

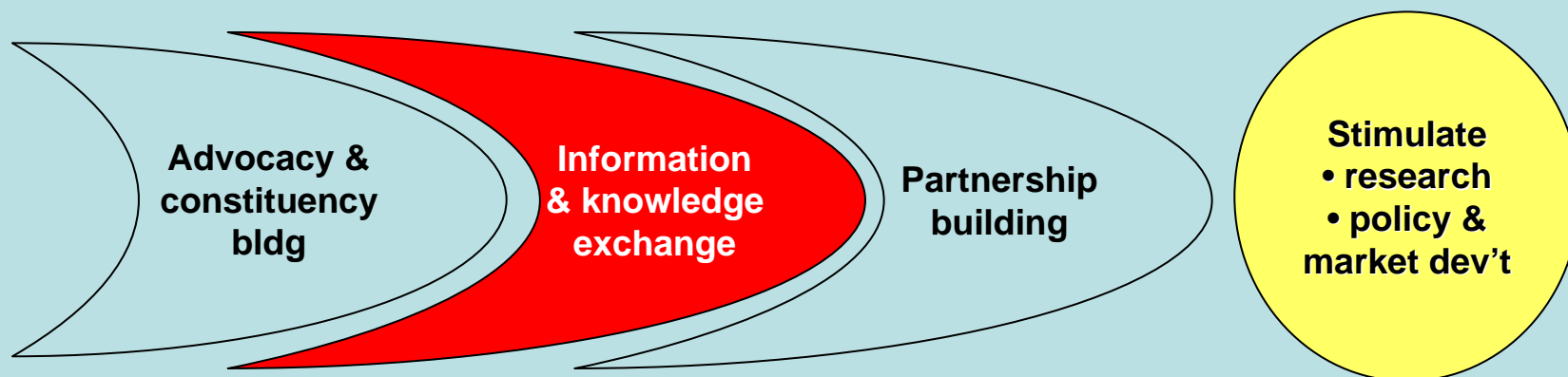


Regional Agricultural Information and Learning Systems (RAILS)

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RAILS in the FARA strategy and priorities

FARA's main thrusts and its catalyzing action



Five requirements to improve ARD impact

- Agricultural innovations systems approach
- Capacity to build capacity
- Outscale and upscale products
- Improve information and learning exchange
- Develop policies on new technologies

Why should FARA be involved in agricultural information and learning?

- African researchers have difficulty accessing global knowledge pools
- End-users have even more difficulty finding and accessing information and knowledge required to face diverse challenges in agriculture
- Agricultural innovations failure to scale-out or up due to lack of awareness and knowledge
- Inadequate information and learning systems in research – extension continuum
- Traditional extension systems can only reach a minority of farmers



Learning from initiatives of international organizations (GFAR, FAO, CTA, COL, CGIAR, TEEAL, CABI)

1. ICT/M program's effectiveness linked to **connectivity, availability, cost and quality**
2. **Declining contribution** to major scientific and technical information service
3. Agricultural extension services **not reaching** the majority of African smallholders and pastoralists
4. African need for **digital and internet based platforms** linked to traditional information services e.g. radio, tv
5. Need for **advocacy and consolidation of initiatives towards an information and learning platform for Africa**

Learning from other regional fora APAARI, FORAGRO, etc.

1. Need for support mechanism to advise on current issues and needs in the region
2. Adequate resources (infrastructure, human, financial) to implement
3. Continuous learning and adoption
4. Protocol for information sharing and dissemination
5. Clear value addition at continental level
e.g., advocacy and support for the National agricultural information systems

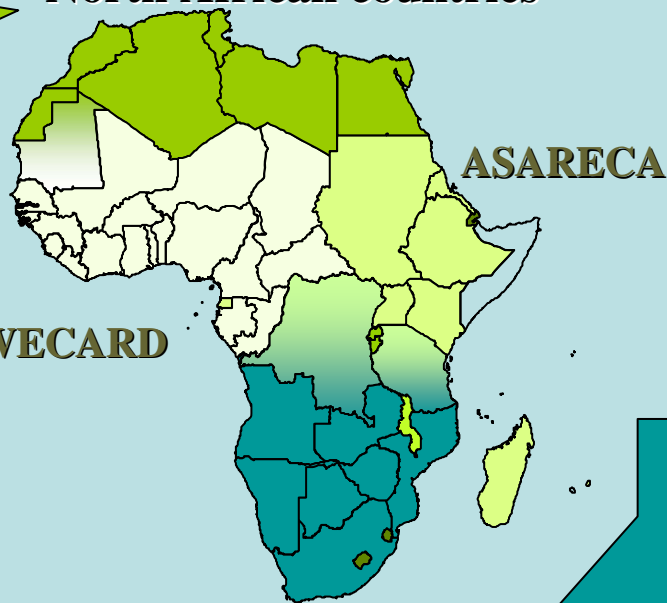
Building on the strengths of SRO initiatives

