Creating effective environmental communication strategies

A ten step guide for practitioners

Manfred Oepen and Sean Southey

CEC Commission on Education and Communication

NATURE FOR ALL

reimagine CONSERVATION

ACT applied communication for development

About IUCN

IUCN is a membership Union uniquely composed of both government and civil society organisations. It provides public, private and non-governmental organisations with the knowledge and tools that enable human progress, economic development and nature conservation to take place together. Created in 1948, IUCN is now the world's largest and most diverse environmental network, harnessing the knowledge, resources and reach of more than 1,400 Member organisations and around 17,000 experts. It is a leading provider of conservation data, assessments and analysis. Its broad membership enables IUCN to f ill the role of incubator and trusted repository of best practices, tools and international standards. IUCN provides a neutral space in which diverse stakeholders including governments, NGOs, scientists, businesses, local communities, Indigenous Peoples' Organisations and others can work together to forge and implement solutions to environmental challenges and achieve sustainable development. Working with many partners and supporters, IUCN implements a large and diverse portfolio of conservation projects worldwide. Combining the latest science with the traditional knowledge of local communities, these projects work to reverse habitat loss, restore ecosystems and improve people's well-being.

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Contents

Preface

This guide is designed to help you use **strategic communication** to make your environmental programmes more effective. We all know that designing and implementing a **successful conservation initiative** at any level is a challenge. A broad range of complex issues is involved and the participation of many different stakeholders is usually required. A strategic approach to communication helps you as the managers of multi-stakeholder conservation initiatives to promote shared understanding of the issues and agree with all involved on the specific objectives to be achieved.

For our purposes, "conservation initiatives" referenced in this guide can be processes, projects, programmes, campaigns or other activities at the individual, group, community, municipal, national, regional, or global level. In this guide, we mostly refer to them as **conservation programmes** or conservation initiatives. What they all have in common is that they will run into **communication barriers** sooner or later. We find ourselves asking – "How do we convince people who often have conflicting knowledge, views and interests to learn about an environmental problem and change their attitudes and adopt sustainable, collaborative practices for the better?" "What and who are the forces driving and resisting change?" "Which media and materials are best suited and most cost-effective to reach specific audience groups?" "How do we design the most persuasive messages to call these groups to action?" This guide is designed to help you answer these critical questions.

The concerns of species are not always easy to communicate...

Fig. 1. Hound of the Farside. 1980s Gary Larson Far Side Cartoon Book, p. 17.

"Think about it, Ed.... The class Insecta contains 26 orders, almost 1,000 families, and over 750,000 described species — but I can't shake the feeling we're all just a bunch of bugs."

Effective **communication, education, and public awareness** (CEPA) is central to the mandate of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature's Commission on Education and Communication (CEC). In other organisations, the same concept is referred to as environmental education and communication (EEC).

CEPA or EEC are the daily work of many of the environmental communication and education experts in the CEC and beyond. This guide draws on the experience of the main authors, who have designed, run, and evaluated hundreds of communication campaigns and strategies in countries around the world on a wide variety of environmental themes working with stakeholders ranging from pastoralists to national decision makers and the private sector. The guide has also been enriched by substantive insights, feedback, stories, examples and tools – which we call 'Seeds' in this guide – provided by CEC members. The authors offer their deepest gratitude for this engagement and sharing. The acknowledgement section of the guide reflects the depth of input provided. We deeply appreciate their input and wisdom without which this document would not be the rich and living tool you find it.

Building on existing resources and our experiences, the guide consolidates and provides **practiceoriented steps and seeds** to support people implementing conservation programmes to communicate effectively. It is not intended as an academic analysis, but rather aspires to be a seed for you to design better communication interventions and enhance your impact.

While the communication approaches presented here have been developed with a view to supporting the IUCN network, we hope they will also be useful for those who work to improve their environments and make the world a better place. Together, we are all working for the good of the planet in support of the Sustainable Development Goals, the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and other environmental and climate frameworks. This guide would not have been possible without the input, contributions and feedback of experts from within IUCN and from around the world.

We invite you to use this guide as you see fit and to provide us with your feedback, suggestions, and experiences – so we can continue to learn together.

Sean Southey
Chair, IUCN CEC

Manfred Oepen
Managing Director, ACT Assist

Introduction to environmental education
in a Mongolian workshop. © GIZ.

Executive summary

Creating Effective Environmental Communication Strategies offers conservation professionals a straightforward, ten-step guide for designing and delivering strategic communication that drives measurable conservation impacts. Written for government focal points, NGO staff, scientists, private-sector partners, community organisers, and the communication specialists who support them, the guide positions communication as a core management tool rather than a last-minute public relations add-on.

At its core, the guide recognises that conservation succeeds only when people change unsustainable practices as a result of targeted attitude changes and knowledge gains. In this process, information alone is not the missing link between a problem and a solution. Instead, the authors frame communication as a two-way, participatory dialogue in which meaning and messages are co-created by and with audiences rather than bombarded on them. Drawing on holistic learning models (Head-Heart-Hands) and KAP-related social marketing insights about incentives, audience segmentation, media selection, and storytelling the guide shows practitioners how to move all parties involved from "being aware" to "ready for action" in ten logically consistent steps that build on each other.

The ten steps unfold across four phases of a project life cycle. **Assessment** covers situation analysis, stakeholder and KAP research, and the drafting of specific, measurable communication objectives. **Planning** stress-tests the change hypothesis, secures partner buy-in, and selects the most effective media mix for each audience segment. **Production** walks teams through message design, media and material production, and pre-testing for clarity, socio-cultural fit, and call for action. Finally, **Action & Reflection** guides roll-out, adaptive management, and rigorous monitoring and evaluation (M&E) that feed lessons back into future work. Throughout this management cycle, the guide insists on regular learning loops so adjustments happen in real time rather than ex-post.

A separate **SeedBox** of more than thirty plug-and-play so-called "seeds"—stakeholder maps, force field diagrams, media use planners, indicator scorecards, and more—anchors every step, enabling users to apply concepts immediately without reinventing templates. Case studies such as Venezuela's Flying Together campaign related to threatened bird species and the nationwide conservation radio drama as part of My Green Mongolia translate theory into real-world outcomes and demonstrate how adaptable the framework is to different cultures, languages, and resource levels.

Strategically, the manual urges teams to budget for communication, align messages with overall conservation goals, and measure progress through practice-oriented indicators. By embedding audience research, iterative learning, and objective metrics into every phase, it transforms communication from a peripheral activity into a catalyst for sustainable environmental results. Practitioners who adopt the guide's ten-step process can expect sharper objectives, deeper stakeholder ownership, complementary media selection, better M&E, and programs with proven records of conservation gains.

Acknowledgements

This Guide was developed with input from several rounds of reviews by specialists associated with the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and its:

- Commission on Education and Communication (CEC)
- Species Survival Commission (SSC)
- Commission on Environmental, Economic and Social Policy (CEESP)
- Commission on Ecosystem Management (CEM)
- World Commission on Environmental Law (WCEL)
- World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA)
- Behavior Change Task Force of CEC and SSC

This Guide has been derived from various sources, inter alia:

- FAO's Strategic Extension Campaign approach,
- GIZ concepts of environmental communication and strategic communication for sustainable development,
- CEPA toolkit (communication, education and public awareness) developed by IUCN CEC, or
- the Strategic Communication Guide for Access and Benefit Sharing published by GIZ and CBD.

One of the core authors of this Guide, Manfred Oepen, was also the author and editor of the above-mentioned GIZ publications. All these sources build on and use a variation of the ten steps of an effective communication strategy that we are using in this IUCN CEC Guide, and have been previously reviewed and recommended by the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), GIZ, and the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD-DAC).

IUCN CEC wishes to thank the following individuals for their critical contributions to this toolkit concerning advice, examples, checklists, text suggestions, resources, and illustrations for the toolkit:

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Abbreviations

ACT	Appropriate Communication in Development
C4SC	Communication for Social Change
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CEPA	communication, education, and public awareness
EEC	Environmental Education and Communication
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH
3H	Head-Heart-Hand
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
IUCN CEC	Commission on Education and Communication
IUCN CEESP	Commission on Environmental, Economic and Social Policy
IUCN CEM	Commission on Ecosystem Management
IUCN SSC	Commission on Species Survival Commission
IUCN WCEL	World Commission on Environmental Law
IUCN WCPA	World Commission on Protected Areas
KAP	Knowledge-Attitude-Practice
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MGM	My Green Mongolia
MOVE	Moderation and Visualization for Group Events
NGO	Non-government organisation
PA	Protected area
OECD-DAC	Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

Seedbox

The SeedBox has been put in a separate annex in order not to overload this Guide. All seeds in the ten steps detailed in this Guide are cross-referenced with the seeds 1.1 – 10.1 in the SeedBox.

Assessment

Seed 1.1	Situation analysis
Seed 1.2	Policy field analysis review
Seed 1.3	Big picture chart
Seed 1.4	Miradi
Seed 2.1	Overview of strategic stakeholders
Seed 2.2	Stakeholder map
Seed 2.3	Four-field analysis of stakeholders
Seed 2.4	Force field analysis
Seed 2.5	Knowledge – Attitudes – Practices (KAP)
Seed 3.1	Communication objectives
Seed 3.2	Indicators for communication objectives

Planning

Seed 4.1	If – Then: Drafting the strategy
Seed 5.1	Involvement of partners
Seed 5.2	Forms of co-operation and roles
Seed 5.3	Negotiation
Seed 5.4	Chairs in the corner
Seed 6.1	Media selection & mix

Production

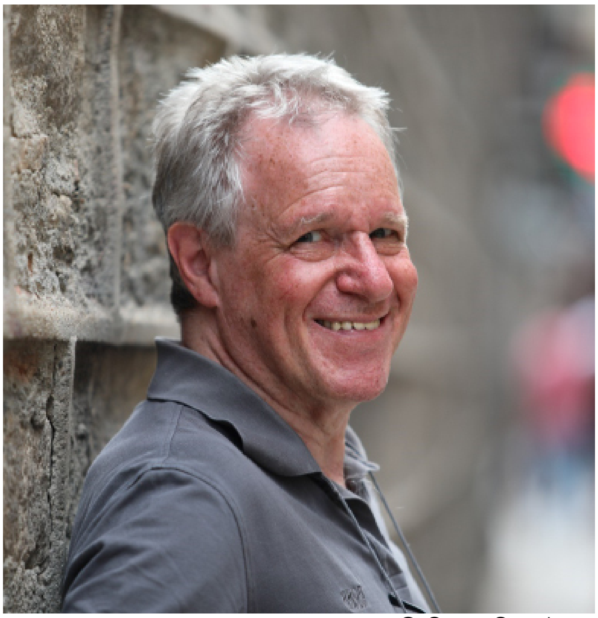
Seed 7.1	Message design
Seed 8.1	Media production & pretesting

Action & Reflection

Seed 9.1	Media use in the field
Seed 10.1	Monitoring and evaluation & process documentation

About the authors

Manfred Oepen has almost 40 years of professional experience in international development, focusing on communicating sustainable development, environmental, and climate change issues. Based on empirical social research such as KAP and other surveys, he designed Communication for Social Change (C4SC) strategies and multi-media campaigns in more than 30 countries. He is also a specialist on interactive training and planning using MOVE – Moderation and Visualization for Group Events, and on tailor-made curricula and human capacity development schemes. After studies of communication and political science at Freie Universität Berlin and Stanford University, Manfred worked, inter alia, as a consultant and project manager for various clients, and has been teaching C4SC at Berlin, Hamburg and Leipzig University. At the latter university, he is a founding member of the C4SC Research Center. Since 1992, he has been Managing Director of ACT Assist. He has been working on the "My Green Mongolia" campaign for GIZ since 2022.


