



Information and Communication Mapping report | November 2013



Information and Communication Mapping Report

RMSA Technical Cooperation Agency

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Note on Documentary Series

A series of documents has been produced by RMSA Technical Cooperation Agency for the government of India's programme to make good quality secondary education available, accessible and affordable to all young persons in the age group of 14-18 years.

RMSA-TCA reports are accessible from the RMSA-TCA website <http://www.rmsatca.org>

The documentary series is arranged as follows:

RMSATCA 0	Programme Management Reports and Documents
RMSATCA 1	Assessing Learning Achievement (Reports and Documents for Thematic Area 1)
RMSATCA 2	Teacher Management (Reports and Documents for Thematic Area 2)
RMSATCA 3	School Performance Management (Reports and Documents for Thematic Area 3)
RMSATCA 4	Data Management and Use (Reports and Documents for Thematic Area 4)
RMSATCA 5	Results Focussed Planning (Reports and Documents for Thematic Area 5)
RMSATCA 6	Communications and Knowledge Management (Reports and Documents for Thematic Area 5)

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

AWP&B	Annual Work Plan & Budget
CBSE	Central Board of Secondary Education
CCE	Continuous Comprehensive Evaluations
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
CSS	Centrally Sponsored Scheme
CTE	College of Teacher Education
DFID	Department for International Development
DIET	District Institute of Education and Training
DISE	District Information System for Education
DMU	Data Management and Use
DPP	District Perspective Plan
EMIS	Evaluation and Monitoring Information System
IRT	Item Response Theory
KM	Knowledge Management
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MHRD	Ministry of Human Resource Development
NAS	National Achievement Survey
NCERT	National Council of Educational Research and Training
NCF	National Curriculum Framework
NIOS	National Institute of Open Schooling
NUEPA	National University of Education Planning and Administration
PEST	Political, Economic, Social and Technological analysis
PSC	Programme Steering Committee Quality
QMT	Monitoring Tool
RCT	Randomised Control Trial
RIE	Regional Institute of Education
RMSA	Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan
SC	Scheduled Caste
SCERT	State Council of Educational Research and Training
SDP	School Development Plan
SEMIS	Secondary Education Management Information System
SPP	State Perspective Plan
SSA	Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan
ST	Scheduled Tribe
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats analysis
TCA	Technical Cooperation Agency
TCF	Technical Cooperation Fund
ToR	Terms of Reference
TSG	Technical Support Group
U-DISE	Unified District Information of School Education
VfM	Value for Money

Summary of Findings

Distribution and dissemination channels and systems

- Channels for effective dissemination of RMSA-related information across States are not available.
- Many State Project Directors believe that their methods of informing and receiving feedback from officials could improve significantly
- Websites at national and State levels are poorly designed and do not make the most of the interactive and dynamic nature of the technology. The potential of new technology as a means to provide regular information and facilitate dialogue is significantly under-utilised.
- The media, including traditional news media as well as social media, is hardly used as a means of communicating RMSA to either the wider public or sector stakeholders

Audiences, information targets and relationships

- At central levels, there is an absence of coordination of information, messages and the delivery of communication tasks
- RIEs and State Project Directors indicate that more support for information and communication at State and district levels would be welcomed
- State Project Offices, in particular, indicate that they need to form improved relationship with a wide range of institutions including State education departments, SCERTs RIEs, DIETs as well as with the districts they serve
- There are no requirements or incentives in place for RMSA stakeholders to proactively share information on best practices or success
- There is potential for development of communication skills at the central and state level and support to their role in coordinating and delivering communication and information

Messages, content and information quality

- The central messages of RMSA, its objectives, main interventions, milestones and activities require significant communication support
- Much of the information produced to communicate RMSA is of a very technical nature and that clear, accessible information is lacking
- The content and messages of communication should be refocused in certain instances to explain how processes can be used and applied, rather than merely explaining the processes themselves
- Under U-DISE, there is a well-developed system of school-level data capture, though data itself is not effectively used as a means of diagnosis and decision making at all levels of the education sector

Materials, products and vehicles carrying content

- Communication products and materials are not always packaged well for the intended audience and that there is a lack of communication expertise and professionalism when producing them
- Whilst NAS reports are highly detailed and expert in their creation, they are difficult to interpret and do not display information in accessible formats relevant for the intended audiences
- There are significant opportunities to present U-DISE and other data in more accessible and appropriate formats.

1. Introduction

The Technical Cooperation Agency (TCA), funded by the British Government's Department for International Development (DFID), aims to support the systems for accelerated planning and implementation of a Government of India programme for secondary education called Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA). TCA supports the process through providing technical assistance in developing, piloting and advocating models of exemplar practices, in collaboration with national institutions, in five key areas:

- Assessing learning achievement
- School performance management
- Teacher management
- Making better use of data
- Evidence based planning

The communication, knowledge management and advocacy strategy is designed to support the Project's impact and outcome in two principal ways:

- Enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of RMSA-TCA as a whole in managing and disseminating information
- Supporting the delivery of RMSA focused on the five TCA outputs with specific communication and capacity building support to national institutions

Having developed approaches, strategies and baselines through the Inception Phase, RMSA-TCA seeks to enhance the impact of the cross-cutting activity of communication and knowledge management by conducting an Information and Communication Mapping exercise across central institutions supporting RMSA implementation and state RMSA delivery partners. The purpose of the Information and Communication Mapping exercise was to collect and analyse data and information in order to ensure that communication activities are prioritised and focused on supporting the project outcome and RMSA at large.

