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# Producers to Markets Alliance **Communications & Outreach Plan**

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Visibility, outreach, and promotion are three key concepts driving the Producers to Markets Alliance (PMA) program's updated communications strategy. Between January and March 2020, PMA revamped its communications strategy to more effectively highlight the progress, impact, and results of program activities.

The PMA team conducted a communications diagnostic through participatory workshops and field visits to regional offices in Cauca, Florencia, and Cali. This served as the foundation for developing key messages, identifying target audiences, brainstorming products, and creating a dissemination schedule.

After three years of implementation, PMA has increased commercial competitiveness and sustainability in the agricultural sector to improve the well-being of beneficiaries in target regions. For this reason, this communications strategy aims to position the program as a leader in agricultural development by ensuring program results are **visible, sharing** technical and knowledge management information, and **promoting** the competitiveness of smallholder producers in national and international markets.

This document details how PMA will effectively communicate the successes of producers, progress made through commercial alliances, improvements in infrastructure, and advances in the coffee, cacao, latex, dairy and fruit and vegetable sectors. All communications products and activities will be shared in advance with the USAID communications team for approval.

This document should be considered a living document that will evolve as messages, deliverables, and priorities shift.

## 2. COMMUNICATIONS CONTEXT IN COLOMBIA

The health emergency caused by COVID-19 has resulted in the digitization of a large part of Colombian society and the increase in the consumption of radio and television in the country. According to the Communications Regulation Commission, through May of this year internet consumption among Colombians has increased by 38 percent, with social media and Google being among the main portals accessed by most consumers. At the same time, the survey firm Datexco revealed that radio consumption during quarantine increased by 61 percent. According to its survey, the average consumer listens to radio between one and three hours per day. Regarding television, the survey company Kantar Ibope Media found that Colombians are watching one additional hour of television per day compared to before the pandemic.

One of the main reasons for the increase in the consumption of internet, radio, and television is that the global pandemic and quarantine requirements have transformed Colombia's reality and many people are now working, studying, and spending most of their time at home. The second reason is that people are now looking for information and news related to COVID-19 more regularly.

While these changes are more common in urban areas, the crisis is also impacting rural areas where PMA operates. Although connectivity is generally lower than in the rest of the country, the program found solutions that allow technicians to keep in touch and share information with producers and associations, such as sending text messages and working through lead producers to replicate technical assistance with their neighboring farmers in harder-to-reach areas.

This year, PMA will implement a more robust advocacy strategy with Colombian media to highlight program results, as well as promote the importance of agriculture in general. To achieve this, PMA will establish contacts with primary media outlets. The first linkages have already been made with organizations such as RCN, W Radio, Canal Uno, Caracol Radio, and El Tiempo.

### 3. OBJECTIVE

This work plan is based on PMA’s updated communications strategy for the final two years of program implementation. The strategy was built around program’s three primary interventions: production, marketing, and infrastructure, and their main positive impacts on the cacao, coffee, latex, dairy, and fruit and vegetable value chains in target municipalities. The general objective and the three specific objectives that this communications strategy seeks to achieve are outlined below.

**General Objective:**

Position the Producers to Markets Alliance program as a leader in agricultural development.

**Specific Objectives:**

- **Showcase** the positive impacts of the strategic interventions of the program.
- **Broadly disseminate** practical technical information and lessons learned.
- **Promote** the competitiveness of Colombian agricultural products in national and international markets.

### 4. KEY MESSAGES

PMA will continue to support USAID/Colombia in its key message to promote economic prosperity through licit economies and improve the living conditions of victims of violence and vulnerable populations. To complement USAID’s messaging, PMA defined four key messages and subsequent sub-messages to communicate the program’s strategic interventions (production, marketing, and infrastructure) in all internal and external products.

- **Key Message 1: Competitiveness.** The program strengthens agricultural production, achieving higher volumes, consistent yields, and market-driven quality.
- **Key Message 2: Profitability.** PMA consolidates alliances and trade between producers and buyers, which is mutually beneficial.
- **Key Message 3: Sustainability.** PMA builds technical capacity and develops knowledge management tools tailored to specific territories and crops that allow for continued training and transfer of technologies and technical assistance. This guarantees sustainability of the results and investments in the sector.
- **Key Message 4: Legality, Dignity, and Opportunity.** PMA contributes to the development of a licit and dignified way of life for all producers, with a special focus on members of vulnerable populations.

**Table 1: Key Messages and Sub-messages per Strategic Intervention Area**

Strategic Intervention Area	Key Messages	Sub-messages
<b>Production:</b> Transferring technologies and technical knowledge to increase production and improve quality.	Competitiveness Sustainability Legality, dignity and opportunity	Increased volume, improved quality, environmental protection, reduced costs, social inclusion, employment, licit economies.
<b>Marketing:</b> Strengthening commercial alliances and fostering market-led production.	Profitability Sustainability Legality, dignity and opportunity	Price differentials, higher sales, cash flow, market-led production, employment, social inclusion, improved commercial capacity.
<b>Infrastructure:</b> Connecting producers to markets through investments in road and productive infrastructure.	Profitability Competitiveness Sustainability Legality, dignity and opportunity	Increase in volume, improved quality, time saved, money saved, sustainable use of natural resources, co-investment, mobility, social inclusion.

