Report of the Mid Term Review for the WOTRO Integrated Programme
W 01.65.310 ("Mobile Africa Revisited: A comparative study of the relationship between new communication technologies and social spaces (Chad, Mali, Cameroon, Angola)")

1. Introduction
This report documents the Mid Term Review, describes progress of the programme and includes recommendations to the programme team for the Integrated Programme W 01.65.310 ("Mobile Africa Revisited: A comparative study of the relationship between new communication technologies and social spaces (Chad, Mali, Cameroon, Angola)"), which started on 14 April 2008. This programme aims to study the relationship between new communication technologies and social spaces in Chad, Mali, Cameroon, Angola and South Africa.

2. Purpose, focus and approach of the Mid Term Review
The Mid Term Review is supposed to be a moment of reflection on action: the programme team and stakeholders reflect on the past in order to make informed decisions on the future of the programme. With the Monitoring & Evaluation instrument of the Mid Term Review, WOTRO aims to monitor the progress of the Integrated Programmes more thoroughly, while simultaneously reducing the intensity of reporting to a mid-term report and a final report. Both reports have to be the joint product of the coordinator, research team and stakeholders.

The Mid Term Review (MTR) has to be conducted two years after a programme started. To ensure that the MTR is a mutual learning exercise, the review comprises two levels: that of the programme and that of the Integrated Programmes subsidy scheme. First, the programme's progress is assessed using the criteria in the original programme design. The MTR concentrates on the operational level, i.e. activities and results, communication and output, and programme management. Changes in the context that could have hindered or supported the planned activities, should also be taken into consideration. Second, experiences of the programme team of the Integrated Programme’s criteria, the WOTRO management and M&E strategy will be used to assess and improve the Integrated Programmes scheme.

The MTR comprises three stages. First, the research team carries out a self-evaluation, using the WOTRO progress report form. Second, the receipt of the progress report is followed by a meeting of the programme coordinator and one or more project researchers with a small WOTRO team of programme officers. This half-day meeting is held at the research institution of the programme coordinator and comprises brief presentations on progress, a WOTRO interview based on the report, and a dialogue on the Integrated Programmes scheme. Third, WOTRO writes a brief report on the conclusions, recommendations and/or requirements.

3. Programme summary
This research programme investigates the relationship between the new Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), social space, mobility and marginality in Sub-Saharan Africa. Although transport facilities and communication infrastructure are frequently deficient in the so-called remote and marginal regions of Africa, these regions usually have long histories of translocal mobility and migration. As a result of this combination of remoteness and mobility, the impact and the social use of new ICTs may be most dramatic among marginal social categories and in marginalized areas. Relations between people living in these areas and those who have moved away can be studied as strings of people forming mobile margins, with changing aspirations and possibilities. This project aims to study the extent to which the recent introduction of new ICTs in these areas is shaping and is shaped by the mobile margins, both socially and economically. Alternative alleys of contact are perhaps being opened up but it is also possible that earlier routes and forms of interaction are being closed off or redefined. New ICTs may be

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leading to unforeseen opportunities but could also generate new patterns of exclusion and poverty and lead to new social hierarchies. New ICTs are perhaps being used and articulated in creative, locally embedded ways, but it could equally be possible that people in mobile marginal networks feel that the new ICTs and the international companies introducing them are being aggressively imposed on them, leading to new social, moral and economic problems. The research programme therefore aims to interrogate the unequivocally positive view regarding the introduction of ICTs that is often found in policy circles.

This interdisciplinary research (History, Anthropology, Communication Technology, Media Studies, Geography, and Development Studies) will be carried out on a comparative basis in several marginal areas among physically and virtually marginal communities in Chad, Mali, Cameroon and Angola. The project also plans to establish a link between different scholarly and research institutions, local and international development agencies and companies concerned with the introduction and use of ICTs in Africa. The project will result in academic publications (PhD theses, edited books, articles and films) but will also produce reports and policy documents to encourage intensive discussion and a reassessment of the role of ICTs in development in Africa on local, national and international platforms.

4. The Mid Term Review

The report

Three months before the deadline of 14 April 2010, WOTRO informed the programme coordinator about the MTR procedures and planning and sent the format of the progress report. The Mid Term progress report was received on 24 March.

The meeting

The Mid Term Review meeting took place on 4 May 2010 at the African Studies Centre in Leiden from 10.00-13.00 hrs. The participants of this meeting were Prof. dr Mirjam de Bruijn (programme coordinator), Dr Inge Brinkman (post doc researcher) and Dr Naffet Keita (post-doc researcher). The present WOTRO staff were Dr Barbara Plavčák (M&E officer, report), Dr Eva Rijkers (programme officer, chairperson) and Dr M. Wienia (programme officer, report).