2. Approach and methodology

The principal stages in the mapping exercise were as follows:

2.1 Principal steps

TABLE 1: PRINCIPAL STEPS IN THE MAPPING EXERCISE

INFORMATION, COMMUNICATION MAPPING EXERCISE		
Basic steps	Key activities	Outputs
1. Become acquainted with key issues, policies and activities	Reviewed RMSA documentation, objectives and problems being addressed	Relevant findings, notes
2. Identify and engage key stakeholders	Identified and explored stakeholder perceptions, information needs, policy priorities through interviews and questionnaire	Relevant findings, stakeholder analysis, initial report
3. Assess communication networks, content, materials and capacities	Identified and analysed information provision, communication systems, channels of communication, formal and non-formal decision making structures through interviews and questionnaire	Relevant findings, systems analysis
4. Probe problems, causes, risks and opportunities	Explored causes of problems, barriers to change (technological, social, political, economic) through in-house assessment	Relevant findings, PEST and SWOT. Identification of focal areas for action
5. Assess and rank options and solutions	Analysed and discussed solutions and approaches to achieve change through in-house discussion group	Relevant findings, options paper

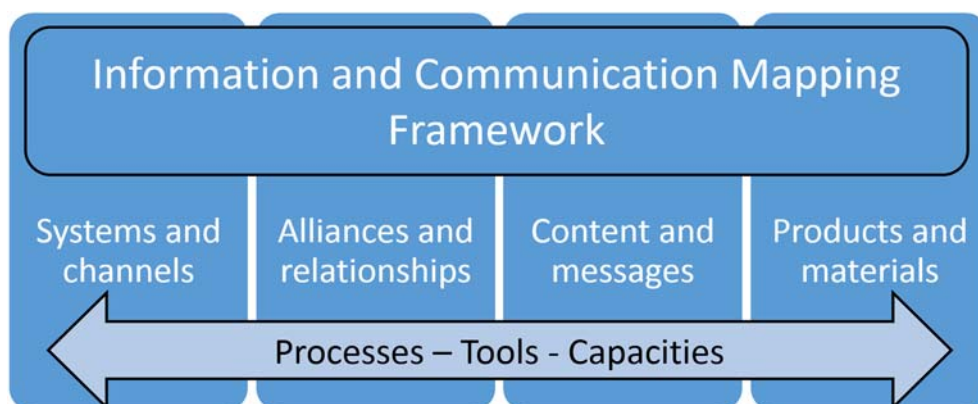
This exercise involved a mix of one-to-one interviews with senior and key officials from the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), National University of Educational Planning and Administration (NUEPA,) and the State bodies such as RMSA - State Project Office (SPO), who are responsible for formulating policy, plans and implementing strategies for RMSA.

Using the programme log frame information and communication needs were assessed and ranked using the following four communication-based assessment criteria:

1. Distribution and dissemination channels and systems
2. Audiences, information targets and relationships
3. Messages, content and information quality
4. Materials, products and vehicles carrying content

The table below shows the mapping framework used for this exercise:

TABLE 2: INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION MAPPING FRAMEWORK



Using these criteria the Information and Communication Mapping exercise established the extent to which each of selected organisations fulfilled their role and obligations to engage, inform and motivate stakeholders and audiences towards reform and improved delivery of RMSA.

An intensive Mapping Exercise requires the ranking of priorities, therefore, an important output of the Mapping Exercise was to develop an analysis of the role of principal actors, and rank information and communication priorities in order to develop the basis for detailed implementation of information, knowledge management and communication activities.

In addition, there was a focus on key interventions points for RMSA-TCA with regard to information and communication. These intervention points illustrate where the programme can add value to – and support – the secondary education sector in maximising the impact of already-planned initiatives. The National Achievement Survey is one such intervention point and the Mapping Exercise draws out strategies to ensure that resources for communication are targeted towards priorities that add to the programme’s impact and increase the capacity and effectiveness of the sector. A further communication-based assessment of the programme’s planned activities is recommended.

The Information and Communication Mapping Exercise was undertaken through of a semi-structured interviews in order to allow for the emergence of stakeholder priority issues and concerns and a structured questionnaire. A research template was used to ensure consistency of approach and to enable the ranking of priorities.

The research template below shows the following question areas as a basis for the interviews and questionnaire.

TABLE 3: INTERVIEW RESEARCH AREAS

Mapping Exercise – Interview research areas	
1.	Role and function <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore the principal functions of the organisation, the challenges and opportunities in delivering activities to fulfil the role with respect to support/delivery of RMSA and areas relevant to the project. Ensure organisational priorities are discussed
2.	Stakeholder relationships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore the principal alliances, networks and communication targets of the organisation, developing a list alongside role and functions (e.g. Annual Work Plan and Budget (AWP&B) review Explore the potential for these relationships to be improved, stakeholders not present in discussion, and the information and communication implications of this assessment
3.	Channels, systems and networks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore the mechanism used to disseminate and communicate (two-way), their frequency, effectiveness as well as the responsibilities within the organisation for maintaining them Assess the potential for channels to be improved, including increasing engagement and participation of stakeholders and/or beneficiaries
4.	Messages and content <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss the principal information priorities of the organisation (i.e. what information needs to be transmitted), and explore the content of information, its appropriateness for stakeholders, information gaps or content challenges, and data use Explore how information is produced and agreed, how feedback is used and responsibilities for the production of content
5.	Materials and products <ul style="list-style-type: none"> List and discuss the range of products used or produced to convey information, and assess their effectiveness (NB: request examples where possible) Explore and discuss options and potential to enhance or develop materials, ensuring capacities to do this are clear
6.	Priorities and intervention points <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore principal organisational priorities over the coming period and explore how and where improved communication can assist these in achieving impact Discuss capacity and support needs (NB: Balancing these against RMSA-TCA capacities and priorities)

3. Findings

3.1 Key challenges & Gaps

There are currently significant challenges and gaps in the current management and provision of information and communication to support RMSA. These challenges and gaps can be summarised in the box below.