Manfred Oepen. © Sean Southey.

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Sean Southey has over 30 years of experience in the international development and communications field. Sean started his career with five years in the Canadian Ministry of Environment, followed by 12 years working with United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) environment team. His NGO experience includes with ICLEI (Secretary General), Rare (Vice-President) and ten years as President of PCI Media. He is the CEO of the Canadian Wildlife Federation, one of the largest environmental organisations in Canada. In the past decade he has led the development of over 80 campaigns world-wide and won over 100 awards for impactful campaigns. Together with Manfred, he has co-created the "My Green Mongolia" campaign in 2022-2023. In 2016, Sean was elected as Chair for the Commission on Education and Communication (CEC) of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). Sean has lived, worked and traveled in over 100 countries. He holds a MSC from the London School of Economics and a BA in Economics from University of British Columbia, and has a wonderful daughter, Safia.


Sean Southey. © Safia Southey.

Email: sean.southey@gmail.com

Communication design workshop in Madagascar. © Sean Southey.

1

Introduction

The IUCN framework

We are nature.

Over time, humans have lost sight of specific values that allow us to comprehend our intimate and profound connection with Earth. We humans have built gaps that separate us from the natural world as if nature was something outside and detached from what and who we are. Our health and survival depend on our ability to nurture the values, behaviors, and attitudes that allow us to work with nature and not against it, understanding our place in this world and the responsibilities we share to protect and nurture it.

Humankind is facing unprecedented challenges with climate change, biodiversity loss, water depletion, threats to our biosphere's integrity, nutrient cycle disruption, unsustainable land use, and chemical pollution, just to name a few. We have significantly altered our surroundings through our relationships and use of natural resources. These changes negatively impact our health, as well as the planet's.

Considering these environmental challenges, healing the connection between humans and nature is critical to ensure a healthy world. As UNESCO put it in its 2021 report Reimagining our Futures Together: A new social contract for education, "to change the course and imagine alternative futures, we urgently need to rebalance our relationship with each other, the living planet, and technology. We must learn our interdependencies and human place and agency in a more-than-human world".

IUCN's Nature 2030 Programme highlights in its 10-year strategic pan that "the future of life on earth depends on the choices we make and the way these decisions are implemented over the coming years. There is an urgent need for immediate action on a global scale. The need grows with every day that passes".

This guide was created to support you, the readers, in responding to this need. The mission of the IUCN Commission on Education and Communication (CEC) is an agent of change that leads communication, learning, and knowledge management initiatives throughout IUCN and the conservation community.

family, community and global levels. Understanding sets us on the path to help shifts norms for the better. This is complicated work – part art, part science – but when approached with care, understanding, grace and a deep appreciation for the unknown, it can be accomplished.

For 75 years, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) has worked towards a sustainable future for people and nature. IUCN pursues a vision of "a just world that values and conserves nature". Drawing on a large and diverse membership, and thousands of volunteer experts across its seven global Commissions, IUCN is focused on the crucial mission of safeguarding our natural world and rebuilding a healthy and equitable planet for people and nature. This practice-oriented environmental communication strategy Guide is one of the CEC key contributions to this singular and essential goal.

Person sitting on top of cliff.Gabor Kozmon. Unsplash License.

Who – What – Why

A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.

"Who – What – Why" often are the three major questions to start an event or a process with. Let us answer these questions in respect with this guide.

As to the **WHAT**, this guide offers **advice** about the role, relevance, and use of **communication** for implementing conservation programmes at any intervention level and related to whatever conservation theme. It provides an overview of **communication approaches** and **methods** for the four major phases of your overall conservation programme cycle: assessment, planning, production, and action & reflection.

This guide is designed to be thematically agnostic so that you can use it on the issues that matter most to you and your community. It can guide you in conserving and protecting a species; it can be used to design a programme to engage communities in restoration; and, it can help support your efforts to mobilise the youth in your community to mitigate and adapt to climate change. It is useful for policy advocacy, even fundraising. It can help you in addressing a landscape, such as a protected areas, other area-based conservation measures, an ecosystem, or a city or town. Or, it can help a particular threat to a piece of nature you love. Whatever the issue that needs resolving, if communication is part of the solution, then this guide may assist.

Establishing conservation policies, regulations, and mechanisms is a process of **social change.** Well-designed communication strategies will help you manage the change effectively, and efficiently. Strategic environmental communication requires **specialist knowledge and experience**. Most people in charge ofconservation programmes are not communication experts. Therefore, a very first piece of advice is: Don't try to do it all by yourself!

If you can, **team up with others** who have the necessary expertise, and look out for partners who can help you design and implement the strategy and identify the required resources.

Fig. 2. Animated video and comic book on guidelines for visitors in Mongolian protected areas. © GIZ.

Let's have a first look now at what environmental communication is all about. In a nutshell, environmental communication is the planned and strategic use of communication processes and media products to support effective policy making, public participation and project implementation geared towards environmental sustainability.

Environmental communications in a nutshell...

missing link	... is the missing link between subject matter of environment issues and socio-political processes and policy making and public participation
strategic and systemic	...uses strategic planning and an integrated systems approach for networking among a variety of actors, and their levels and functions in an organizational hierarchy
process over product	... relies more on cost-effective and creative communication processes than on expensive media products so that related skills are defined technically as well as in terms of social, communicative, organizational, and political competence
integrated approach	... uses multi-faceted and integrated approaches involving mass media and community media, individuals, groups, and the public at large, and stakeholders comprising state authorities, non-government and community-based organizations, private sector, research institutions etc.
strategic planning	... makes use of step-by-step strategic planning as part of a policy, program, or project life cycle in the different phases of which communication takes over distinct functions and roles
community orientation	... is embedded in human and behavioral dimensions and is oriented towards community needs, problems, demands, and practices
ecological socialization	... fosters responsible resource management through an environmentally concerned socialization of individuals and groups
social learning	... means managing a social learning process that motivates and mobilizes for change through strategic alliances among stakeholders
practice priority	... as achieving practice changes is the ultimate objective, without which a plan simply remains a discussion on knowledge and attitudes

Fig. 3. Environmental communications in a nutshell. Source: Report authors.

Who - This guide is for

- **actors** who are **in charge** of conservation programmes, such as team leaders at the community level, project managers at the national level, focal points of international conventions and agreements, etc.,
- **stakeholders** who are **involved** in conservation programmes, such as officers in ministries, interested NGOs and civil society groups, as well as in the industry, the science community, etc., and
- **any other people** who aspire to communicate about the environment.

Purpose – This guide is to

- support decision makers build communication strategy into **programme life cycles,**
- help conservation experts and practitioners understand the **relevance** of strategic environmental communication,
- assist people working on conservation programmes with **guidance** and communication **seeds** that support the well-being of people and planet, and
- support people and organisations involved in conservation programmes to communicate their **interests and concerns.**

Why a special guide for communicating conservation?

The short answer to this question is "because **conservation programmes are so complex"**. We typically work at different levels and with a great diversity of stakeholders and issues such as biology, technology, law, justice, economics, politics, ethics, culture, etc., and touch upon a variety of sectors and markets.

The range of **stakeholders** involved can be broad and heterogeneous: from policy makers and legal experts, scientists, and the private sector, NGOs, to Indigenous Peoples and local communities. Each have their own **worldviews and perspectives**, speak their own languages, have their own interests and objectives – and the distribution of power among them is often unequal.

Conservation initiatives are often not a "project" with clear boundaries in space or time but rather touch many spheres of engagement, including the political arena and the **policy field.** Communicating conservation is only partly about selling a new concept and is equally about leading, coordinating and facilitating a **socio-political negotiation process.** If this factor is neglected, confrontative approaches may lead to one-way information dissemination disregarding understanding, instead of relying on two-way communication to facilitate 'shared meaning' and 'win-win' situations.

Environmentalists often believe that scientific facts and ecological concerns are convincing on their own - but what people perceive and act on is influenced by emotions and socialisation more than by reason and knowledge. An inflated expectation that the cognitive power of science can resolve any issue can lead to what we call a 'Said, Done!' situation whereby experts can declare an optimal outcome and then be surprised when no, or limited, action is undertaken. We know from decades of experience, a disregard for **communication barriers** leads to weaker programme design.

Communication professionals, especially early in their careers, may get frustrated when asked to perform a task that suspect will have little impact. They may be directed to "make a brochure", "build a video for our website" or "set up a TikTok account for us", when they know that no rigorous planning has been undertaken. Often, communication activities are implemented on an ad- hoc and sporadic basis, mainly using top-down mass media, without a "theory of change", and usually neglecting public participation and community media.

For all these reasons, this guide will focus on questions such as: How to initiate and maintain **communication with and among stakeholders** about a variety of environmental issues? How to design and deliver **targeted messages** to **decision makers** and **change agents** and beyond? How to support different stakeholder groups to arrive at a **shared meaning** of conservation and its goals? We will show you how to **use communication strategically as a management tool** that will help you turn your programme into practice effectively along the scope of biodiversity conservation.

Speaking of the role of communication in conservation programme management, the analogy to **Liebig's Law on plant growth** comes to mind: Even the most sophisticated communication strategy will not solve a conservation problem if a minimum of economic resources, social organisation and political bargaining power is lacking. Hence, information alone is not the missing link between a problem and a solution. This is why communication should be considered as a management tool alongside other instruments that may be market-based, legal, financial, or technical. When it comes to addressing issues of nature and people, it can often be more motivating to incorporate the **non-environmental co-benefits of taking action**. For example, when installing a more energy-efficient heating system or insulation to your house that is subsidised or tax-reduced by the government.

It is important to note that stakeholders and beneficiaries of a conservation intervention require distinct communication strategies. Stakeholders support the design and implementation of an intervention, while beneficiaries – at times also referred to as target audience – are the focal group whose practices the intervention seeks to influence. While beneficiaries may sometimes become stakeholders through empowerment or involvement over time, each group has different roles and needs, and communication approaches should be designed accordingly.

Liebig's Law on Plant Growth

The yield is related to the one indispensable nutrient (light, water, fertilizers etc.) which is available in smallest amount.

In other words - if your plant doesn't see the light, you may water it as much as you want, it won't grow.