## 5. AUDIENCES

The communications strategy identifies four target audiences for which specific communications products will be developed. Although these are the priority audiences, it is important to note that other audiences such as the general public, international donor community, producers outside our area of intervention, and others can be reached through these products.

### Target Audience 1: USAID and the US government

USAID and the government of the United States are PMA's most important stakeholders. This audience should always be informed of results, accomplishments, success stories, and any other impactful or positive results achieved by the program. USAID and the US government are key for the program's continuity and financing, and for ongoing support to producers and organizations in PMA regions of intervention.

### Target Audience 2: Decision Makers (national, regional and local)

The decision makers on national, regional, and local levels are essential for the program's promotion of rural economic development and in leveraging funds with the public and private sectors. This audience includes directors of government institutions, mayors, governors, international development organizations, and leaders in the private sector.

### Target Audience 3: Commercial Allies

PMA's commercial allies are also the commercial allies for hundreds of organizations and thousands of producers. Providing this audience with communication products that reflect results, market-driven quality, guaranteed production, traceability, and organized law-abiding associations will contribute to the sustainability of PMA's activities and opportunities for producers.

### Target Audience 4: PMA's Producers Base and their Communities

PMA's producer base is indispensable for the program's success. Communications products for this audience are designed to ensure that the knowledge passed on by the program remains in the region. Leaving these communities with the necessary tools to continue adopting and replicating technologies, and the know-how for future generations will contribute to the continuity of PMA's interventions.

## 6. PRODUCTS

**Communication Strategy Products:** These products are those identified in the current communications strategy and are designed to reach the four audiences above.

- **Testimonial and Technical Videos.** These 2-3 minute videos will focus on showcasing success stories, testimonies, and results. Also, a series of videos will focus on DIY tutorials on how to implement technologies such as pruning, drip irrigation, lime application, and pest and disease control.
- **Infographics.** Present results and data-driven information through imagery and charts with minimal text. This product gives an easy-to-understand overview of topics such as value chains, marketing, social inclusion, and infrastructure.
- **Agricultural Tool Kit.** Contains various products and educational tools that help guide producers in the implementation and replication of PMA techniques and technologies that comprise good agricultural practices.
- **Informative Brochures.** Present the marketing strategies for PMA value chains. The brochures will be a useful tool for USAID and PMA's marketing team when meeting with both public and private sector stakeholders as they will illustrate the methodology of intervention for the commercial aspects of each value chain.

- **Animated Videos.** These 2-3 minute videos will synthesize dense and data-rich information into easy-to-understand visual and interactive formats.
- **Special date commemoration videos.** Short 1-2 minute videos focused on highlighting special dates such as International Coffee Day, International Women’s Day, National Farmer’s Day, etc.

**Contractual Obligations and Recurring Products:** Those products stipulated in the contract between PMA and USAID or are reoccurring deliverables.

- **Bi-Weekly Bullets:** Sent to USAID every two weeks to highlight PMA impacts, results, and events in production, marketing, infrastructure, and social inclusion.
- **Bimonthly Bulletins:** Sent to USAID every two months, these bulletins focus on public/private sector interventions.
- **Technical Bulletins:** Under PMA’s knowledge management component, these bulletins are tools for producers and organizations for the implementation of good agricultural practices and for crop management and protection.
- **Quarterly Reports:** Sent to USAID every three months to present the advances of the program in all major areas and components for the corresponding quarter and the overall progress toward accomplishment of indicators.
- **Fact Sheets:** Updated PMA factsheets are annexed to each quarterly report.
- **Success stories:** Three success stories focused on program components are submitted to USAID each quarter.
- **PMA Infographics:** An updated national infographic detailing advances against our key indicators is annexed to the quarterly report.

## USAID Policies & Procedures

**Branding & Marking.** As part of its communications strategy, PMA will adhere to all branding and marking guidelines as stipulated in ADS Chapter 320, USAID’s Graphics Standard Manual, and the program’s approved branding and marking plan. Please note that marking is not required on items used as part of the administration of the contract, such as stationery products, equipment, offices, or vehicles.

**Submission of Development Experience Documentation.** Per the contract, PMA will submit one electronic and/or one hard copy of development experience documentation, in accordance with applicable regulations, to the Development Experience Clearinghouse (DEC).