- An absence of the planning and coordination of information and communication to key RMSA stakeholders at national and state levels
- Weak dissemination channels and methods to provide useful and timely information across states and to RMSA stakeholders
- A lack of managed feedback mechanisms to capture and share perspectives and instances of good practice from school through to district and state levels
- Poor use of new technologies as platforms for communication, which should be prioritised given India's size and diversity
- Limited engagement with the media as a means to promote reforms and manage misperceptions
- Poor presentation of data, in formats that are easily accessible and that encourage a diagnostic approach
- A failure to package information appropriately for different audiences and, in particular, to ensure that information is presented in ways that clarify, engage and maintain project momentum
- Few central resources or materials that adequately communicate RMSA, its aims and objectives, interventions and progress.

3.2 Systems and channels

3.2.1 Current status

Information sharing and coordination

Respondents interviewed for this Mapping Exercise noted that channels are not available for effective dissemination of RMSA-related information across States. This absence of channels is apparent in particular at the national level, via MHRD and the apex institutions given their central coordinating role.

Given the importance of finding and sharing exemplar practices under RMSA-TCA, a specific weakness is of the channels through which RMSA stakeholders can submit their own examples of best practice and find out about how other States are addressing common issues. There are no requirements or incentives in place for RMSA stakeholders to proactively share information of this nature.

Workshops/meetings

States, specifically RMSA State Project Directors, use a variety of dissemination methods to inform and receive feedback from officials and functionaries. These include traditional methods, including workshops and meetings, post and telephone. The average frequency of formal meetings with District Planning Teams/District Planning Committees is twice a year. Many State Project Directors believe that their methods of informing and receiving feedback from officials could improve significantly.

The importance of developing and convening spaces for reflection, debate and decision-making is recognised within RMSA. As communication channels, meetings and workshops take place at all

levels. However, the use of these meetings and workshops and their focus suggest that more could be done to provide a robust framework to guide an overall approach to RMSA-related meetings.

Internet technologies

There is internet coverage and access in the significant majority of States and, though there are some issues with coverage speeds, RMSA programme offices across the country have the facility to use new technology. Depending on the location, at a district level, access to the internet is less secure, either due to a lack of hardware or coverage.

Both the MHRD and the RMSA Project Cell have pages on their websites that provide an overview of RMSA. However, it is clear that the potential of new technology as a means to provide regular information and facilitate dialogue is significantly under-utilised. RMSA-TCA is currently developing its website as an information and discussion resource to support RMSA.

It is worth noting that the Government, in collaboration with NCERT and CIET, has recently launched the National Repository of Open Educational Resources (NROER). This is a web-based facility that provides open and user-generated content to support teaching across India. This development shows the potential of the web as a means for interaction and information.

A number of States have RMSA-specific websites which vary in quality. In a number of instances these websites serve a dual function, also focusing on SSA. The States with RMSA websites include: Andhra Pradesh; Assam; Bihar; Himachal Pradesh; Kerala; Maharashtra and Punjab. As with national level systems, the extent to which these websites are used as key dissemination channels is open to question. Rather, they tend to be static pages that describe the programme, occasionally being updated with news.

UDISE data collection system

Data collection, under U-DISE, uses a well-developed system of school level data capture under the local responsibility of cluster resource persons. Data across 15 principal school performance indicators is collected and aggregated at cluster, block, district and finally at State level. In the final quarter of each calendar year, the U-DISE system cascades and collates a vast quantity of school level data. NUEPA completes the analysis of U-DISE data and prepares report for the States. As an information channel, this is a sophisticated and well-resourced mechanism.

Media

The media, including traditional news media as well as social media, is hardly used as a means of communicating RMSA to either the wider public or sector stakeholders. It was noted during certain interviews that there may be some caution on the part of certain partner institutions in engaging the media, due largely to a lack of skills and capacity. Both new and traditional media use communication platforms that represent opportunities for RMSA to manage perceptions, engage existing stakeholders effectively and promote the aims and energy driving RMSA.

3.2.2 Recommendations

Internet technologies

A significant area of opportunity in the development of systems and channels for dissemination and feedback is to use web-based platforms more effectively to interact with key stakeholders. The development of the RMSA-TCA website should be considered with this aim in mind. The website could act as a core resource that links several platforms and mechanisms. Twitter and Facebook could be used to disseminate content and facilitate discussion among the RMSA community. A key area of support that TCA may consider is in encouraging the development of institutions' websites as more dynamic channels of communication.

Email usage

Using new technologies is likely to be critical to the effective communication of RMSA, given the disparate and diverse nature of the States. Central to this approach should be the coordinated and regular use of email. A first step should be to develop a “master list” of email contacts, as well as mobile telephone numbers, comprising all key national and state RMSA stakeholders.

Email channels should then be used for the planned dissemination of information of RMSA information and updates, using clear and branded RMSA alerts and updates. Over time, this use of email should be enhanced to develop into a feedback mechanism and discussion mechanism. Linking to other content produced for RMSA, including social media, multi-media and PDF documents, the email network should become a trusted and core system for the communication of RMSA.

New media

A further dissemination channel that is currently under-exploited is that of the traditional news media. Clearly, audiences for traditional media span beyond the RMSA community. However, TCA support should focus on how the media can be engaged as partners in the promotion of RMSA activities, vision and best practice. TCA support to institutions in this area is likely to involve developing media plans for specific initiatives.

3.2.3 Action Points

RMSA TCA website

Develop the RMSA-TCA web site as a dynamic and interactive platform for the dissemination of information relating to RMSA. The website should be a platform that links a range of dissemination mechanisms including an e-newsletter, social media and multi-media content hosted on sites such as YouTube. In this way, RMSA information will reach audiences in a variety of ways appropriate to the user and, by linking to other platforms, will alert users to new content as it appears and ensure they are “part of a conversation”.