Structure of this guide

This guide starts with a glimpse at the IUCN framework and an overview of key dimensions of environmental communication theory and practice. These are foundational and will make the rest of the guide easier to absorb and to utilise effectively.

We then move directly into the ten steps for strategic communication, practice-oriented sequential guidance to design an effective communication programme for your conservation challenge.

Finally, we provide a set of methods and tools – that we call seeds - that will help you put the ten steps of strategic communication into practice. This SeedBox has been put in a separate annex in order not to overload the guide. But all seeds in the SeedBox are cross-referenced with the ten steps detailed in the guide. This allows you to access the right seed at the right time in the process of designing your communication strategy. For example, the seed "Stakeholder Map" or "Force Field Analysis" will clarify crucial elements of Step 2 Stakeholder Analysis.

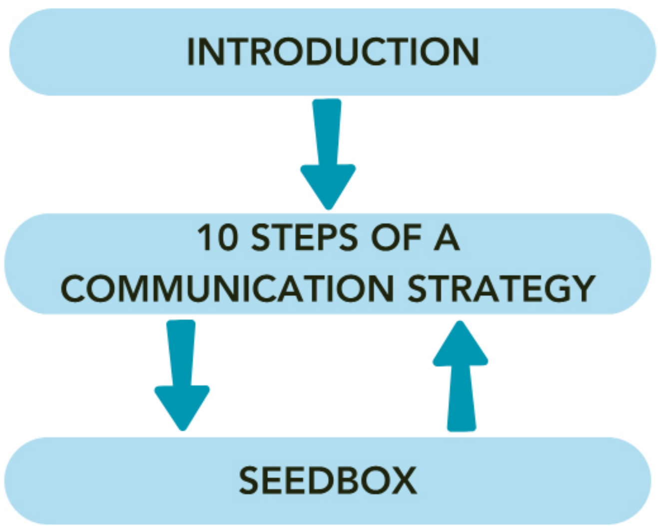


Fig. 4. Guide structure. Source: Report authors.

As the guide was written to allow you to use key sections independently, you may find occasional repetition. We have tried to keep this to a minimum but recognise the value of using different sections as training and planning seeds at key moments in your process.

Growing practice in the implementation of conservation programmes will bring about new communication needs, concepts, methods, and seeds. Therefore, this guide is intended to be a **living document,** to be updated, complemented and expanded as best practices emerge.

Icons used in this guide

Throughout the text of this guide we will use the following five icons for your orientation:

Seeds – are referring to items in the Seedbox (see Seeds 1.1 to 10.1) in the separate Seedbox attached as an annex. The seeds are cross-referenced with the ten steps of the communication strategy in the guide itself.

Case studies – illustrate how the ten steps are implemented in two real-life initiatives

Examples – refer to other instances that represent a point made in the guide

Supplementary resources – are about literature, links or other references related to communication strategy design

Tips – are supposed to help you apply steps or points suggested in the guide

Getting started

Before diving into the significance of communicating conservation strategically, it is useful to recall some general features of communication.

Communication is a two-way process - not one-way information dissemination

Communication is rooted in the Latin *"communis facere"*, i.e. to develop a community, to share, to act together, to involve. So, communication is much more than just speaking, listening, writing, reading, or watching, and goes far beyond the simplistic sender-media-receiver model that Aristotle had in mind – and some of us still have.

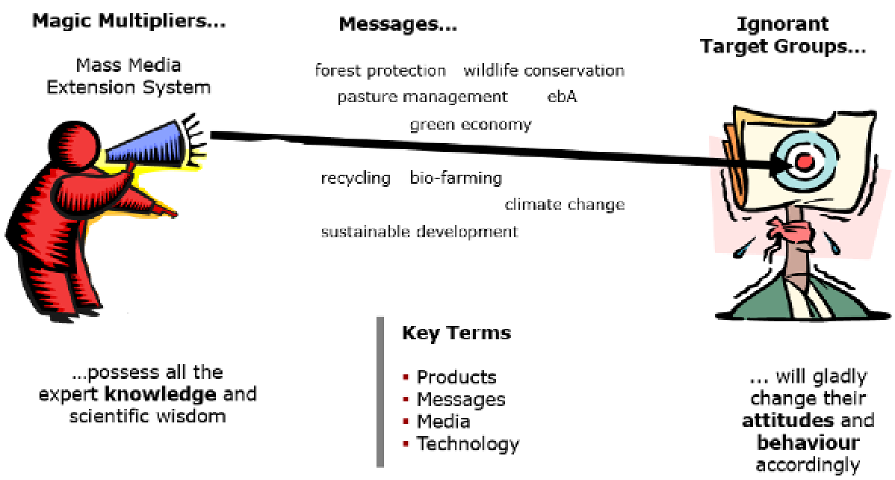


Fig. 5. One-way information dissemination is not effetive. © Manfred Oepen.

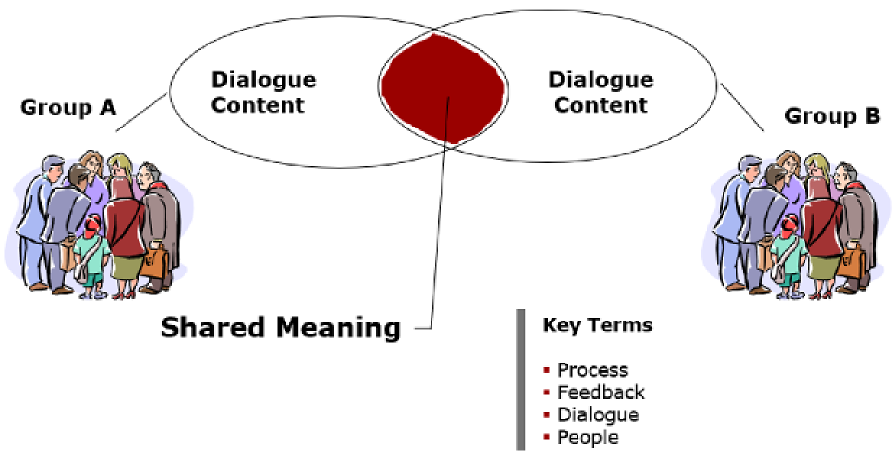


Fig. 6. Communicaitons as dialogue creates shared meaning. © Manfred Oepen.

Communication is also not the same as information, which is the one-way transfer of signals from a sender to a recipient disregarding feedback or understanding. Communication necessarily implies social context, relevant content, dialogue and, most importantly, 'shared meaning' between two or more communicators, i.e. the whole process of social change. Therefore, this guide starts from a phi- losophy of a communication dialogue ***by and with*** people rather than information dissemination ***to and for people.*** As Nora Quebral, the 'mother' of development communication in the Philippines, put it "We badly need communication that does not put people as sources and receivers at different ends but rather recognises they are right smack in the middle."

Communication is subjective: The mean- ing that one person, the sender, puts in a message is not the same that another person, the receiver, takes out from the same message. The receiver interprets the message according to his or her own perceptions – not according to the sender's intentions. Only feedback and exchange can create ***shared meaning.***

This is why it is crucial to go beyond producing brochures or posters, and to approach communication in an interactive and strategic way. Moreover, a multi-stakeholder process like a conservation programme is not limited to one sender and a couple of receivers. Rather, multiple and diverse stakeholder groups will need to engage in a dialogue with each other, exchanging views as both senders and receivers.

Good communication does not subscribe to a development model: "We have a solution. Do you have a problem?" The question "**WHO** is shaping or determining the desired or intended social change?" should be at the very beginning of any communication strategy. We strongly advocate for instigating and facilitating dialogue and input from different interest groups involved in each issue set and problem prior to initiating the programme. It should also be mentioned that we start from a notion of non-violent communication", i.e. a humanistic philosophy and approach to increase empathy and understanding to improve the overall quality of life.

Perception is the only reality

How we interpret other people's messages is shaped by our own background, world views, experience and culture. Words do not mean the same to all of us. For instance, a European will have a different idea of "heat" and "cold" than a person from the Sahel. The two will think of different things when they hear the word "fruit". Consider what that means for abstract concepts like "freedom", "justice" or "sustainability". Also, we tend to judge other people's statements by the quality of our relationship with them. For example, we are usually more ready to accept advice or opinions from people we trust than from those we don't know well or distrust. Therefore, trust and credibility in communication cannot be over-estimated.

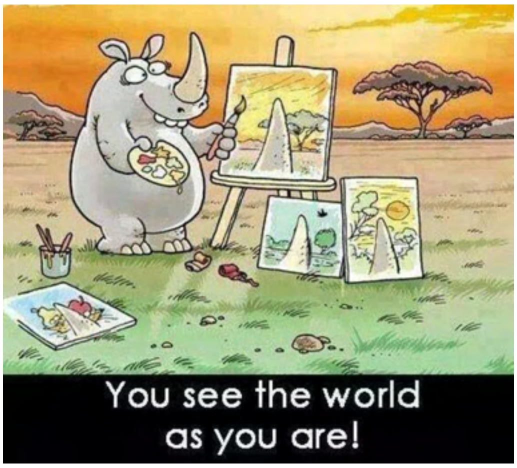


Fig. 7. Communication as dialogue. © Gustavo Sanchez.

That is why many conservation communicators recommend working with trusted voices: It's not just what is said, but who is saying it. The quality of these discussions will depend on what people perceived and if they trust the source. On the other hand, this trend may lead people to disregard information that contradicts their own views. This echo chamber effect makes it harder to adopt new perspectives and hinder practice change.

Fig. 8. 7-tips for effective storytelling. © Sean Southey & Safia Southey.

Know your audience

If you don't know who your audience is, or what they care about, you can't reach them effectively.

Conservation programmes requires knowledge, motivation and the cooperation of many different individuals, groups and organisations. They may know little about conservation – but you may also know just as little about them. Who are they, really? **What drives their practices?** What is important to them? What interests and motivates them? What turns them off? Who are their role models? Who are the change agents in their community who already do what you would like the whole community to do? Are their opinions dominated by specific individuals or groups?

Your messages will only hit the mark if you relate to your audience's perceptions and views. So, look for shared meaning by finding out as much as you can about your audience. How? Read about them. Observe their daily practices. Identify what people like and don't like about a certain practice that should be changed. Study them. Share experiences with them. And most importantly: **Listen to them before you speak** as even the correct level of jargon may be crucial for your message design.

Adapt your communication style to the needs and interests of your audience

Speak from a place of love: Don't stress only the problem and the challenges but communicate in a way which shows what can and does work. In other words: Love, not loss, a concept promoted by IUCN CEC for over a decade. In conservation communication it is usually wiser not to talk about what went wrong—extinction, habitat loss or resource scarcity—but rather to share what we loved in the first place. This will make for a **relaxed atmosphere** and open opportunities to dig deeper into complex subject matters related to conservation. Studies show, the quickest way to the brain, is usually through the heart!