thru AARINENA

- Experience in development and use of systems tools for research

AARINENA:

North African countries



RAIN – Regional agricultural information system

- strong network of AICM specialists
- focus on post graduate training for AICM

SRAILS

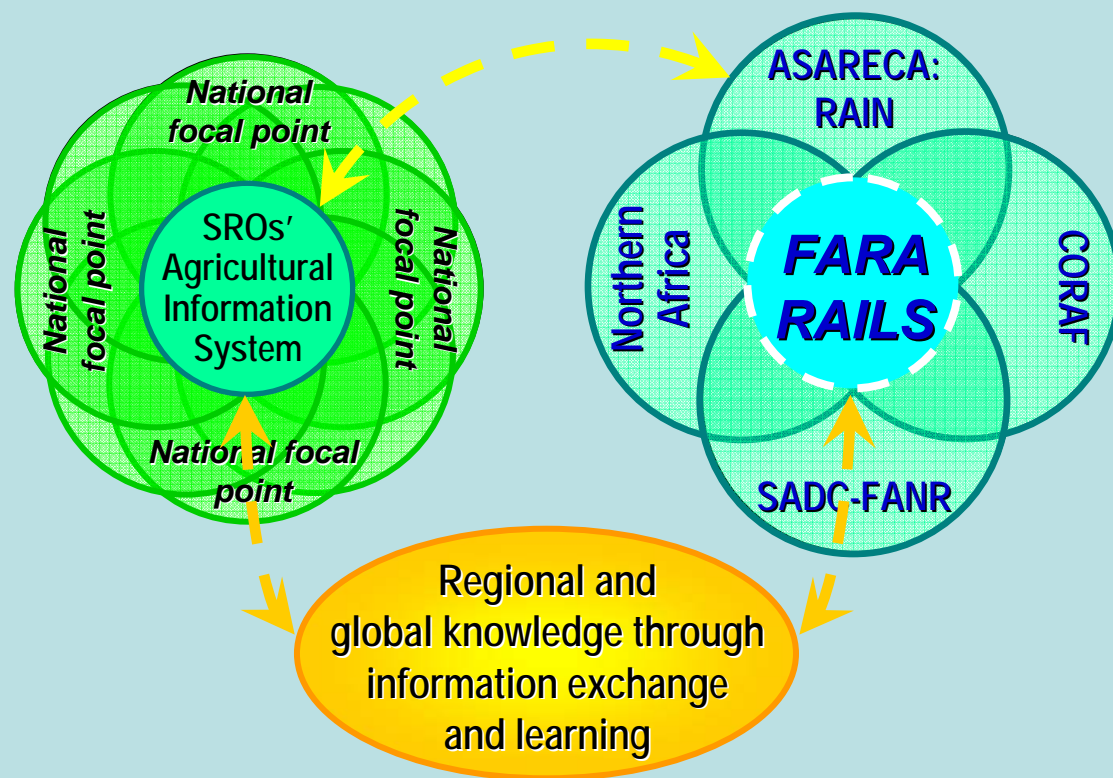
- use of information tools with potential to facilitate learning culture

AIMS – agricultural information management system

- **ICART** – Implementing & coordinating agric research & training
- data exchange standards
- available resources for networking