The meeting had five items on the agenda:

10.00-10.15 1. Opening and introduction

10.15-10.45 2. Presentations on the programme’s progress, based on the programme’s objectives

10.45-11.45 3. Interview on the programme’s progress

11.45-12.00 Break

12.00-12.45 4. Reflection on the Mid Term Review and the Integrated Programmes subsidy scheme

12.45-13.00 5. Conclusion and follow-up

In the introduction, Eva Rijkers described the purpose, focus and approach of the Mid Term Review and explained the agenda of the meeting. Because this was one of the first MTR, she invited the programme team to reflect on the meeting.

The programme team delivered three presentations and showed an instructive film about the programme. Mirjam de Bruijn explained the objectives of the programme, described the research team
and outlined progress for the projects and the programme. She drew special attention to the intricacies of stakeholder collaboration. Subsequently, Inge Brinkman and Naffet Keita explained progress for the projects in Angola/South Africa and Mali.

The WOTRO interview on progress focused on the four main bottlenecks in the progress report and the integration of the programme (see below).

In the final part of the meeting, the team reflected on the Integrated Programmes subsidy scheme and on the Mid Term Review (see below).

After that, the chairperson described the follow up of the Mid Term Review and closed the meeting.

4.3 The WOTRO report and follow-up
Based on the programme self-evaluation, presentations and the interview, WOTRO made this report of the Mid Term Review, including recommendations. Four actions to be taken have been outlined in this report (see the conclusion).

The Final Review of the programme will be in line with this Mid Term Review. The programme coordinator will be informed about the Final Review in due time.

5. Assessment of progress
The Integrated Programmes objectives of scientific significance, relevance for development and international (multi)stakeholder collaboration have been used to assess the progress of this programme. Programme management and the bottlenecks identified by the programme team will also be discussed. Recommendations and/or requirements have been added.

5.1 Scientific significance
The overall scientific objective of this programme is to enhance original interdisciplinary research and methodologies; to provide new theoretical insights and identify new research areas.

Progress for the specific objective to enhance the interdisciplinarity and integration of fields of study in communication studies, anthropology, history and development studies has been made. This programme has six projects, which focus on new ICTs in northern Angola (Dr Brinkman) and south-eastern Angola (Dr Brinkman), Angolans in Cape Town and Luanda (Ms Gooskens), nomadic cultures in Mali (Dr Keita), Anglophone Cameroon (Ms Nyamnjoh) and Chad (Mr Seli). With respect to the enhancement of interdisciplinary research, the programme links researchers from different disciplinary backgrounds.

Gooskens and Keita have a background in anthropology, Brinkman and Seli in history and Nyamnjoh in development studies. With the departure of PhD student Mr Akum, communication studies are less represented in the team. The programme coordinators are anthropologists; the supervisors in Cameroon and Chad have a background in political science and linguistics, respectively. Seven MA students conduct research in the Mali case. An ASC-funded PhD project, executed by Ms Diallo, on ICTs in a legal context in the Casamance in Senegal has de facto been added to the programme.

The projects are comparatively linked through the research focus on the mutual interaction of technology and society and specifically on the relation between marginality, mobility and communication. The programme has a people-centred rather than technology-centred approach. Most research attention so far has been on the societal impact and influence of new ICTs. The South African/Angolan study strengthened the focus on the link between mobility and new ICTs. This is also the case in which new ICTs other than cell phones are central (social media such as Facebook). Preliminary findings indicate the level of politicization of new ICTs in Sub Saharan Africa: issues of politics of belonging and exclusion and state expansion over citizens emerged in all the case studies. The added Casamance study strengthens this insight.

A writing workshop was organised in Cameroon in January 2010. With respect to the publication strategy, one edited volume has been realised (in which MA theses of the Malian students have been
included); another edited volume will be published later in 2010. A final volume is planned for the end of the programme.

Progress for the specific objectives to develop new methodologies and to conduct empirical research has been made in the programme. The PhD students, except Henriette Nyamnjoh, currently conduct fieldwork, until September 2010. Preliminary results have been presented in conferences. Ethnography is ‘the common language’ of the researchers from the different disciplines, but the team has set objectives for developing new qualitative methodologies for the focus on the relationship between mobility, marginality and new ICTs. To that end, a methodology workshop was organised in Cameroon in January 2009. Audio-visual methodologies are important in the programme: each project will contribute to a moveable exhibition, which is also a key instrument in stakeholder collaboration. The complexity of data collected so far is expected to generate a higher level of analysis, but it also requires more supervision time investment for senior researchers.