If you want to attract a particular group's interest and motivate its members to contribute to your conservation-related goals, you need to adapt to their style and what matters to *them*. It is not what you **put into** a poster, brochure, film, or your most sophisticated message that will determine the success of your communication. It is what your audience **takes out** from your media and messages. This is why the Golden Rule of social marketing is "The worm has to be tasty to the fish, not the angler".

The worm has to be tasty to the fish, not the fisherman.

Fig. 9. Deni Rodendo. © GIZ.

Based on your knowledge of your audience, now put yourself in their shoes. Dress the way they like and accept. Use inviting language that they understand. Start speaking of things that are *important to them* and try linking this to what is important to you. Tell them what conservation offers to them, talk about incentives and advantages, how they feel and what your counterpart will be able to do with them. In a nutshell: Present your conservation messages in ways that are attractive to *them*.

Keep in mind, too, that **people learn and communicate differently.** Some learn best through concrete experiences and emotions that touch the **heart**. Others learn best by processing information by thinking about it, using their **head**. Yet others may need to process information by actively doing something, using their **hands**.

This is why we will in this guide combine the "3H" approach (Head-Heart-Hands) from **non-formal education** with the KAP approach (Knowledge-Attitudes-Practices) from **social marketing** so that the cognitive, emotional and practice- oriented levels of learning are involved.

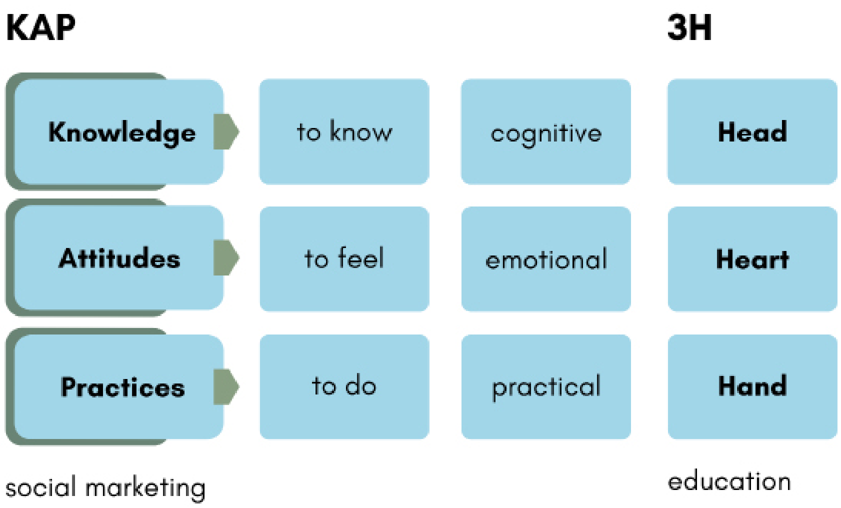


Fig. 10. Knowledge–attitudes–practices, head–heart–hand. Source: Report authors.

Define your communication objectives

To start with, communication objectives are not the same as your conservation programme objectives – even though the former support and relate to the latter. What do you want to achieve because of your communication strategy? Do you just want to increase peoples' knowledge – which is generally the easiest. Do you want to influence their attitudes? Or do you want them to change their practices – which tends to be much harder.

Ask yourself: For what purpose are we designing this intervention? As you will see in the next chapter, a conservation programme involves activities covering different environmental issues. Each of them has its own policy objective and its own set of stakeholders. The communication objectives for each issue and with each group will therefore be different, too. You will save yourself a lot of effort once you consider carefully what exactly you need to communicate with whom. Don't waste your time with approaches that target everyone and, therefore, reach no one.

Fig. 11. Comicbook on wildlife conservation for children in Laos. Chongkham Phonekeo. © GIZ.

Stories work

We often use brain-appealing words to exchange views – but when it comes to decisions on new ideas, emotions and practical concerns are often stron- ger. Images and sounds that appeal to our heart and hands play an important role. We all know this from hard-to resist TV commercials, or an inviting poster. Hence, when we want to motivate and mobilise - people to contribute to conservation programmes, we need to appeal not only to what they know but also to what they feel and do about conservation. So, go beyond words, work with rich images and sounds, attract attention and always strive to reach people's heads, hearts and hands.

This works most effectively if you create a **"surround sound"** experience, cross-fertilising messages through multiple media and materials, and diverse channels and voices. As people prefer to hear things from different sources, pick spokespeople from different walks of life. In the same context, content is only powerful if people truly engage with it. Hence, it is strategic to design to distribute because **if content is King, then distribution is the Queen.** Don't wait for your audience and intended ben- eficiaries to come to you and pick up the nice media and messages you have prepared for them. Instead go out and meet them, distribute the media and messages through a variety of communication channels preferred by them. Or, even better, develop the media and messages togeth- er with them. Always remember to meet your audience where they are, not where you want them to be.

And finally, we environmentalists often use facts-based language, while many people are motivated by powerful **storytelling** built on empathy and imagination. Use stories throughout your work, and choose them wisely – they are not stories you like to tell, but rather stories people will engage with and learn from.

Test your hypothesis

Because of the **subjectiveness** involved in communication, you often need to work with hypotheses, sometimes called a **theory of change.** You may not always know for sure what others find important. And it is not always obvious how your messages are perceived or what happens to them. Testing your hypotheses means seeking feedback, from observation and from dialogue. Has your message been heard, read, or seen? Has it been understood, shared meaning been achieved? Does your audience agree? Did they act and change practices the way you intended? Just once, or more often? Has the difference between addictive and non-additive behavior patterns and drivers been observed? The answers may not be obvious. For example, smokers may have heard, understood, and accepted that smoking is unhealthy. Whether they give the habit up – for a day or forever – is a different matter. So – did your assumptions and If–Then hypotheses (see Seed 4.1) work?


Preparing for outdoor environmental education in Laos.
© Manfred Oepen.

"Said - Done"

Said is not **heard**
Heard is not **understood**
Understood is not **approved**
Approved is not yet **done**
Done is not yet **maintained**

Often, what we try to achieve in conservation is easier said than done. This leads us to at least five **barriers** lying between 'Said' and Done'.

Removing each one of these barriers is the daily business of every teacher, trainer, consultant or communicator. Any recommendation or innovation in conservation must reach its intended beneficiaries physically and intellectually. It must relate to existing systems of knowledge and meaning in order to be understood. It must be considered relevant and useful to be accepted. And, finally, its intended beneficiaries must have all the political, economic, social and cultural resources available that are needed to transform an increase in knowledge and a change to environmentally friendly attitudes into a change of practices. Because, ultimately, it is the change of practices, and only the change of practices, that constitutes the success of a conservation programme.

Said–done example

Said is not heard: A protected area (PA) manager is concerned about endangered flowers because farmers mow the grass for stock feed too early in the year for the flowers to set seed. He prepares a leaflet and a poster to explain the need and background to mow on a later date in the year. The PA newsletter has a message that farmers can pick up the leaflet at the local administration office. However, the leaflets are not collected as most farmers do not read the PA newsletter.

Heard is not understood: Some farmers, however, by chance, find the leaflet and poster at the admin office. These explain the scientific facts about biodiversity and the right date for mowing. The farmers even discuss the matter with their peers but they do not understand the academic language. All but a few are left behind puzzled.

Understood is not approved: Yet, a few farmers understood a clear message from the more simple poster: only start mowing from 18 June onwards. But they and their peers do not approve because this is the time when they are still busy sheering their goats. And why is the PA interfering with their business anyway!

Approved is not done: Some young farmers who attended school in the capital approve of conservation principles. But mowing later means that they lose on the quantity of hay for winter feeding. Without financial compensation they do not want to change their practices.

Done is not maintained: When the government offers such a financial bonus, many farmers mow at the right time. The PA manager is happy. But when this compensation is accompanied by a lot of bureaucracy, farmers return to their former practices in the next year.

Children exploring nature in Mongolia (above) and enjoying a comic on wildlife conservation in Laos (below). © GIZ.

Outdoor environmental education is fun for children in Laos. © GIZ.

2

Getting strategic – ten steps for communicating conservation

Entry points

The guide offers **advice** about the role, relevance and use of **communication** for implementing conservation programmes at any intervention level, be it individual, group, community, municipal, national, regional or global. Your entry point for the need of strategic communication may also be related to a specific conservation field such as illegal hunting or wildlife trade, protected area management, species survival, forest protection, wildlife or biodiversity conservation. We explore some examples of such entry points below.

My Green Mongolia campaign

Environmental Education in Mongolia. © Manfred Oepen.

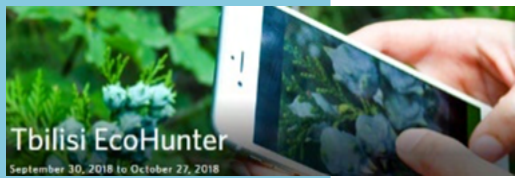
In the **My Green Mongolia** (MGM) campaign more than 20 organisations have agreed to work together for the environmental of Mongolia. They started with sharing their environmental communication and education (EEC) products and resources on digital platforms in early 2022. Next, the initiative generated a 26-episode radio drama series. These characters are now used in both animated videos and community theatre. A MediaKit has been developed that showcases the MGM media and materials. Trainings for the MGM partners have been undertaken based on this ten step Guide to design a communication strategy to encourage and facilitate them to start their own campaigns on themes such as water, recycling and youth support to protected areas.

Communicating biodiversity, wildlife, and diversity in Laos


Environmental Road Show in Laos. © Manfred Oepen.

In **Laos**, a Lao-German project employed a similar EEC strategy based on three KAP suveys, an edutainment approach and capacity development over a period of more than ten years since 2011. It aims at improving knowledge, attitudes and practices regarding wildlife and biodiversity conservation, forest protection, protected area management and climate change adaptation. TV, radio, videos and social media, and environmental tours and community theatre in remote villages were combined, and are documented in a manual and a Media Kit. Almost 66% of respondents in the awareness surveys had watched, listened to or read mass media messages, and felt better informed than non-users about climate change (+21%) or the extinction of wildlife (+15%). Survey respondents consistently put "protecting the environment" their second most important topic on a national policy agenda. The edutainment-orientation of this approach, utilising VoxPop and radio dramas showed an improvement of environmental journalism over time as confirmed by 77% of stakeholders.

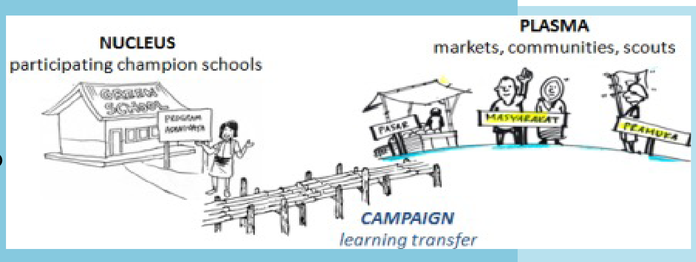
Transboundary biodiversity programme in the South Caucasus



Social Media News in Georgia. © Manfred Oepen.