Where possible, work with apex institutions and States to encourage the development of their websites as dynamic dissemination channels, using innovations piloted in the development of the RMSA-TCA website.

As the website is being developed, set up and maintain social media platforms to communicate RMSA.

Contact database

Build a central database of email contacts for all RMSA stakeholders and ensure this is held, updated and used centrally a principal mechanism for dissemination. Over time, this central database can be segmented and used to target specific information to certain groups of stakeholders.

Develop an e-mail-driven dissemination approach. This should create and provide regular e-mail bulletins and updates to the central database of contacts. The dissemination of key information should be planned and managed to coordinate with key RMSA initiatives and activities.

Advocate and develop proactive approaches to the use of traditional media as a dissemination method. This will involve supporting apex institutions through the production of briefings, news releases and other information for the media and, where appropriate, developing media plans for some of the most important issues that clearly have a public interest.

3.3 Alliances and relationships

3.3.1 Current status

National

MHRD is the central government ministry charged with the coordination of RMSA with the help of RMSA State Implementation Societies (SIS) in each state. There are a range of support arrangements and institutions available for better implementation of RMSA. A National Resource Group (NRG) provides guidance for bringing about reforms in teaching learning processes, curriculum, teaching learning material, ICT education and mechanisms of monitoring and evaluation. The Government meets with State Education Secretaries every six months to discuss policy directions.

The Technical Support Group (TSG) is a constituent of the NRG. TSG is supported by MHRD and has a direct reporting relationship with the ministry. Equipped with a staff of 27 consultants TSG provides technical and operational support and expertise to national and state level teams. There is potential for development of communication skills for TSG and support to their role in coordinating and delivering communication and information.

Various subcommittees have been constituted under NRG. These sub-committees comprise of members from the TSG and meet thrice a year to apprise themselves of the progress made on mutually set goals and commitments. In addition, NCERT and NUEPA support RMSA through dedicated RMSA units.

RMSA-TCA has also been set up for capacity building support to RMSA with DFID support. RMSA-TCA provides its support strategically to apex institutions. A key finding of this mapping exercise was the absence of coordination of information, messages and the delivery of communication tasks. This is an area where, potentially, RMSA-TCA could play an important role.

State

The table below indicates support at state, district and school levels. Regional Institutes of Education cover groups of States across 5 zones. There is clearly an implication for communication in developing the role of institutions at regional and state level as coordinators of information from national level. In the two states visited for this mapping exercise, the RIEs and State Project Directors indicated that more support for information and communication at State and district levels would be welcomed. It was noted that RMSA offices need to work more effectively with other agencies. Motivation of and communication with teachers was identified as a particular challenge. State Project Offices, in particular, indicate that they need to form improved relationship with a wide range of institutions including RIEs and SCERT, DIETS as well as with the districts they serve. It has been observed that some State Project Directors need to further develop their State Core Planning Teams and District Core Planning Teams. Ensuring a planned approach to communicating with them throughout the year has been suggested as one way to tackle this issue.

District & School

While the support to scheme is well endowed at the national level, the district and school levels have only limited support from national or state agencies. The role of the School Management and Development Committee is clearly critical in delivering improved school management. It was noted at State level that, in reality, few school development plans are in place. Observations from respondents suggest that the function of School Management and Development Committees requires communication support and promotion.

3.3.2 Recommendations

Bringing Communication to the central agenda

From a communications perspective, most RMSA management and delivery functions lack coordination. It is important that central management functions of RMSA, both within and across institutions, prioritise the importance of communications that are planned and professionally executed. A starting point for improving coordination, and therefore the alliances and relationships across RMSA, is to convene a central group which will have responsibility for determining editorial and communication content to be produced, as well as managing the delivery of principal communication activities. In this way, relationships with specific stakeholder groups will be enhanced through focused activity.

In addition, high-level decision making groups, including the RMSA Executive Committee, should consider placing communications as a standing item on their agenda. Under this standing item, members should discuss the priorities and requirements to provide information and communication on key policies and decisions. This, in turn, would provide strategic guidance to a centrally convened editorial and communication group.

Improving coordination, over time, should also be encouraged at State level. If the central level is providing a range of regular, planned, professional communications, it should be the aim of RMSA central partners to encourage States to “mirror” this approach. This may take the form of simply ensuring the regular communication to State and district level functions of centrally-produced information.

Capacity Building at national and state level

To meet the need for quality, planned, professional communications to support RMSA, it is likely that some skills development will be required, initially at a national level. Tackling communication skills through workshops, coaching and training would support central level institutions in a range of disciplines which, taken together, would enhance the alliances and relationships between different functions of RMSA. A skills assessment would be a useful starting point in planning this work, though initial findings suggest that skills development may be required in the following areas: Presentations and Powerpoint; Creating Effective Publications; Media Relations; Communication Strategy and Planning.

Skills development needs can also be addressed by TCA producing and disseminating short guides via its website and other means which are specifically related to the five output areas of RMSA-TCA. In this way, supporting improved communication of teacher performance management, for example, will ensure the cross-cutting importance of knowledge management and communication to the programme as a whole.

Actor based approach

Overall, communications under RMSA should adopt an actor-based approach. This means ensuring that the principal actors in the delivery of RMSA initiatives and reforms are specifically addressed through information and communications. This approach requires assessing the communication needs of those actors, and ensuring that information is timely and appropriate for them.

3.3.3 Action Points

RMSA editorial and communication group

Convene a RMSA Editorial and Communication Group from across apex institutions and key partners. The TOR for this group should be developed to give it delegated authority to plan and

advise on the communication of RMSA-related activities and products, especially and including the regular RMSA e-newsletter. This Group will also serve to share programme information and initiatives, contributing to a RMSA Communication Diary, in order that forthcoming issues can be discussed in terms of the communication activities needed to support them.