Conclusion and recommendations:
Scientific progress for this programme is good. The projects focus on clear case studies and logically contribute to programme-level comparisons. Interdisciplinary and integration of the programme is good. Notwithstanding minor delays, fieldwork progresses well and preliminary results are promising. WOTRO is confident that the training of Henriette Nyamnjoh will allow her to catch up with the other team members, but agrees with the team that progress for her project requires special attention. The addition of two PhD projects to the programme is applauded; both projects apparently strengthen the focus of the programme. Progress for the development of new methods is good. The publication strategy of the team is good.

5.2 Relevance for development
The overall relevance for development objective of this programme is to contribute to new insights for policy formulation with regard to mobility, marginality and ICT and to close the gap between academia and development policy-making circles. Another main objective is the improvement of local capacity, through capacity building at African universities and research institutes (humanities and social sciences).

Progress for the objective to contribute to policy-making has been made in the programme. Policy-making was addressed in the inception workshop in 2008, in conferences and in interactions with government representatives in the field. Key events with respect to this objective will, however, be the large policy/theory workshop in Leiden late 2010 and the subsequent national policy workshops in the selected research countries. Policy papers will be written in 2010 and 2011. Rather than developing explicit policy recommendations, the team aims to convey a more nuanced vision on the impact of new ICTs in Sub Saharan Africa, by pointing out that initial expectations of these technologies are counterbalanced by disappointments, new forms of exclusion of women and elderly. State control is exacerbated. The latter process is most tangible in Chad and the Casamance, but this trend can be discerned in the other case studies too.

Progress for the objective to improve local capacity has been made in the programme. The programme involves a number of MA students, both in the Netherlands and in developing countries, especially in Mali. These MA theses have and will be included in the edited volumes, which will be presented at events with stakeholders.

Conclusion and recommendations:
Progress with respect to the development relevance objectives is good. Policy-making has been addressed since the start of the programme and the planned research/policy workshops in Leiden and in the research countries are promising. In the refinement of the setup of the workshops, two issues may be considered. First, to what extent has a feedback mechanism been developed so that results of these
workshops can be integrated in the programme? Second, to what extent has the possible impact of the increasing role of the state in the research countries been calculated in the setup of the workshops? The capacity strengthening component of the programme is applauded by WOTRO. Progress for this objective is very good. The MA programme in Mali has been successful and the proposed follow up programme (MA level 2) is promising. WOTRO is also appreciative of the addition of other research projects to this programme.

5.3 International collaboration
The overall quality of collaboration objectives of this programme are to create networks between African and European research institutes in the social sciences and humanities and to create a link between academia (African and European universities and research institutes) and international NGOs concerned with development & ICT; international advocacy groups; multinationals (MTC/Celtel, MTN, etc); migration institutes (research, NGO, EU etc).

Progress for the objective to create networks between African and European research institutes in the social sciences and humanities has been made. Collaboration with Point Sud in Mali, CRASH in Chad and Langaa in Cameroon was strengthened. Francis Nyamnjoh was recently appointed at the University of Cape Town (UTC), South Africa. Collaboration with UTC has been developed, but collaboration with CODESRIA, where Nyamnjoh was previously appointed, has decreased. Another research programme on mobile telephones in Africa has been developed by UTC and submitted to SANPAD for funding. The National Policy workshops, which will be organised in 2010 and 2011, will be important events for strengthening collaboration. The senior researchers from the concerned research institutes have participated in programme workshops in The Netherlands and Cameroon.

Progress for the objective to create a link between academia and international NGOs, international advocacy groups, multinationals and migration institutes has been made. However, both bottlenecks in the programme were related to international collaboration. First, stakeholder collaboration is time-consuming; and second, it has been difficult to get and keep the interest of ICT companies. A complicating factor in the stakeholder collaboration is that stakeholders are also informants. According to the team, the set objectives were too ambitious, but no adjusted objectives were developed in the self assessment report. Another bottleneck described was the lack of interest of ICT companies in the programme. Although good individual contacts exist with telephone companies, actively involving these companies in the programme remains difficult. Audio-visual methods are used in stakeholder collaboration, but due to budget constraints, filming is restricted to Cameroon. However, the junior researchers each use audio-visual methods in their research, output of which may be used in a moving exhibition for stakeholders. The team described their contacts with local civil society organisations to be good.