In 2016-2019, the transboundary biodiversity programme IBiS in the South Caucasus used ten step communication strategies and related trainings to run campaigns on forests biodiversity in **Armenia**, pasture management in **Azerbaijan** and urban biodiversity in **Georgia**. Geared to make the young, de sion makers, and journalists, the media mix employed TV, radio, social and print media news in addition to community-based activities such as Days of Nature and media festivals.

Ecological footprint action at schools in Indonesia



Carbon Footprint Programme at Green Schools in Indonesia. © Manfred Oepen.

A youth-oriented project in **Indonesia** by the Ministries of Education and Environment in 2016–2017 transferred nationwide achievements in improving the carbon footprint at 19 green schools to 10-step climate change campaigns in four cities. Using info booths, comics, banners, films, quizzes, etc. in a playful and interactive way, the campaign focused on themes such as "engage in recycling", "bike to school" or "save energy at home".

Fighting illegal wildlife trade worldwide

© WildForLife.

Wild For Life, a UNEP led campaign to reduce illegal trade in wildlife is another good example of a comprehensive multi-tiered communication approach. Utilising celebrity voices, an interactive online quiz, videos, a pledge, airport exhibitions, air plane giveaways and many other engagement features, the campaign has run for years encouraging people not yet engaged in conservation to understand illegal trade in wildlife and help equip them to act.

So – from whatever entry point you start, this guide is for you. It provides an overview of **communication approaches** and **methods** for the four major phases of programme implementation: assessment, planning, production, and action & reflection. You may notice here that these four phases refer to both the communication strategy and the conservation programme as a whole. This ten step guide is set up as an integral part and a **management tool of your overall conservation programme cycle.**

Other guides

As the saying goes **"Many roads lead to Rome"** which means there are many different ways to achieve the same result. We already acknowledged that this guide has particularly borrowed from the GIZ concepts of environmental communication and strategic communication for sustainable development, the CEPA toolkit (communication, education and public awareness) developed by IUCN-CEC, and the Strategic Communication Guide for Access and Benefit Sharing published by GIZ and CBD. All these sources build on and use a variation of the ten steps of an effective communication strategy that we are using in this IUCN-CEC Guide.

In this guide, we will be using the Provita Flying Together Initiative related to two bird species as a behavior change campaign case to exemplify the practical dimensions of strategic communication design across the ten steps outlined below.

But there are **other environmental communication guides** with less or more than ten steps. Some start from a very specific topic such as illegal wildlife trade in general and come up with a Behaviour Change Decision Tree in six major steps, or a 6-step communication strategy on demand reduction behavior change in illegal Venezuelan threatened bird markets, or demand reduction strategies to combat illegal trade in CITES-listed species in five steps. Others set off from a regional perspective such as the European Environment Agency on public communication, environment policy and behavioral science in three chapters, or the 6-step Biodiversity Communications Handbook for non-profit organisations in the U.S. and Canada. In their Behavior Change For Nature Science Toolkit, the Behavioural Insights Team (BIT) and Rare compare differences in methodologies: BIT has 5 stages and nine steps while Rare uses eight steps in their projects. The GreenCom guide to effective environmental education and communication uses 18 lessons learned in five stages. In their self-paced online course on Communicating the Value of Biodiversity, UNDP, the NBSAP Forum, the CBD Secretariat, and Rare offer five lessons, one of which is a ten step guide creating an effective communication plan. Another online course by UNDP and RARE introduces Behavior-Centered Design, an approach that blends principles of design thinking and behavioral science to develop innovative solutions to environmental challenges in eight steps from framing an environmental challenge, gaining empathy with your target audience, connecting research data to behavioral insights, ideation and prototyping, testing and launching, and measuring the success of behavioral intervention.

We encourage you to find the guide that best fits your needs. This guide was produced first and foremost for the IUCN community, which is hugely diverse in topics, size, and types of organisations, audiences, and issues. Thus, we have sought to engage you at a strategic and conceptual level while seeking to make each step practical and achievable.

Practices or behaviors?

As you may have noticed, some of the guides mentioned above are grounded in the **social and/or communication sciences** that refer to the need of changing environmental 'practices' while others do so from **psychological science** referring to applied 'behavior' change (ABC). Simply explained, behavioral sciences abstract empirical data to instrumentalise or nudge decision processes at the micro-level within and between (groups of) individuals, while social sciences investigate practices, processes and impacts within a society or community in a systemic and structural way. Both acknowledge that there is no rational transfer from knowledge (what you know) to attitudes (what you think and feel) to practices or behavior (what you do), and that communication barriers must be overcome by taking the socio-cultural setting of intended audiences seriously.

Therefore, we in this guide see these two approaches as interconnected. We strongly believe that the **two schools complement each other,** and you will observe many references to ABC in the ten step structural approach of the CEC Guide.

To this end, two IUCN Commissions, the Special Survival Commission and the CEC have set up a Task Force on behavior change with the key objective to formulate insights and guidance for high quality behavioral interventions in biodiversity conservation. In the years to come, this will include freely accessible training materials and modules that can help build further capacity across IUCN and in the biodiversity conservation space.

© Sean Southey

IUCN SSC CEC
BEHAVIOUR
CHANGE
TASK FORCE

Getting strategic

Being strategic refers to

- long-term vision,
- alliances,
- goal & action orientation,
- priorities,
- logical consistency in a step-by-step approach, and
- management of activities, budgets, time and human resources.

As we have learned from the previous chapters, implementing conservation programmes means establishing an innovative set of policies, legal provisions and other mechanisms by involving a considerable number and variety of different groups of people. What does **"strategic communication"** mean in this context?

Being strategic is about setting goals and identifying means to achieve them. It is the opposite of isolated, shotgun or ad-hoc initiatives. Strategic communication for conservation programme means reaching **shared meaning** of its underlying concepts, principles and implications with a variety of stakeholders, and defining workable, co-operative solutions.

Put differently: **strategic communication is more than disseminating information,** and much more than producing brochures, films or TV ads. The latter are often used ad-hoc for introducing new products or projects – but that is not strategic, and mostly not impactful either. As such there are major differences between conventional and strategic communication approaches:

conventional communication approach	strategic communication approach
Managers focus on media and come up with exciting ideas that capture the imagination.	Managers analyze the wider system and plan strategically to achieve desired outcomes.
Approach is to convince people individually.	Interventions are focused on goals and audiences and messages determine media.
Their social environment is not analyzed.	Communication is integrated from initial stages in the full scope of a program cycle.
Communication is an end of pipe activity, isolated from the rest of the project/program.	Target audiences are involved in planning and interventions are based on their values.
Content and message are secondary and cannot answer "why?" or "what?" questions.	

Fig. 12. Strategic communications. Source: Report authors.

Instead, strategic communication means pro-actively giving rise to stakeholders' perspectives through **dialogue, consensus building and partnerships.** Internal as well as external factors need to be considered: Internal factors include human characteristics, such as norms and values, attitudes and practices, emotions and beliefs, culture and social relations. External factors refer to the 'carrier' of a message, i.e. material such as brochures, posters or film, as well as the 'vehicles' that bring the material to the target groups, like print or broadcast or social media, the internet, influential individuals, or the dialogue that occurs during meetings and group events.

People do not always act on the basis of statistics and studies. Personal narratives and reports are just as important as objectively verifiable data. People are driven by their own interests, select from the information available to them, and act on the basis of their perceptions.

Ultimately, change results from a blend of neutral data and subjective interpretations. As indicated in the iceberg chart, what affects the relation between humans and nature is not so much the cognitive, policy- and knowledge-based tools which environmentalists mostly use for creating external (extrinsic) motivation in their environmental projects. This is just the tip of the iceberg. Instead, attitudes and practices regarding nature are primarily shaped by non-rational, socio-cultural values and norms, emotions, needs and lifestyles based on internal (intrinsic) motivation and experiential learning.

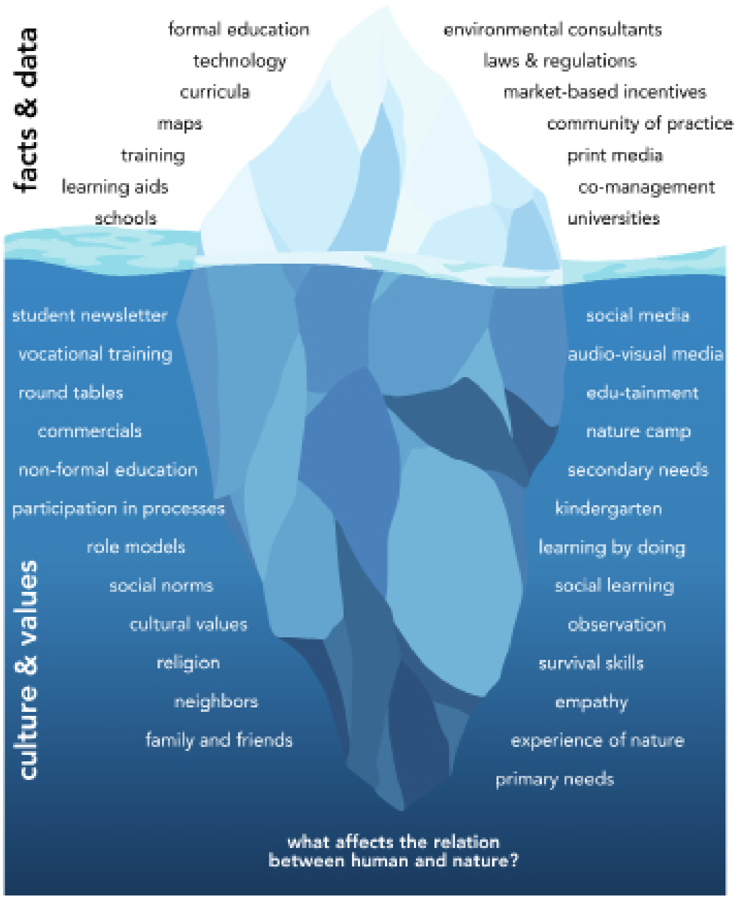


Fig. 13. Human-nature relations. © Manfred Oepen.

We work here on the assumption that individuals, groups or communities go through five stages of change while moving from environmentally detrimental to environmentally friendly practices: **Awareness** or first exposure to something new, an innovation; **Interest** that leads to actively seeking related details; **Decision** by weighing the advantages/disadvantages of the innovation and either adopting or rejecting it; **Implementation** by using and evaluating the innovation; **Confirmation** by finalising the decision to continue using the innovation. The decision-making stage is the most crucial one as incentives and benefits come into play. When people ask "What is in it for me?" they are engaging a central act of human nature that will contribute to whether you change to a new brand of coffee or a more environmentally friendly practice. This question does not necessarily refer to a financial outcome, but often includes a social or cultural incentive such as recognition, pride, or simple "doing good". Norma- tive appeals, however – telling people "Do this! Don't do that!" – rarely work.

The necessary skills associated with strategic communication can be learned and applied by national focal points, national competent authorities, civil society organisations and others involved in conservation programme implementation. The key is to define up-front for what and for whom the information is meant, and how different groups are supposed to translate information into communication and action. This is best achieved by means of a systematic and comprehensive, stepwise approach, which is structured along the four main stages of a programme or policy cycle: Assessment, Planning, Production and Action & Reflection.