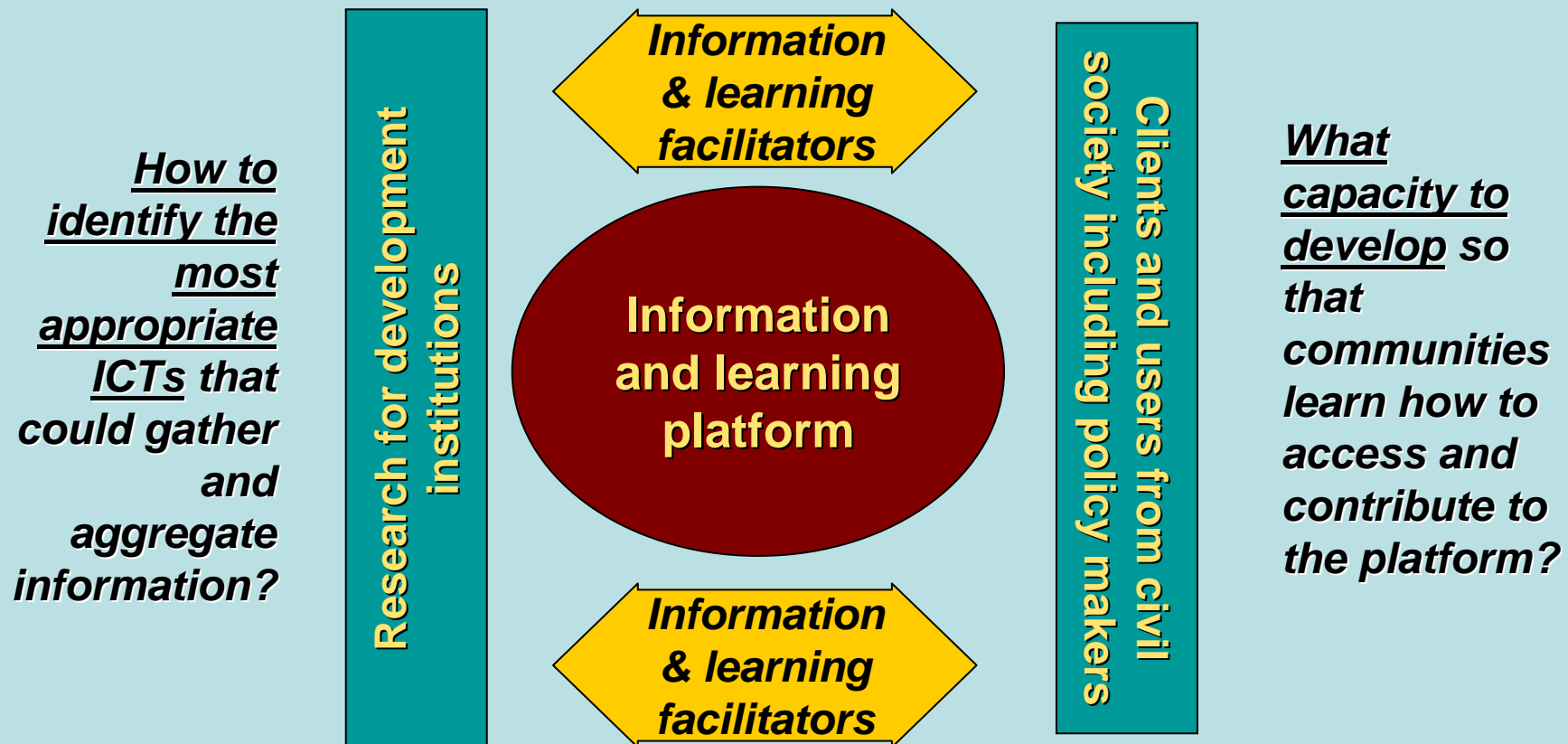
How will RAILS contribute?

1. Advocacy for increased investments in agricultural information and learning systems by African governments and institutions
2. Improve the access and contribution by African ARD Stakeholders in the global knowledge exchange
3. Facilitate agricultural information systems synergies and learning among international and national organizations
4. Build an African platform for agriculture information and learning systems