State communication plan

Working directly with States, there should be an aim over time for each to develop a more coordinated approach to communication, initially creating a short document setting out its priorities and main activities. TCA support to the States should involve selecting States that wish to progress in this area and assisting them in creating an outline RMSA Communication Plan in the first instance.

Capacity assessment

TCA should identify communication skills requirements, possibly using a capacity assessment tool, and provide support to apex institutions and others to assist in the way in which they use communication to interact and build relationships with key stakeholders.

Knowledge Attitudes and Practices surveys

Review and planning of communication should seek to assess and measure the extent to which alliance and relationships have been strengthened in the support and delivery of RMSA. TCA should build into its programme evaluation and planning targeted Knowledge Attitudes and Practices surveys that test the awareness of RMSA-related issues to ensure communication techniques are effective.

3.4 Content and messages

3.4.1 Current status

Awareness about RMSA

During several interactions for this mapping exercise, it was noted that communication, and therefore the understanding, of RMSA was ineffective. Many respondents suggested the central messages of RMSA, its objectives, main interventions, milestones and activities require significant communication support. RMSA is ambitious and visionary and the potential for communication content to energise and inspire stakeholders is not being realised under current arrangements.

Content management & use

There is a vast range of content that is required or produced at central and State levels under RMSA. Guidelines on recruitment, progress reports, and minutes of meetings, annual plans, RMSA policies and instructions are amongst the principal types of content developed under RMSA.

It was often noted that much of the information produced to communicate RMSA is of a very technical nature and that clear, accessible information is lacking. In many instances, whilst technical information is necessary for certain stakeholders, communication about the role and purpose of RMSA-related interventions and initiatives had been overlooked.

This specific point was discussed in relation to NAS. Whilst communicating the data of NAS presents a challenge in itself, a broader issue was to support stakeholders in understanding the value of assessing learning achievement, the purpose of the NAS, how it relates to other assessment surveys, and how it can be used in decision making.

There are other instances where the content and messages of communication should be refocused to explain how processes can be used and applied, rather than merely explaining the processes

themselves. For example, the value and role of data in planning and decision-making is another issue that respondents feel needs greater communication support.

The point made in the previous paragraph is of particular importance when it comes to the communication of exemplar practices and best practices currently being used in the field. The communication of exemplar practices is a specific focus of TCA, and RMSA overall, and there is a need both to identify and capture these best practices as well as to communicate them in which support their adoption and adaption across the States. This indicates the need both for mechanisms to capture best practices and for the creative and innovative communication of exemplar practices created and piloted under TCA.

In addition to the messages and content that are used, the effective management of content requires coordination and accessible platforms in order that it can be used by stakeholders. The central resourcing and management of this content is largely absent, due both to the separate activities and approaches that different institutions have with stakeholders and the lack of shared, central platforms. The development of the RMSA-TCA website may provide an opportunity to coordinate much of this content, ensuring that is centrally available and codified, therefore making it easier to access.

3.4.2 Recommendations

Messaging framework

Taking the RMSA-TCA log frame and project documentation, the mapping exercise plotted the content and messaging issues under the main goal and under each output. The table below provides a high level guide to the principal focus of content when communication activities are being planned and created.

TABLE 4: RMSA TCA MESSAGING FRAMEWORK

RMSA-TCA Messaging Framework	
Goal	A focus on improvement and the adoption and adaption of exemplar practices speeds progress towards RMSA goals
Output One	Learning assessment and National Achievement Surveys used as a diagnostic tool improve education outcomes. Role, purpose and how to use NAS data.
Output Two	Effective teacher recruitment, redeployment and motivation is critical to education outcomes. Best practices and guidance.
Output Three	Schools do well where best practice performance management is in place. Best practices and guidance.
Output Four	The analysis and use of data is essential to effective decision making. Best practice and guidance.
Output Five	Effective planning processes at all levels ensure resources and capacities are focused on improvement. Best practice and guidance.

The management of content is, to a large extent, a function of Knowledge Management approaches. There are two principal suggestions under this section that will help to develop the content and messages under RMSA and therefore improve communication.

Phased approach to RMSA content management

The first proposal is to look at RMSA content and messaging requirements “in the round” and, over the course of a given period (such as an academic year), plan to prioritise communication of key aspects of RMSA in phases of three months. In this way, principal outputs such as websites and newsletters can highlight particular issues and, in so doing, build greater awareness of RMSA-specific issues. This phased approach to communication of RMSA, taking themes each quarter, is a useful way to ensure that communication adds up to “more than the sum of its parts.”

In this way, a three-month focus on teacher management for example, will use a range of methods to communicate important information on best practice and the policies guiding recruitment, redeployment and motivation. Under this approach, States will be encouraged to use centrally-produced content as a basis for discussion, reflection and decision making.

The second proposal is to develop a Knowledge Management approach that classifies and clearly identifies different types of information according to its importance and use. Content under different outputs would be colour-coded, organised under content categories (such as Policy or Research), and placed on the central RMSA-TCA website and other websites in output, category and date order.

In this way, the vast range of information and data available would become more accessible and stakeholders would be able to easily access it as well as understanding clearly its purpose and usefulness for them. Central institutions, and TCA, would proactively promote the availability of new information using enhanced dissemination channels and the improved products and materials, such as an RMSA newsletter.

RMSA best practice award

Taking the capture and promotion of best and exemplar practices, it is important to develop ways to incentivise the capture and creation of these. One way this can be done effectively is to develop RMSA Best Practice Awards. The Best Practice Awards would seek nominations under defined award categories, driven by the outputs of RMSA, and encourage States to provide entries that demonstrate where challenges are being successfully addressed using best practice approaches. The criteria for selection would be carefully developed to ensure, for example, that entries are replicable and that they directly contribute to student learning outcomes. Entries and winners would be widely promoted using the range of communication materials and platforms developed under RMSA.