Ten step strategic communication

Failing to plan is planning to fail

Strategic communication as described in this guide helps stakeholders ex-change ideas, change directions and shift to a higher gear towards conservation programme implementation. It bridges 'hard' technical and legal know-how and the 'soft' action-oriented change of critical practices. It is oriented towards participation and involvement, which are indispensable for the acceptance, credibility and sustainability of new ideas and changes such as conservation programme.

Having said this, a word of caution: Communication is neither a magic wand that will help overcome all conservation programme challenges, nor is it for highly specialised journalists and media producers only. Rather, **communication is a management tool** that supports the conservation programme process, like the chain on a bicycle. The bike won't move without it, but the chain cannot move on its own. Similarly, strategic communication transforms the power generated by those in charge of conservation programme into joint action with others.

This is why the ten steps of strategic communication reflect the reality of your work in a conservation programme cycle. Orient yourself by the four main stages, i.e.,

- first, collecting information and insights during the **assessment** or analysis stage,
- next, doing the basic **planning** on who to involve and what media to choose,
- then, going into **production** of media and messages, and
- finally, taking **action** and **reflect** on what you have achieved.

Fig. 13. © Safia Southey.

In other words:

Fig. 14. Assessment, planning, production, action & reflection. © Safia Southey.

A remark on the methodology and the logical consistency of the ten steps and the related tools is due: You will see that all steps build on and refer to each other but as each step has been designed as a stand-alone unit they are partly overlapping and iterative. For example, in the assessment phase, Step 1 and Step 2 are largely combined because the situation you look at and the stake-holders who are relevant in it cannot be separated in practice. If it turns out in your situation analysis that you will need partners then you cannot wait for Step 5 to dig deeper into these issues. The same for Steps 4 and 10 – we seriously recommend not only to plan your communication strategy at Step 4 and measure its success at the end but to do monitoring whether you are on the right track iteratively at each step.

Finally, we offer advice that applies to all serious and complex matters – this is playful work at heart, it mixes art and science, and we encourage you to keep a good sense of humor while using this guide as while designing and implementing your conservation initiative. Being open to the unexpected, watching for new opportunities, failing and revisioning, and looking for the joy that people feel in conservation will position you well for success.

And now, finally, let's get strategic – step by step.

Step 1: Situational analysis

Mistakes in communication planning

Communication "to address threats to biodiversity" is too vague, when the real communication issue is "to reduce the pressure of visitors camping on the habitat of a rare flower species".

Posters or leaflets with beautiful pictures and messages about the importance of an area that is to be protected may not be very useful if the real communication issue is to address people's perception that a new protected area will mean restrictions to their normal way of life, business, recreation or new investments.

What this step is about

Key question: What solutions to given problems do you want to communicate?

Relevant seeds:
Seed 1.1, Situation analysis
Seed 1.2, Policy field analysis review
Seed 1.3, Big picture chart
Seed 1.4, Miradi

Communication is a management tool to help you solve problems. Therefore, it is helpful to clarify first things first:

1. Which issues do you want to address in your communication strategy?
2. What do you have to say regarding these problems?
3. How can communication contribute to solving the problem?

The answers to these questions depend on the particular situation in your country or community, and on the objectives you want to achieve. In a conservation programme, they relate to which topics, regions, social environment etc. you are working on at a given point in time. You will also want to familiarise yourself with the different policy objectives and the potential range of stakeholders, as well as with some of the to-do's to manage each field successfully.

Starting out from those objectives and to-do's you need to arrive at a clear picture of the specific situation you are facing, the challenges that you decide to tackle, and what you need to or want to say about them. Only when you are clear about these matters will you be able to define your communication approach.

Even if you start from the same entry point in terms of topic or region, different countries or communities may find themselves in very different situations and face considerably different challenges. If you don't clarify what the situation and related problems are in your country or community, you run the risk of investing money and time into communication about minor issues – while missing out on the important ones.

It is important to clarify what are the desired changes in the people involved in the problem at stake. Is it a lack of skills or "know how" to make a change, is it to **change the attitudes or mind sets** of people and/or organisations, the way people feel about an issue, or – most difficult – to **change their practices?** In each situation, the different states of knowledge, attitudes and practices require different communication strategies.

Assessment

Conservation issues tend to be complex as there are often many actors with different interests and viewpoints involved. The desired changes may benefit or disadvantage different interest groups involved. The resistance to change may be due to a lack of financial resources, a lack of alternative ways of generating income, and/or a lack of technical resources or infrastructure. In each case communication alone cannot solve the problem. When the desired change of practices for conservation does not benefit the people involved, usually other instruments need to be used that support, and are supported by, strategic communication. Significant instruments that often help bring about change are:

- legislation and regulation, such as laws, directives, restrictions, and conventions,
- financial or market-based incentives, such as subsidies, deposits, fees, taxes, and compensation,
- facilities, such as proper equipment, machines and tools, infrastructure.

Conservation requires changes in people's knowledge, attitudes and practices. As people approach a change in practices, they weigh up the benefits and disadvantages before making a change. The adjacent diagram helps show the role of communication in bringing about change according to perceived benefits, as an independent instrument and/or in support of other instruments.

The **CEPA Guide** offers a range of positive and negative examples for communication standing alone or in combination with other tools, with or without a situation analysis.

How you can take this step

There are many ways to conduct a situation analysis. The conventional way is to commission a **study** or **survey**. The more complex the conservation programme is, and the less is known about the situation and related challenges, the more insights you will gain from a broad, formal analysis – and the more useful will be the investment.

If you just need an initial overview – and/or if you are tight on resources - Step 1 can be combined with an analysis of the knowledge, attitudes and practices (KAP) of the most important stakeholder groups (Step 2) and the definition of communication objectives (Step 3). The seed **Situation Analysis** (Tool **1.1**) provides a simple table that helps you clarify what you need to achieve within your particular conservation programme. It also provides insights into the particular challenges or problems in that situation. However, you should familiarise yourself with Step 2 and Step 3 before using this seed, looking at the **Assessment** stage as a whole.

The assessment stage is often referred to as the '**homework**' of your communication strategy which should not be neglected even if you believe you know the facts about the problem at hand. Accurate insight of the causes and effects is crucial to convince tar get groups, potential partners, decision makers and other sectors or levels of government that a specific issue needs to be tackled urgently. This is why the first three steps are essential for any communication plan to prevent wasting energy, time and financial resources in communication efforts which will have no effect.

If you require a more thorough analysis, a different – or complementary – option is to conduct a **Policy Field Analysis Review** (Seed **1.2**), which helps you define the system boundaries of the conservation programme issue in question. This is important in order not to overextend the scope, audiences and activities related to your communication strategy.

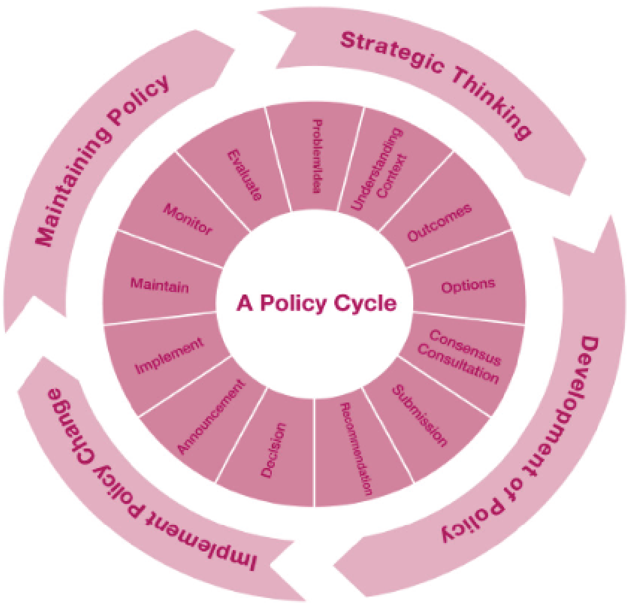


Fig. 15. A Policy Cycle. © Anthony F. Camilleri.

Another useful method is the **Big Picture Chart** (Seed **1.3**), with which you can identify the driving and restraining forces at work as related to a specific problem. Driving forces push towards your goals, restraining forces might stand in the way of progress. Obviously, when the driving forces are stronger than the restraining ones, your chances for success are greater. At a later stage of the process, you will think of ways to strengthen the driving forces and weaken the restraining forces. A Big-Picture Chart can guide you in developing and implementing your communication strategy.

For more location-specific analyses, where indigenous and local communities are involved, you may consider a **Participatory Rapid Appraisal (PRA),** which is ideally done with the help of an experienced NGO or technical partner. PRA is not just a seed but a methodology and a toolbox in its own. It aims at incorporating the knowledge, views and interests of local people in the planning and management of development policies and programmes.

PRA enables local people to share, present and analyze facts and traditional knowledge that concerns their life and development with outsiders such as environmentalists or communicators who can contribute external know-how, methods, and tools. As such PRA is flexibly and informally applied in the community by on-the-spot analysis. It avoids biases by being self-critical, and works through optimal ignorance and appropriate imprecision, i.e. only those data are collected which can also be managed and used in later stages of the PRA process.

PRA tools can be divided into four broad categories:

- **Assessment**, e.g., transect walks, mapping, production patterns, seasonal calendars, traditional knowledge, trend analysis, problem ranking, etc.
- **Communication**, e.g., focus group discussions, semi-structured interviews, triangulation of teams (comprising men and women, multi-disciplinary orientations, insiders and outsiders), sources of information (events, processes, people, places), and tools and techniques (observations, diagrams, interviews and discussions)
- **Visualisation**, e.g., Venn diagram, social and physical mapping, matrix scoring, timelines
- **Group dynamics,** e.g., learning contracts, role reversals, feedback sessions, tackling constraints.

Further references on PRA can be found at https://waterforwomen.uts.edu.au/qualkit/approaches/pra

While PRA is about methods and tools in the field, there are many other concepts and related tools that conservation programme planners and their teams can work with at their desk, online and/or with communities and technical partners.

Miradi (Seed **1.4**) is an excellent tool for understanding the context of your work, the drivers of conservation loss, and the potential solutions. There are platforms available online free of charge to brainstorm, ideate, and structure concepts collaboratively. Concept mapping tools are offered by the Conservation Measures Partnership (CMP) which is a community of conservation-oriented NGOs, government agencies, funders, and private businesses that work collectively to guide conservation around the world. In addition to Miradi and concept mapping tools, there are other tools for retro planning in teams, e.g. Reetro, allowing for better time management and anticipation. As stewards of the Conservation Standards, CMP seeks better ways to design, manage, and measure the impacts of conservation action. A draft Cookbook provides a series of "recipes" for "Lighter Approaches to the Conservation Standards" (CS), i.e. different scenarios that teams typically encounter. The recipes link to tipsheets that offer practical ideas for how to develop key CS products using a lighter approach. They are many strong resources here you may wish to explore and utilise in your assessment process.