The information & learning concept

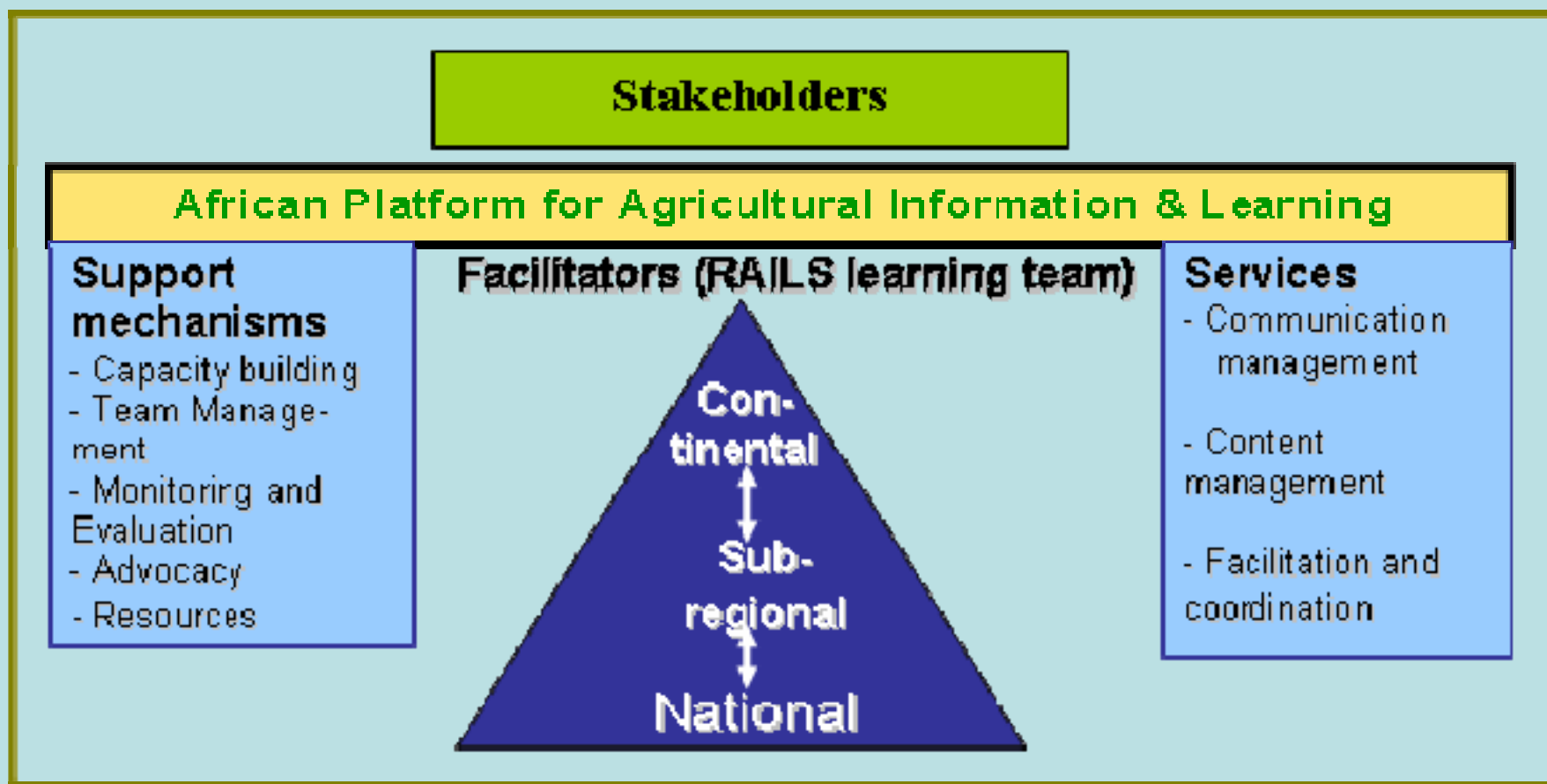
How to advocate on the use and to invest on ICT by agricultural communities?