3.4.4 Action Points

Review messaging framework

TCA should discuss, review and consider the proposed messaging framework when developing work streams under each of the Output areas of the project. Working with the TCA team and technical experts, each Output area should have clear content and messaging to support activities and initiatives.

Develop quarterly themes

TCA support to Information and Communication should developed communication “themes” that will be delivered on a quarterly basis. These themed quarters will align primary communication channels and products to deliver core messages on the theme in question and, in so doing, provide a focus and a platform for enhanced reach and communication effectiveness.

Knowledge management software

TCA should discuss and procure knowledge management software that has the following functions: accessible through any computer with a web browser; categories can be password protected; restricted revisions are created and saved automatically when an item is updated; popular search terms make it easy to find content; accurate searching and indexing of content and attachments; items are linked to a web content management system to upload automatically to public platforms.

Best practice award

TCA should explore and develop RMSA Best Practice Awards as a means of generating and incentivising content development to promote RMSA. Initially, this should involve a concept paper and discussions with the intention of launching the Awards in 2014, and selecting winners towards the end of 2014.

3.5 Products and materials

3.5.1 Current status

Overall, this mapping exercise found that communication products and materials are not always packaged well for the intended audience and that there is a lack of communication expertise and professionalism when producing them. There is a need for a set of core, principal RMSA communication products that meet quality standards, present a coherent set of messages and adhere to a common identity beyond the use of the RMSA logo.

The mapping exercise found that there is an over-reliance on printed documents and that multi-media and new technologies are not exploited effectively when creating communication materials and products. The length and technical nature of some documents and reports is in itself a barrier to communication. The mapping exercise found that there are opportunities for creativity and innovation in the development and production of effective communication tools.

National Achievement Survey report

The National Achievement Survey is a significant exercise designed to provide a snapshot of learning achievement of pupils across India in core subjects. The NAS also produces State level reports to assist States in targeting issues and challenges identified through NAS. It was widely observed that, whilst these reports are highly detailed and expert in their creation, they are difficult to interpret and do not display information in accessible formats relevant for the intended audiences.

U-DISE data

U-DISE generates relevant reports based on the data collected at school level. These include school specific data provided to the head teacher, collated and aggregated district data as well as State level report cards. However, the data is presented in a format that is difficult to interpret and use, and the capacity and involvement of staff in working with this data to improve decision making is weak. The mapping exercise found that there are significant opportunities to present U-DISE and other data in more accessible and appropriate formats. The Data Management and Use Needs Assessment report proposes that a communication strategy is developed to help communicate the development of U-DISE to key stakeholders.

RMSA updates

A further issues identified during this exercise was the absence of regular RMSA updates and activities. It was observed that TSG had attempted to produce an RMSA newsletter, intended as a quarterly publication. A consultant within TSG had begun to develop content, and it was identified as an issues that would require support from TCA.

Websites

The general finding of this Mapping Exercise is that websites at national and State levels are poorly designed and do not make the most of the interactive and dynamic nature of the technology. The RMSA-TCA website has been referred to elsewhere as an important dissemination tool. The mapping exercise has found that as a product this and other websites have the potential to display innovation and best practice under, encourage and facilitate discussion and debate and be a dynamic resource of information for RMSA.

Exemplar practices

An important content requirement of RMSA, and TCA's support to the programme, is in developing and sharing best and exemplar practices so they can be adapted and adopted at State level. The products and materials that communicate these exemplar practices are therefore important and, to date, no formats for the products and materials that will be produced under this work stream have been developed.

3.5.2 Recommendations

RMSA information suite

As a starting point, it is important that there is a "suite" of information materials and core products that convey the purpose, goals and main interventions under RMSA. These core materials should be of a high quality design and be available in printed as well as digital formats. Using the existing RMSA branding, they must be clearly identifiable as high-level documents. These documents should include: a brochure explaining RMSA; a poster, with a strong visual element, explaining RMSA; an e-newsletter produced quarterly that provides updates on progress, shares best practices and profiles news from across the States. Later, a performance update should be considered that summarises performance and achievement data secured under RMSA initiatives.

Use of multimedia

Beyond designed documents, there is the potential for a greater role for multi-media, including short films to convey RMSA-related information. RMSA-TCA should consider supporting the development of several animated and short films to communicate principal RMSA content such as the purpose and role of the NAS as a diagnostic tool. These can be used on a variety of platforms, including the website, social media and at live presentations.

Further, there is potential for other multi-media formats to be employed. These may include video blogs (Vlogs); short inexpensively produced short videos should be produced to bring stakeholder perspectives and ideas to a wider RMSA audience. These would be hosted on the website and be accessible via social media and email.

Overall, there is a need to transform the way in which data is presented. TCA can work with partner institutions to develop and trial a new info-graphic-led approach to the presentation of data, ensuring that RMSA leads the way in the use of data for diagnosis and decision-making.

3.5.3 Action Points

RMSA core materials

TCA should work with partners, including MHRD (TSG), to develop, create and design a set of core materials to communicate RMSA. These should start with a brochure, poster and quarterly newsletter. They should access professional design services and both communicate RMSA as well as use these to energise partners.

Short films on NAS

TCA should work with NCERT to develop and commission a short animated film to explain the role and purpose of learning assessment, the role of NAS and how it can be used as a diagnostic tool. This should be produced to coincide with the work taking place to disseminate the Year VIII NAS and begin the Year X NAS.

Revise RMSA TCA website

The development of the RMSA-TCA website should include innovation in the use of multi-media including, where possible and over time, video blogs and short films showing stakeholder perspectives on RMSA. These should also be used to profile case studies.