Fig. 16. Conservation Standards Cookbook. https://www.conservationmeasures.org/initiatives/

As was mentioned earlier, we will use **two real-life case studies** to illustrate how the ten steps are implemented in practice. One is the Provita Flying Together Initiative related to two bird species, the other one is #NatureForAll, a global movement to inspire love of nature. The Provita case study combines social science and ecology fundamentals to design, implement, and evaluate behavioral change campaigns focused on reducing demand for wildlife, i.e. two Venezuelan bird species threatened by illegal trafficking, namely the Red Siskin and the Yellow-shouldered Amazon. #NatureForAll is an initiative of IUCN CEC and the World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) for organisations around the world to share successes, find ways to collaborate and celebrate the amazing work being done globally to address the threats of climate change, biodiversity loss and plastic pollution.

As was mentioned earlier, we will use real-life case studies to illustrate how the ten steps are implemented in practice. Aside from the Provita and #NatureForAll described in detail for each step, you may also have a closer look at the EnviroVision2050 Green Leaders programme, endorsed by the UN Ocean Decades, which highlights the work of so-called "ocean heroes" to inspire and educate youth to become changemakers. This approach is inspirational in terms of what a single person can do about nature conservation. Part of the programme was a social media campaign on the topic of Fast Fashion created by youth for youth, along with Prada Group. In this case study environmental issues were effectively combined with other transdisciplinary topics such as fashion.

Finally, here is a summary of how Step 1 of the communication strategy, i.e. the situation and problem analysis was tackled by the Provita Flying Together Initiative and the #NatureForAll, a case studies.

Provita

The Provita case study actually includes two endangered bird species, The Yellow-shouldered Amazon and the Red Siskin, both in Venezuela. In this guide we will focus on the Yellow-shouldered Amazon parrot. Due to habitat loss and unsustainable harvest of wild individuals as pets the latter is included in Appendix I of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), so its international trade is only allowed under exceptional circumstances.

The Yellow-shouldered Amazon is classified as endangered in Venezuela. Currently, on the Macanao Peninsula of Margarita Island, Venezuela, where one of the species' largest populations persists, three of every 10 people have parrots as pets. Fledglings are taken from their nests and given as gifts to relatives and loved ones, with trade restricted to mostly local communities within Macanao. Demand for parrots is motivated by affection and need for companionship, a misunderstood empathy for the safety and conservation of the parrot, and by a widespread social norm that tolerates and justifies keeping wild birds, perceiving ownership not as part of the trade chain.

#NatureForAll

In a world dealing with climate change, biodiversity loss and increased pollution, the need to protect and conserve nature has never been more important. There is growing evidence that when people experience and connect with nature, they are more likely to act in ways that benefit the Earth. Studies convincingly show that environmental knowledge alone is not sufficient to solve conservation problems, and the role of nature-based experiences as part of the solution is becoming increasingly important. This is particularly true for childhood experiences in nature, which provides a foundation for support for conservation. However, while many people experience, benefit from, and care for nature, others face barriers to experiencing and connecting with it. The latter can be overcome by positive and effective messaging that results in action for nature. This notion was and is the starting point for #NatureForAll.

Step 2: Stakeholder & KAP analysis

Stakeholders are the people or organisations

- whose practices you want to change (e.g. fishermen using dynamite on coral reefs)
- who are effected by such practices (e.g. the people involved in the local tourist industry)
- who have formal responsibility for the problem (e.g. local government officials)
- who influence the opinions and practices of certain social groups (e.g. journalists, opinion leaders, change agents, influencers)
- who, as intermediaries, can help you use media or communication channels you have no access to (e.g. non government or religious organisations, trade unions, local resource user groups)

What this step is about

Key question: Which target groups do you want to reach?

Relevant seeds: Seed 2.1, Overview of strategic groups
Seed 2.2, Stakeholder map
Seed 2.3, Four-field analysis
Seed 2.4, Force field analysis
Seed 2.5, Knowledge, Attitudes, Practices (KAP)

Based on your assessment of the situation and the specific challenges at hand, let's now investigate the landscape of stakeholders that are required for solv- ing the problems addressed by the communication strategy. Two questions need to be answered in this respect: Who are the relevant stakeholders? And what do they know, feel and do about the intended conservation programme? The answer to the first question involves identifying all individuals and groups who play a role in resolving the issue – either because they are affected by it, or because they can influence the solution. The answer to the second question requires a closer look at each stakeholder or stakeholder group: What are their main characteristics? What motivates them, what holds them back?

The decision for or against a new idea or innovation typically goes through four stages, which are like the process of introducing a newly invented product to the market: **Awareness – Interest – Trial – Adoption or Rejection.** In a society or community, this change process over time is driven by a minority, **innovators** and **early adopters** who curiously pick up the new idea and push it forward. This is why they are often called **change agents,** and they better become your natural allies in adopting pro-environment practices.

These change agents typically have more access to education and media, and often show a positive deviance in terms of their behavior patterns and strategies so that they find better solutions to the problems experienced by the community even though they have the same resources as their peers. Change agents understood here are natural allies in adopting pro-environmental practices. While there is evidence that more education or media exposure can increase the adoption of environmental behaviors, the effect is context-specific and depends on the type of behavior in question. Change agents often are the opinion leaders or

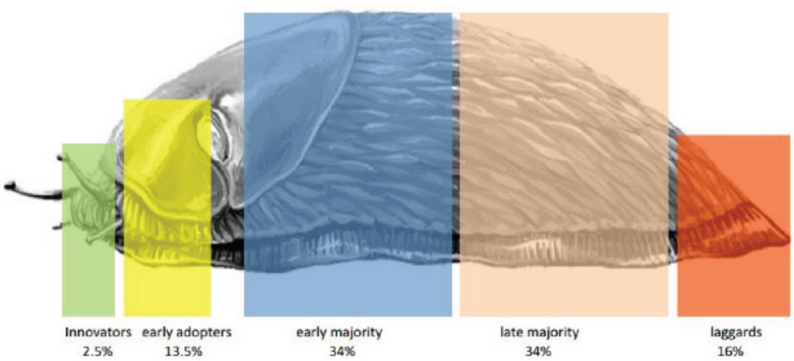


Fig. 17. © Manfred Oepen. ACT Assist.

trend setters - often called influencers these days - for the **early and late majority,** and the people who lag behind because of structural reasons or by choice. Laggards are those late to adopt a behavior as they tend to shy away from costs and risks and need to be won over. In many conservation scenarios, the enthusiasts cannot easily convince the majority. Some may be dismissive of this group accrediting hesitancy to ignorance or misinformation. However, there are often important reasons for lack of action that need to be understood to move forward. Thus, it is necessary to listen to them and take their points seriously into account. When members of a group or society successively adopt the new practices - in our case related to nature conservation - this often takes time. In Germany, for example, it took 15 years from the first pilots regarding bio-degradable waste bins until municipalities nationwide changed over to this innovation.

Do education and media contribute to pro-environmental practices?

In this context, one social group is of special importance: Indigenous people and local communities (IPLCs) are not only important stakeholders but also rightsholders, e.g. in relation with fair access to genetic resources and equitable sharing of the profits from their use (ABS).

Where do ***you*** stand in this process? If you are reading this guide, you are certainly an innovator who lavishes time, energy, and creativity on convincing others regarding the new ideas in the conservation programme, which will not thrive without your energy and commitment. You are the quintessential change agent.

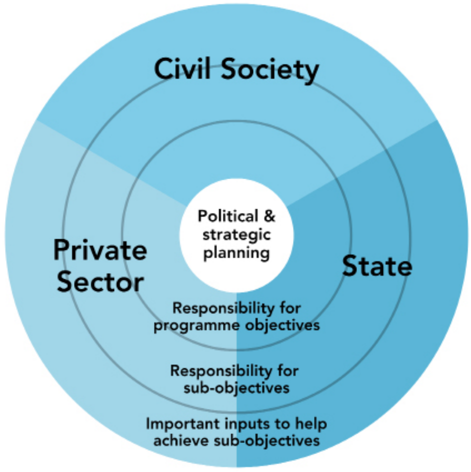


Fig. 18. Political & strategic planning. © Manfred Oepen.

How you can take this step

The simplest way to get an initial overview over relevant stakeholders is the seed **Overview of Strategic Groups** (Seed **2.1**), a table in which you can list the main strategic groups, their major interests and related critical practices. Creating a slightly more sophisticated overview of stakeholders is a relatively straightforward task. Ideally, you work with colleagues and brainstorm all those individuals and groups who may influence or be affected by changes in the situation that you have analyzed earlier.

Once you have that list, you can create a Stakeholder Map (Seed **2.2**) to differentiate the relevance and potential impact of each stakeholder group. This helps you identify:

- **Primary stakeholders,** i.e., individuals, groups, or institutions who have an interest or exercise power relevant to the conservation programme issue in question, with whom you will need to co-operate closely and/or from whom a change in practices is expected.
- **Intermediaries,** i.e. individuals, groups, or institutions who can assist you in reaching out to other stakeholders, e.g., opinion leaders, NGOs, or others who may help you lobby for support.

Next, you need knowledge and/or hypotheses about the different stakeholders' key characteristics and motivational forces. Various seeds are available for this: The **Four-field Analysis** (Seed **2.3**) looks at each stakeholder from four different angles: interests, relationships, organisation, and perception.

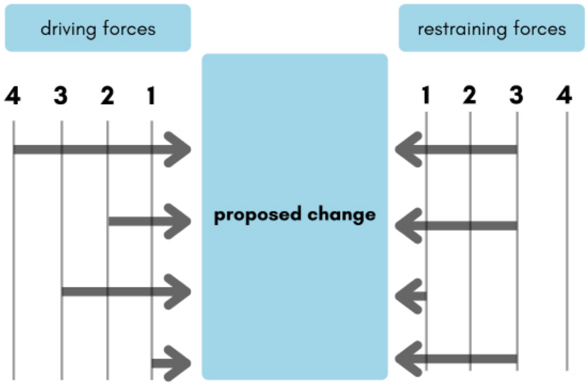
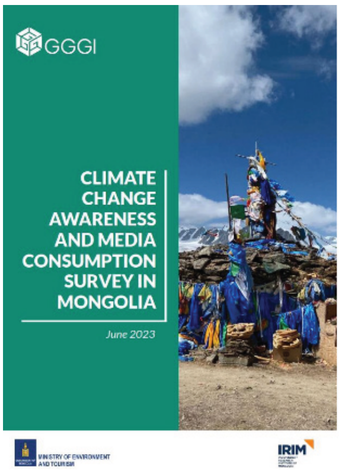


Fig. 19. Force Field Analaysis. © Manfred Oepen. ACT Assist.

