Raise smallholder awareness of the power of information.

6. Help smallholder farmers make more informed decisions by enhancing problem solving skills (e.g., simple cause-effect analysis).

7. Conduct a global best-practice scan for information access, evaluation and use at the village level.

**WorldAgInfo**

8.  Introduce principles of the learning organization (i.e., build systems for information and knowledge sharing at village, organizational (NGOs, extension agencies, etc.), and other levels.

9.  Integrate indigenous knowledge systems as a part of the new knowledge system (storytelling traditions, consultative processes, elders, etc.).

10. Explore the elements of a critical mass for village level information systems.

11. Build and facilitate natural knowledge communities to enhance the potential of information sharing by proximate stakeholders.

## Credibility

12. Build and integrate strategies to validate the credibility of information (e.g., by ensuring farmer input and feedback).

13. Assess risks of the spread of misinformation and develop strategies to guard against it or counter it.

14. Build capacity for public, private partnerships to enhance credibility of their information provision.

15. Build reliable channels for up-to-date information about cheaper inputs, new varieties of seeds, processing and marketing opportunities.

16. Share "proof of success" through witnesses and testimonials disseminated through a variety of media.

17. Develop a user report and rating system for suppliers, traders, extension officers and others via cell phone.

## Types of Information

18. Develop a list of information needs at macro and micro levels, e.g. staging the growing and processing of crops, and diversifying crops to eliminate peaks and valleys in the market (e.g., avoid everybody growing tomatoes at the same time).

19. Develop alternative models for environmental education for smallholders.

20. Develop a radio delivered primary school alternative curriculum based on agricultural skill training in the context of basic education.

21. Encourage market and technology driven curriculum enhancement at all levels of education, formal and informal.

22. Investigate opportunities for using e-government services to improve access and efficient use of time for smallholders.

## Contextual Factors Affecting Information Access and Use

23. Assess who may be threatened by improved information access (e.g., traders, government agencies).

24. Identify points of leverage and their potential deployment and use (e.g., timing for infrastructure coming "on line," coordination of existing resources, promoting new technologies, social interventions, or combo-plays involving several of the above simultaneously).

25. Create choice and help farmers understand their choices.  The market can't be relied on when smallholders do not have adequate choice.

## Information Systems

26. Explore options for automated translation to "localize" information materials in local languages.

27. Digitize relevant historical agricultural texts and grey literature (e.g. French records from the 1920's are still valuable). A scan mobile with trained staff may be an option.

28. Use data extraction technology to reduce complexity of scientific knowledge and concepts to the smallholder level of complexity.

29. Develop group SMS and/or voice mail dissemination for real time information.

30. Develop action alert systems via voice mail, SMS and radio for various categories of information (including person-to-person communication tree).

31. Develop potential for cell phone connection to speaker systems to broadcast voice mail information to village audiences.

32. Develop IT "in a box" kits for village distribution, telecenter development, and other standardized IT applications.

33. Create a domestic Internet policy for connecting ISP and cell phone providers to a local data repository that doesn't require access to the international Internet (i.e., local country LAN).

34. Develop a project to explore GIS applications and uses by smallholders.

35. The Mali experience with remote weather information collection may have parallels with remote soil testing and the resultant radio information bulletins.

36. Develop alternatives for remote data collection by relatively untrained, even illiterate data collectors for a variety of uses, using devices such as digital pens, GPS pads, PDA with software and cell phones. This involves technology and training with an end goal of capacity building at the smallholder level.

37. Develop support systems to enhance agricultural listings in Wikipedia.

## ICT Infrastructure

38. Evaluate and promote opportunities for low cost Internet access at the village level.

39. Project 5-year accessibility of Internet services at the village level and its impact on the construction of village knowledge ecosystems.

40. Improve ICT infrastructure development and bandwidth.

41. Develop an ICT source map for South Asia and Africa by country, province and region that would help identify priority needs, underused current resources, and collaborative and cross-platform potential initiatives (e.g., collect data from existing data from cell phone companies). Possibly pilot in one country.

## Intellectual Property

42. Bring useful information out from behind information firewalls through linkages, partnerships and data extraction.

## Sustainable Business Models

43. Develop sustainable business models for village level information centers.

44. Conduct a world-scan analysis of successes and failures of village level telecenters.

45. Fund consulting teams to focus on a variety of specific business and other questions related to smallholders and the information ecosystem supporting them.

46. Deploy consulting teams to help women develop business models for their entrepreneurial efforts.

47. Deploy consulting teams to offices such as the Office du Niger to help develop credit plans.

48. Deploy consulting teams to help develop a business model for village level soil analysis.

49. Developing alternative small business training and development initiatives (refer to the 2 pager)

*An opportunity exists to access low-cost resources (e.g. MBA students) to assist local stakeholders in developing sustainable business models. Teams should include local people to ensure that the projects build and/or strengthen local capacity and to ensure continuity in service to smallholder farmers and other clients.*

## Best Practices and Project Synergies

50. Document spontaneous current cell phone uses that have not been anticipated or systematically supported (potentially a world survey) and propose strategies for expanding and encouraging their systematic use.

51. Identify under-adopted best practices and explore alternatives to encourage their wider adoption.

52. Appoint a taskforce to visit foundation-sponsored projects and explore possible synergistic cross-project efforts.  The taskforce might have a pool of funds to allocate for synergistic ventures.

## Institutional Capacities

53. Build African institutional capacity to carry out local field studies by students.

54. Create the Baobab Institute (African equivalent of the Aspen institute), a think tank for high-level (political) leaders to exchange information and ideas.

55. Develop alternative models for the involvement of local journalists in serving as information channels for smallholders, the modern storytellers of inspiring anecdotes, promising practices, and unmet needs (journalists as "information mediators").