## 7. DELIVERY METHODS

To ensure the above-mentioned products reach the prioritized audiences, PMA has identified the most effective means of delivery. Taking into account the current reality, digital media will be the most used while there are still mobility restrictions. The main means of dissemination will be:

- **E-mail.** Through email, the main impacts and results of the program told through bulletins, success stories, special reports, among others, will be sent to different audiences, particularly USAID.
- **Social Media.** PMA will have a constant presence on USAID's Facebook and Twitter accounts through the delivery of key messages about the daily activities and impacts of the program and videos produced for special date commemorations.
- **WhatsApp.** Through this platform, technical information, videos, and photos demonstrating the program’s daily activities will be shared with associations, producers, and other audiences.
- **Print Media.** Through interviews and specialized articles, PMA will publicize the reality and benefits of Colombian agriculture with a specific focus on the program’s priority value chains.

- **Radio Broadcasts.** PMA will continue the broadcast of the program *Tierra de Sueños* through RCN radio. Through this program, rural producers receive technical information on crops, harvesting and postharvest processes, among other topics.
- **Photography.** PMA will continue to prioritize the collection and dissemination of high-quality images to tell our story. We will use photography in fact sheets, success stories, newsletters, and for special products such as photo essays or event banners. Photo credit will be given to Fintrac Inc. in all cases.
- **Event Planning.** Public events involving the participation of US and/or Colombian government officials are a common occurrence. In these cases, PMA will coordinate with the COR to determine what type of communication materials and representation are required. PMA will prepare event descriptions, scene-setters, and talking points for USAID personnel as needed. For all public events, PMA will coordinate with USAID on relevant security and political sensitivities.
- **Special Reports and Memoranda.** PMA will prepare special reports in the event of extraordinary, time-sensitive events that need to be brought to the COR's attention sooner than the next quarterly update. Special reports may be requested by the COR or may be produced by the PMA team exercising discretion and judgment.

## 8. TEAM

The communications team consists of a communications manager, communications coordinator, regionally-based communications specialists, and communications firms available for on-demand services. The roles and qualifications of each include:

**Communications Manager:** Responsible for overall strategic messaging of the program and developing communication pieces and reports directed to USAID and other USG audiences. Broad experience in the development of technical and communications documents in English that evidence the program's progress and challenges. Broad knowledge of regional context and experience in directly working with local communities and media.

**Communications Coordinator:** Responsible for coordinating with communications service providers on the development and delivery of strategic communications products. Regularly liaises with regional communications specialists on the development of key successes in each region. Responsible for the development and promotion of communications tools directed to producers and national audience; experience in building content for media, as well as in communication processes for development.

**Regional Communications Specialists:** Responsible for identifying and developing success stories in each region for inclusion in biweekly bullets, bimonthly bulletins, quarterly reports, and regular internal and external communications products. These specialists will also maintain a database of photos by region, and provide communications support to implementing partners in reporting and branding and marking.

**Communication Firms (Subcontractor):** Responsible for providing on-demand support for audiovisual products including photos, videos, and infographics, as well as written materials in English and Spanish such as success stories and technical bulletins. Upon contracting, the communications firms will also assist the program in implementing its external communications strategy through the end of the program.

**Table 2: Year 4 Work Plan**

FY 2021 Work Plan	Q1			Q2			Q3			Q4			Total
	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	
Quarterly & Annual Reports	1			1			1			1			4
Biweekly bullets (every other Friday)	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	24
Bimonthly newsletter (first Monday every two months)	1		1		1		1		1		1		6
Success stories (at least 3 submitted with quarterly report)	3			3			3			3			12
Fact sheet (updated quarterly)	1			1			1			1			4
Knowledge Management Platform (technical bulletins)			8			8			8			8	32
Indicator Infographics (results to date by region)	1			1			1			1			4
Radio Broadcasts (5 days a week)	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20			200
Testimonial and technical videos			3			2			3				8
PMA Results Infographics			3			3			3				9
Agricultural Tool Kit										1			1
Informative Brochures			3				3				3		9
Animated Videos			1					1				1	3
Special Date Commemoration Videos	1		1		1			1		1		1	6

**Table 2: Communications Matrix**

Product	Description	Frequency	Method of Delivery	Audience
Fact sheet	Provides overview of project and key results	Updated quarterly with latest numbers	Electronic (USAID disseminates)	USAID/Colombia
Success stories	Profile of one farmer, family, or community	Minimum one per quarter	Electronic PDF	USAID, gov't orgs, partners, media
Quarterly reports	Detailed account of program activities and results	Quarterly	Electronic PDF	USAID/Colombia
Newsletter	Brief highlights per component from previous two months	Bi-monthly	Electronic PDF	USAID/Colombia
Infographics	Data visualization of program results and impact	As developed	Online	USAID, other implementers
Photo essay	Visual storytelling through high-quality images and little text	One per year	Online, distribute electronically and promote on various websites (Fintrac and USAID)	All
Event posters and pamphlets	Promoting and marking special events (workshops, tours, etc.)	Ongoing, as needed	Print, on-site	Local counterparts, partners
Radio broadcasts	Daily radio segment to disseminate technical messages	Daily	Radio	Producers