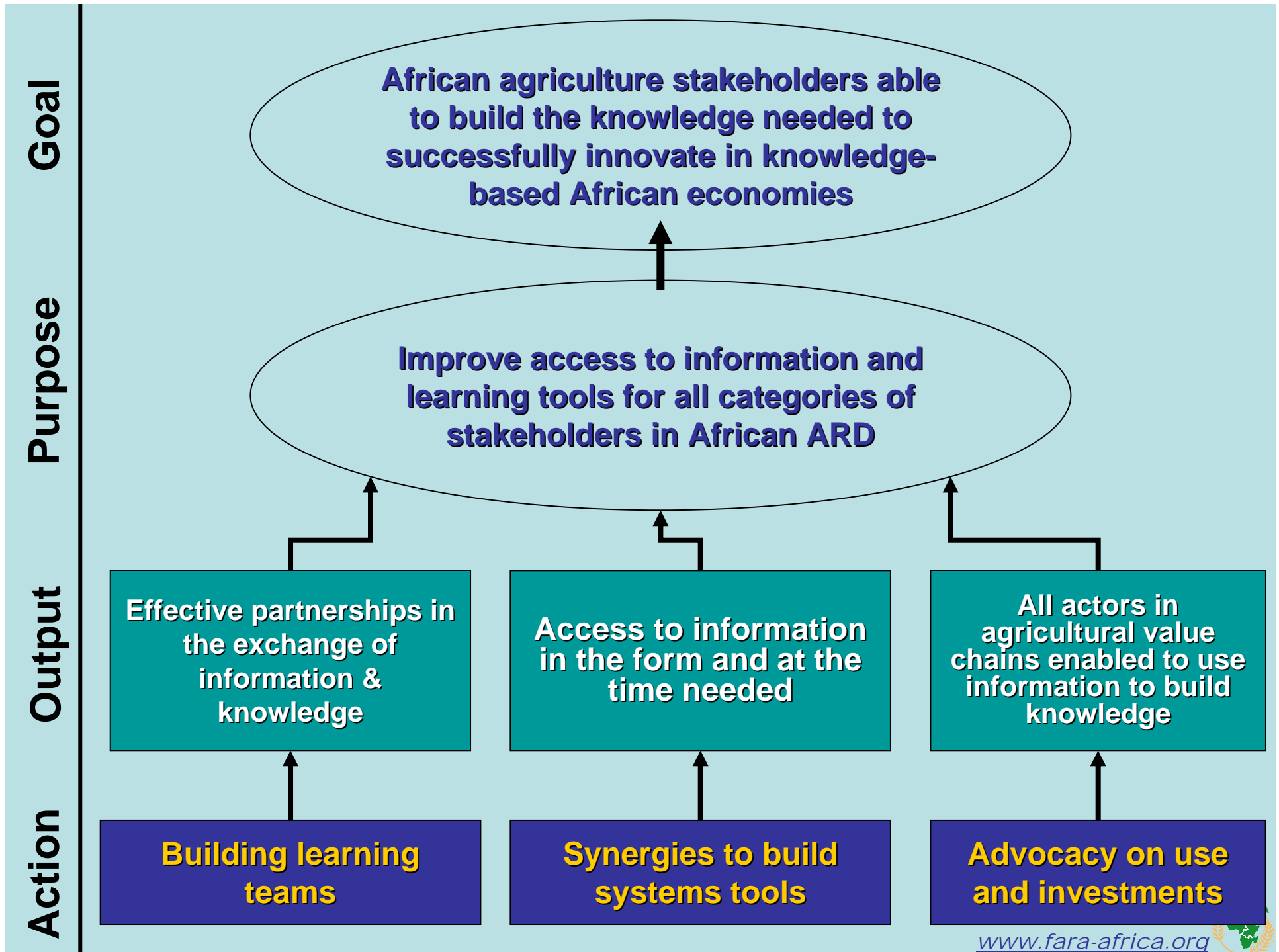


How to integrate communication and learning tools into work and business processes of ARD organizations?