Info-graphics to present data

TCA should resource and develop a significant development in the use of info-graphics to present data. This should involve procuring best practice examples and advocating their use to partner institutions.

Building on the above, TCA should develop and pilot a series on graphically-led Report Cards and Dashboards from school through the district, state and national level to present performance data clearly and appropriately for audiences and stakeholders at each level.

Annexure 1: Questionnaire for Information and communication mapping exercise

RMSA-Technical Cooperation Agency

Mapping exercise for information and communication planning

Kindly fill the following questionnaire and email it to poonam.bhambri@rmsatca.org by October 25, 2013

Questionnaire

SECTION I – INSTITUTIONAL FUNCTION

1. Name of Institution:
2. Your role in the Institution:
3. Please provide a brief description of the principal functions of the institution with respect to RMSA

SECTION II – STAKEHOLDER RELATIONSHIPS

4. Please list the principal stakeholders of your institution in relation to RMSA
Secondary Schools, District Education Offices. Dept. of RD, R&B Govt. of Odisha
- 4.1 Which specific stakeholders does your institution support or provide information and services to?

Which specific stakeholders provide your institution with information?
- 4.2 With which specific stakeholders do you primarily collaborate to develop policies and services?
- Which specific stakeholders provide overall policy direction to your organisation?
5. Are there stakeholders with which your institution needs to form improved relationships? (please list)

SECTION III – INFORMATION CHANNELS AND SYSTEMS

6. Please list the principal methods (i.e. email, website, meetings, post, publications) your institution uses to communicate with different stakeholders and their frequency (i.e. quarterly)
7. How does your institution get feedback from stakeholders to inform your work?
8. In your view how effective are the methods your institution uses to inform and receive feedback from stakeholders (on a scale of 1 to 10, 1 being very poor)?

8.1 Methods to inform.

8.2 Methods to receive feedback.

SECTION IV – MESSAGES AND CONTENT

9. Please describe briefly the principal content of the institution that you communicate to different stakeholders (i.e. new guidelines, policies, specific activities)
10. How is the content of information from your institution produced?
 - 10.1 Who (or which group/unit) makes the decisions about what is produced?
 - 10.2 Who is responsible for creating and producing the information?

SECTION V- MATERIALS AND PRODUCTS

11. Please list and describe the publications (e.g. website) and printed materials (e.g. newsletters, handbooks) your institution produce
12. In your opinion, how might your institution improve the effectiveness of its materials and publications?
 - 12.1 What, if any, materials and products should your institution produce, that are not currently being produced?
 - 12.2 What, if any, improvements could be made to existing materials and products that your institution produces?

SECTION VI – INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION PRIORITIES

13. Thinking about the next 12 months, what are the priority issues and initiatives for your institution that will require communication effort and support in order to ensure success?

14. Thinking about the information needs of your stakeholders, what are the priority areas for your institution over the next 12 months that need communication effort and support in order to improve awareness, uptake or action?

15. Finally, thinking about the needs of your institution, what are the priority issues in terms of ensuring there are the necessary skills, capacities and support in order that your organisation's communication and information provision is as effective as possible?

Thank you for completing this questionnaire. We will feedback to you with a summary of our findings.

Annexure 2: RMSA-TCA Information and Communication Work Plan (2013-2014)

RMSA-TCA Information and Communication Work Plan (2013-2014)						
Deadline	Task/output	Thematic area, log frame	Lead/partner Achieved (✓ X)	Cost Resource inputs	Comments and audience	
Work stream 1: RMSA Awareness/core materials						
November - March	TCA website reviewed, developed and launched.	Impact	PB/DH	Content, editing – 15 days. Design and development - £5000	Develop proposals for website as resource and engagement tool. Produce brief.	
November	TCA PPT and brochure produced	Impact	PB/DH	2 days designer. 1 day edit.	Clearer, better designed descriptive documents.	
November	TCA monthly e-newsletter distributed	Impact	DH/PB	1 day HTML design. 2 days per month content.	Newsletter formats and production/content schedule required	
December	RMSA Poster published	Impact	PB/TSG	5 days content. 2 days design. Print – 5,000 (£1500)	Explaining main issues and features of the programme	
January	RMSA News Magazine	Impact	PB/TSG/DH	15 days content. 4 days design.	Quarterly. Reference group (see 4), schedule required, and formats. Initially as an e-magazine. Minimal printed copies.	
March	RMSA animated film	Impact	PB/DH	4 days content and development. 10 days' production.	Clear, engaging animated making a powerful case for RMSA	
March	RMSA online discussion forum via website/Facebook /Twitter	Impact		2 days.	Set up and populate platforms for disseminating programme content and resources to support RMSA	
Work stream 2: National Achievement Survey						
November 15	Produce design formats for State level reports (NAS VIII)	LA/DMU	DH	5 days.	Short report, info-graphics, single sheet snapshot. State audiences.	
November	National Summary report (What do they Know?) (NAS VIII)	LA/DMU	DH	5 days.	Improved design, other formats. All sector audience.	
December	Poster explaining NAS	LA/DMU	PB	5 days content. 2 days design. Print – 5,000 (£1500)	What, how it works, how to use. All sector.	
December	Media plan on NAS Class X preparation	LA/DMU	PB	1 day	State and National media. Hook required. Sector and public.	
February	Leaflet/film/multimedia explaining assessment	LA/DMU	PB	Development 5 days. Film: Approx. £5000	Expand poster information. All sector.	
Work stream 3: Promoting themes and exemplar practices						