Conclusion and recommendations:
Progress for the international academic collaboration is good. The appointment of Nyamnjoh at UTC seems to have opened a new window of opportunities. It is not completely clear whether there is continuity in collaboration with CODESRIA.

The availability of stakeholders and the ‘incompatibility of language’ were identified as risks for reaching the international collaboration objectives. Rather than the availability of stakeholders, the challenge to keep them interested – and the resulting time investments required – were given as bottlenecks. WOTRO is appreciative of the efforts made to seek collaboration with the ICT companies and agrees with the team that this collaboration requires continued attention from the team. Using audio-visual material to improve this collaboration, as planned, appears to be a good approach.

Progress for the proposed interaction with NGOs about human rights and the local appropriation of new ICTs and about visions on poverty and marginality has been somewhat less addressed in the Mid Term Review. Will these NGOs be involved in the policy conferences? Activities towards this aim may be
increased in the second part of the programme. In sum, however, considering the bottlenecks described, progress for international collaboration is good.

5.4 Programme management: conclusion and recommendations
Programme management is good. Working relationships within the team appear to be constructive. Post-doc researchers Inge Brinkman and Naffet Keita have coordinating roles in the programme. Integration and supervision appear to be well arranged. The regular workshops provide excellent supervision opportunities. The programme activities, however, require significant input from the senior researchers. WOTRO has noted this concern.
The team has suffered from a number of personnel setbacks. Two PhD researchers stopped their appointment: Veronica Pedro (Angola) and Richard Akum (Cameroon). The latter has not returned programme materials to the team. The team has, however, well anticipated to these setbacks. Both researchers were replaced, respectively by Imke Gooskens, who also incorporated a South African focus in the Angola project, and Henriette Nyamnjoh. WOTRO concerns about the restricted appointment period for Ms Nyamnjoh, and the lack of access to Akum’s data, were removed by the team’s explanation that she is an experienced researcher and that she has had Leiden training. Both factors will help her to finish her PhD project within the remaining time. This planning, however, requires careful attention in the coming years. How the project of Djimet Seli is integrated in the programme may require more attention. ASC funded projects of Fatima Diallo and Walter Nkwi were added to the programme. WOTRO applauds this extension.

6. Reflection on the Integrated Programmes subsidy scheme and the Mid Term Review
For refining its subsidy and M&E instruments, WOTRO appreciates the feedback from the programme team on the Integrated Programmes subsidy scheme and the Mid Term Review. With respect to the former, the following topics were discussed in the meeting:

Stakeholder participation:
- It takes time to find out who are the interesting stakeholders and to get in contact with them; stakeholders may also change during the life-time of a project. Stakeholder participation can thus only be planned to a certain degree.
- Relations with stakeholders are not always easy, especially if the result of the research may not be appealing to them: ICT companies and NGO’s might not want to hear that mobile phones don’t bring development, but that they, on the contrary, can also create hierarchies or offer opportunities for state control. The achievement of expected outcomes of the programme partly depends on the willingness of stakeholders to go on collaborating with the project team, even if the research results don’t appeal to them.
- Universities are also important stakeholders and should be considered when planning or reporting on stakeholder participation.

Format of the forms for application and for the Mid Term progress report:
- There should be space for capacity building efforts in the logframe.
- WOTRO should give examples of what interesting output – besides scientific publications – can be, for example films, policy briefs, etc. (Both issues were discussed regarding the fact that university professors need scientific publications – capacity building and other forms of publications don’t count as indicators of their performance. The research team recommended WOTRO to engage in this discussion.)
- The research team also recommended that there should be a category in the budget for the senior researchers.
- The coordinated filling in of the logframe was considered useful by the programme team.
- The team was surprised that they were not asked for a financial report – according to them, this could be useful, also for the team to get a financial overview.
- WOTRO requirements in general were considered to be "heavy". According to the researchers, WOTRO demands a lot in comparison with other funders.

**Contact with other IPs:**
The programme team did not consider this of particular interest.

**Other issues:**
The team suggested that it would be good to have a follow-up opportunity for Integrated Programmes, for example another 2 years for conferences, dissemination, etc.

WOTRO appreciates these comments and suggestions, which we will use for refining the Integrated Programmes subsidy scheme.

**7. Conclusion**
This Integrated Programme completed the Mid Term Review. The programme team conducted a good self-evaluation, delivered presentations on progress and aptly responded to the questions of WOTRO. Progress for this programme is good.