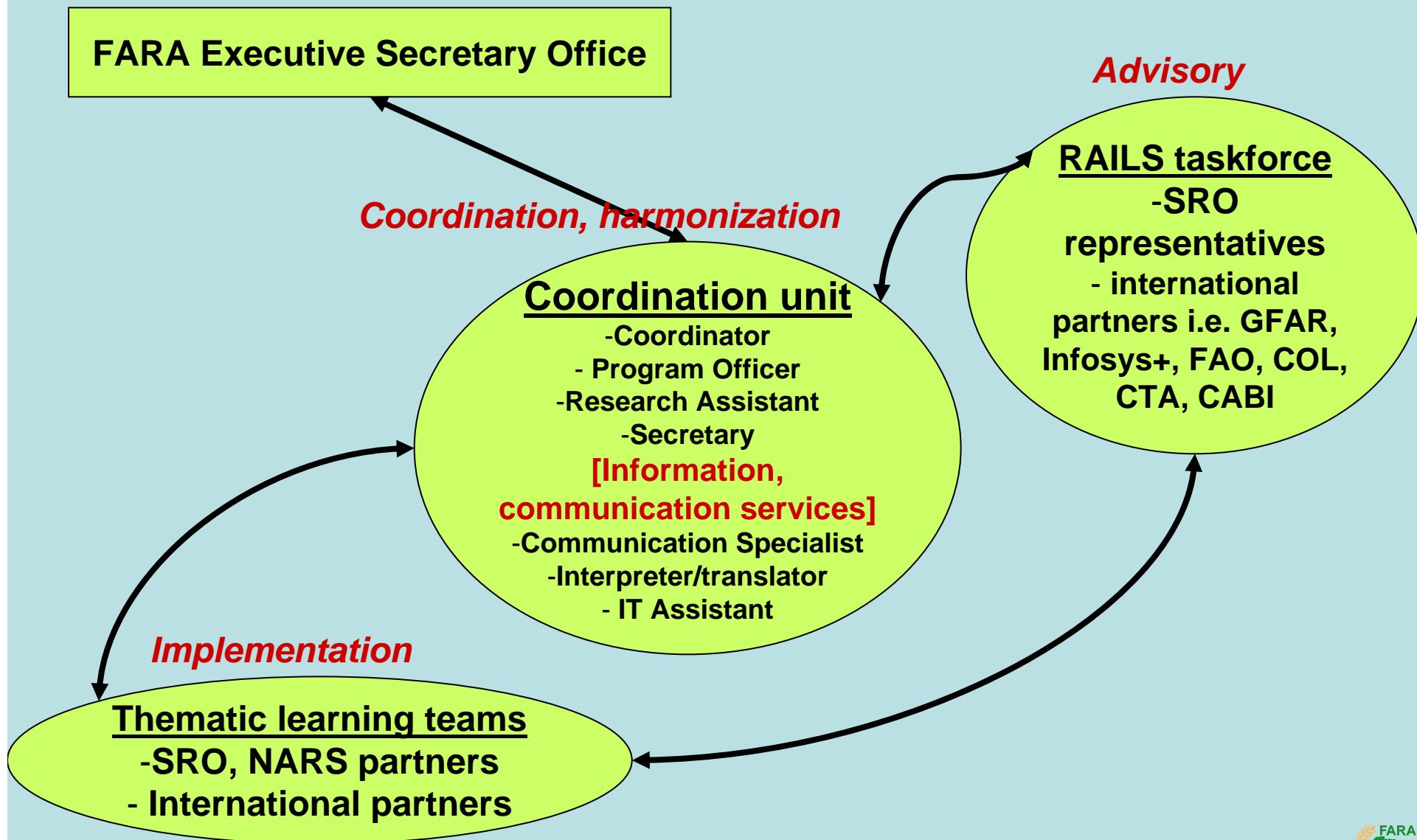
The Key Components of the African RAILS platform

Users + Tools + Contents





RAILS coordination



Actions	Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 3	Yr 4	Yr 5
A. Building learning teams					
Identification and capacity strengthening of learning teams					
Provide adequate infrastructure to learning teams					
Develop the support mechanisms for the learning teams					
B. Facilitate agricultural information synergies to create systems tools					
Consultation with ISPs on information initiatives/tools					
Develop the appropriate and required information and learning system tools					
Application, use and learning of systems tools developed					
Identification of information systems standards for data exchange					
C. Advocacy for increased investment in agricultural information and learning systems					
Mobilize learning teams to facilitate development & implementation of national, regional and continental strategies					
Conduct an innovative survey of agricultural information and learning systems					
Asses (existing) national policies on ICT/M					
Publication of success stories					

RAILS guiding principle

- **Ownership by the African stakeholders**
- **Relevance to the priorities and needs of SROs and NARS**
- **Synergies with existing agricultural information systems**
- **Sustainability not just financially but also in human resources**
- **Regular communication among users and facilitators of information and learning exchange**

Key Challenges

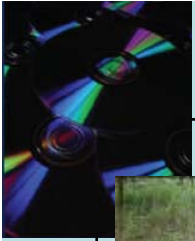


- **Tapping the huge potential of African resources through information and learning systems**
- **Learning culture developed**
- **Open systems approach accepted**
- **Adequate institutional and financial resources mobilized**
- **Dynamic management of information and learning**

Impact

- **Increased participation of African ARD stakeholders in global knowledge**
- **Increased exchange of information and learning among NARS, SROs and international partners**
- **African governments aware of ARD contribution to African economic growth**
- **Accelerated dissemination and uptake of Agricultural research products and farmer innovations contributing to achievement of the African Vision and the MDGs**





Thank you