January	Innovation Hub - case studies documentation template and system	All	PB/STLs technical experts		1 day set up, then 1 day per month editing	Collect and develop initial case studies using template for reporting, ideally monthly
January	Advocate and develop RMSA Innovation Awards	All	TCA/TSG			Awards to encourage innovation in RMSA, upward reporting and competition between states
February	Thematic publication – format developed and initial publications	All	Technical specialists PB/DH		Format development. Design – 3 days. 5 fays.	Editing a range of reports into clear, accessible description of themes, issues, challenges, gaps and options
March	Power point on each theme (x4)	All	Technical specialists PB		8 days	Editing and design
February	National and regional conferences and seminars (NAS VIII)	All	TCA		2 days	Media support. Presentational materials.
Ongoing	Short films on most prominent exemplar practices/TCA interventions	All	STLs/PB	DH/PB	Filming and production – 15 days per film. Script, narrative – 5 days per film.	Filming at start – during progress – and towards the end will capture rich detail and a narrative

Work stream 4: Improving capacity and coordination of information and communication

Ongoing	Creation of RMSA communication reference group.	Cross cutting	All TCA		Ongoing	Discussions at national and later state level on key communication priorities over the coming year. TOR and membership to be discussed.
December	Produce quarterly calendar of events and initiatives	Cross cutting	PB/STLs		1 day	Initial TCA – later to encompass RMSA as a whole.
January	Develop central database of multi-level RMSA contacts	Cross cutting	TCA Admin		Ongoing	Enables effective dissemination
June and November	Workshops on communication planning and core skills	Cross cutting	DH		3 days per workshop to include resource packs	National and selected (i.e. where need/issues identified) state level workshops on messaging, reports, presentations, strategy etc.
Ongoing	Communication modules in existing planned workshops	Cross cutting	PB/STLs and other TCA		2 days	Where appropriate, add communication modules on basic skills (designed by DH) to workshops

Work stream 5: Promoting data through innovative communication pilots

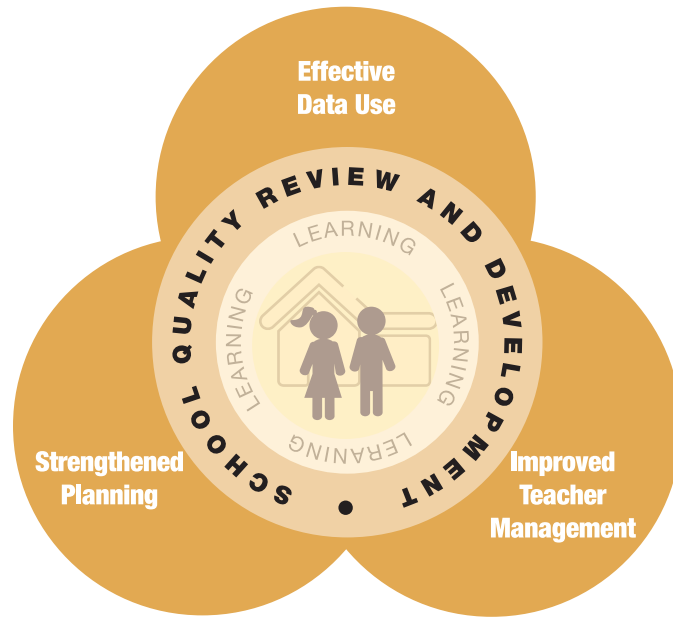
From November	National advocacy towards development of School Report Cards	DMU/SP	PB/TCA Team Leader and others		Ongoing	A degree of buy in exists already. May require a short paper for consideration by Steering Committee
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From December	State-level advocacy towards School Report Cards , District and State Dashboards	DMU/SP	STLs, technical specialists and PB		Ongoing	STL engagement with SPDs after initial assessment of conditions for success. Short paper on State context for the development of School Report Cards, setting out implications
January	Formats produced for School, District and State Reports	DMU/SP	DH technical specialist and PB		8 days	A set of formats and designs to be produced based on State level requirements and U-DISE data sets
Ongoing	Presentation of key RMSA data through innovative products, info-graphics etc.	All	DH/PB		TBC	E.g. Teacher management (recruitment and deployment),
Work stream 6: TCA internal communication, planning and evaluation of activities and outputs						
Feb, June, Nov	Quarterly Communication Review		PB/DH		2 days per review	Review work plan, identify priorities, plan outputs
December	Standard formats for presentations and reports				Ongoing – 2 days design time	Quarterly reports, technical reports, STL reports and others
TBC	Quarterly TCA meetings with regional teams		TCA			Quarterly before Executive Committee and/or Steering Committee and quarterly report
Ongoing	Fortnightly communication and knowledge management update email		PB			Latest documents, initiatives and events for the team
Ongoing	Weekly meeting with Team Leader		PB/Team Leader			Weekly fixed meeting to discuss short and medium term priorities – and issues for KM and communication
November	Knowledge Management system and software					Discussion needed on flexible, adaptable and searchable system for collation and retrieval of all programme documentation

Annexure 3: List of interviewees

List of people met

Colin Bangay	Senior Education Adviser, DFID India
Poonam Bhambri	Knowledge and Communication Manager, TCA
Caralyn Khongwar Deshmukh	Director, MHRD
Professor Govinda	VC, NUEPA
Hemant Kumar	Public Relations Officer, NCERT
Professor Kumar	Education Survey Department, NCERT
Ranjana Orora	RMSA Project Cell Coordinator, NCERT
Professor Rajaran	Joint Director, NCERT
Anugula Reddy	Asst Professor, Department of EMIS, NUEPA
Vinodh Sesham	State Programme Director, RMSA, Assam
Professor Sivastrav	Head of the Education Survey Department, NCERT
Professor Sukumar	Principal, NERIE
Professor Tripathi	Deputy Director, NCERT
All State Programme Directors	RMSA-TCA
All Delhi Central Team	RMSA-TCA
Key RMSA staff	Assam workshop
Key RMSA staff	Meghalaya workshop
Key state and national RMSA staff	Delhi NCERT workshop



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Secondary Education Enhancement Programme

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