This allows you to build hypotheses around what motivates each stakeholder group, what they need, how they look at themselves and others, and how they arrive at decisions. Another way to look at individual stakeholders is the **Force Field Analysis** (Seed **2.4**). Similar to the Big Picture Chart used in Step 1, this tool looks at driving and restraining forces – but this time with a focus on specific stakeholder groups. The seed is useful for mapping forces for or against a plan or policy and different stakeholders' power to influence the process. The result will help you target your communication efforts more effectively.

The seeds so far provide general insights into the stakeholders: who they are, what their goals are, how they are organised etc. This gives you orientation as to what might be expected from them and how to approach them. Based on this, a particularly important question for the development of your communication strategy is where key stakeholders stand regarding the specific conservation programme issue at hand.

Because ultimately, your communication efforts are to create an impact: you will want to increase stakeholders' knowledge, influence their attitudes and/or contribute to their changing practices. To design a communication strategy that helps you achieve this, you need to get a picture of where they currently stand. The seed **Knowledge, Attitudes, Practices (KAP)** (Seed **2.5**) helps you analyze this: What do specific stakeholder groups know, feel, and do about conservation programme? Which incentives or benefits may motivate them to take action? What may be reasons for negative attitudes or rejection of new practices? Which existing practices may support or lead to the desired action? How do they relate to others, especially to other conservation programme stakeholders? Who are innovators and change agents on whom the communication strategy can be built? What are stakeholders' media consumption patterns? And what are their preferred communication channels or sources of information regarding conservation programme?



© GGGI.

What you are effectively trying to do here is to find out how to get from 'Said' to 'Done' by asking how to get a new idea into people's heads, hearts, and hands. This is only possible if you know where they currently stand in the change process.

While thorough KAP surveys require specialised expertise, and can be time-consuming and expensive, you may start by discussing the four KAP questions for each stakeholder group in a workshop or brainstorming session with selected experts or colleagues.

Whichever way, at least a minimum of KAP assessment should always be done, because the results of **Step 2** are crucial for formulating communication objectives in **Step 3**, considering the involvement of partners and intermedi-aries in **Step 5**, selecting media in **Step 6**, designing messages in **Step 7** and monitoring and evaluating the impact of the communication strategy in **Step 10.**

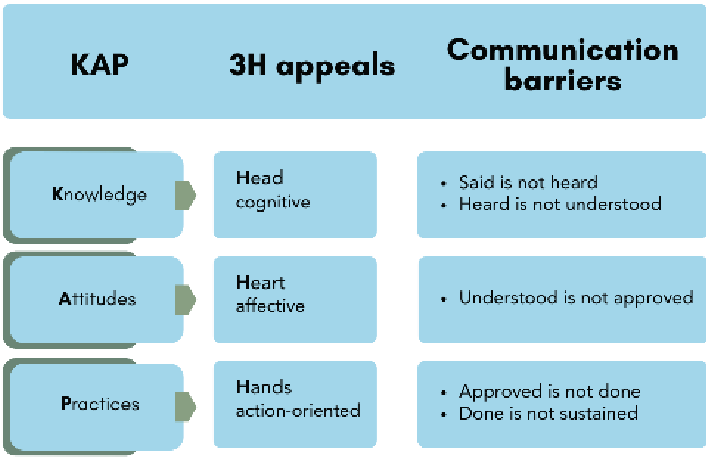


Fig. 20. KAP, 3H, & Communication barriers.
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Another useful tool for your stakeholder analysis is **audience research,** often used in social marketing. It is about understanding the people you want to reach with your message, campaign or communication strategy. The goal is to ensure that your efforts are tailored to the specific needs, communication preferences, and practices of your target audience. Here's a quick breakdown of the basics:

1. **Identify your audience:** Define who you are trying to reach. This includes demographic factors as well as psychographic factors such as interests, values, and lifestyle.
2. **Segmentation**: Break down your audience into smaller groups based on shared characteristics. This helps in delivering more specific, relevant messages.
3. **Understand practices:** Analyze how your audience interacts with content, which communication channels they prefer, and what influences their decisions.
4. **Motivations and needs:** Examine your audience's attitudes, needs and desires to craft messages that resonate emotionally.
5. **Data collection:** Gather data through surveys, interviews, focus groups, social media analytics, and other research tools to get a clear picture of your audience.
6. **Refining strategy:** Use the findings to inform your communication strategy—whether that's choosing the right channels, tone, or type of message to use.

By understanding your audience's preferences and practices, you can make more informed decisions and create more effective, engaging messages, campaigns, and communication strategies.

Provita

In a behavior change campaign (BCC) as the one of Provita, it important to select a behavior change model at the start and stick with it for design of the campaign. This establishes a common language and facilitates communication in an interdisciplinary group. Identifying causes and predictions, and assessing the relative importance of driving factors, will help identify which motivation is most important for influencing the desired behavior. Because the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) considers social norms to be an important driver explaining intention to adopt pro-environmental behaviors, Provita focused on this behavioral model. It defines behavior by four components and understands that audiences' motivations start as focused on demand. In the case of the Amazon parrot "Acquire (action) this year (time) a parrot (object) as a pet (context)".

Quantitative and qualitative baseline survey methods established an audience profilein the case of the Amazon parrot: people demanding parrots in Macanao are mainly women (81%) with a high level of unemployment (58%). Few have education beyond secondary (17%), and more than a third (36%) of the respondents express intentions to keep parrots as pets. Affective attitudes towards parrots is the most important factor explaining intention to keep them as pets. Perceived social norms was the second most important factor: Knowing that others approve keeping parrots as pets increases intentions to keep them. People with higher educational levels have a greater intention to have parrots.

#NatureForAll

During the 2014 IUCN World Parks Congress, a movement began to inspire a new generation to connect with and care for nature. The idea was to work with organisations and individuals who shared an interest in connecting a new generation with nature – focusing on young people. Initial research led to the creation of the Report Home to Us All: How Connecting with Nature Helps Us Care for Ourselves and the Earth. This document presents the growing body of evidence that people's relationship with nature profoundly influences their behaviors toward the Earth. The report included a companion piece, Connecting with Nature to Care for Ourselves and the Earth: Recommendations For Decision-Makers. The research pointed towards the need to focus efforts on experience and education related to nature, specifically with youth.

The #NatureForAll movement grew out of that work, adapting to focus on organisations and individuals working in connecting people and youth to nature, as opposed to targeting youth directly. It was evident that, worldwide, organisations and individuals were already working to connect people and youth with nature and to educate their local communities about conservation issues. However, this was often done in isolated initiatives, with little funding and no opportunities to learn from others. Experience also showed that action was required not only from the conservation sector, but from most other sectors – businesses, industry, education, health, etc. – to address both direct and indirect drivers of change.

Step 3: Communication objectives

What this step is about

Key question: What do you want these target groups to know, feel and do after they have received the messages in your media & materials?

Relevant seeds: Seed 3.1, Communication objectives
Seed 3.2, Indicators for communication objectives

What are communication objectives? Let's start by clarifying what they are not:

1. **Communication objectives are not the same as policy objectives.** For instance, if the policy objective in the ABS Field of Action "Defining overall conservation programme policies/ strategies" is to clarify the national approach to implementing the Nagoya Protocol, even the best communication can only contribute to achieving this objective. Other things, besides communication, will need to happen to arrive at a functional and consistent national conservation programme strategy.

2. **Communication objectives are not the same as the communication activity itself.** For example, speaking with the minister, publishing a brochure, or holding a workshop may be important activities in your communication strategy. Still, they are only means to an end and not the end itself.

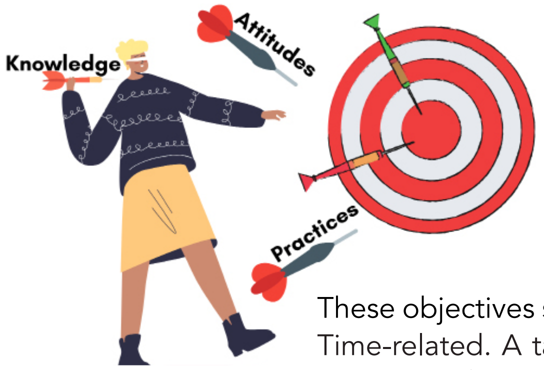


Fig. 21. KAP bullseye.
© Manfred Oepen. ACT Assist.

So, what ***are*** communication objectives? **Communication objectives describe the intended results of a communication strategy in terms of the target audiences' knowledge, attitudes, and practices (KAP).** Communication objectives should specify what exactly is to be accomplished: increasing knowledge, influencing attitudes, and/ or changing practices of stakeholders regarding a particular conservation programme issue.

These objectives should be **SMART**: Specific, Measurable, Acceptable, Realistic, Time-related. A target such as *"we want to educate the people about the importance of this protected area"* is too vague. It will be impossible to determine whether the communication efforts are successful or not.

Instead, you could start with an overall conservation programme objective such as *"within May – September in the year N, we want 30% of registered visitors of the XYZ protected area to collect their garbage and drop it at designated disposal sites".* But this is not enough.

You should now ascribe communication objectives to the knowledge, attitude, and practice levels of your stakeholder groups that you have possibly identified by means of your KAP results and/or other stakeholder information. For example, in a protected area (PA) "Paradise Mountain," a waste management campaign could have the following communication objectives

K

- to **inform** within five months at least 70% of registered visitors of the "Paradise Mountain" PA about 'Leave no Trace' principles regarding littering in PAs and the locations of newly designated garbage disposal sites therein,

A

- to increase the proportion of registered visitors of the "Paradise Mountain" PA regarding their positive **attitude** towards the willingness to collect their garbage and drop it at designated disposal sites from the present 25% to 75% within the period of May–September in the year N,

P

- to **persuade** registered visitors of the "Paradise Mountain" PA to collect their garbage and drop it at designated disposal sites, and to increase this practice from the present 5% to 30% within the period of May–September in the year N.

Defining overall policies

Let's stick to the PA example. Assume that your policy objective is for PA visitors to collect their garbage and drop it at designated disposal sites. You may ask:

Practice (P): What exactly do the visitors need to do (P) to arrive at these practices? For example, they need to familiarise with the drop-off points. They also need to take preparations such as repackaging food to minimise waste even before starting their PA trip, and bringing along a waste bag or container for trash or spilled foods. This will involve costs – e.g., compromises among family or group members, or a detour with the PA – which they will only be willing to pay if they are fully convinced of the advantages of a functioning waste management system.

Attitudes (A): What beliefs, opinions, and attitudes (A) will the PA visitors need to adopt, so that their participation in the waste management campaign (P) will move into the mentioned direction?

Knowledge (K): What specific knowledge (K) about the waste management system do the visitors need to gain, so that they can develop the desired positive attitudes (A)? For example, they will need to be informed about 'Leave no Trace' principles in a flyer or QR code at the entrance to the PA.

How you can take this step

Defining communication objectives is closely related to the KAP results and other stakeholder information collected in Step 2. But in Step 3 you start with the practices (**P**) and go back to the attitudes (**A**) that are necessary for the practices **P** to happen. Subsequently, you move further down to the knowledge (**K**) that is necessary for the attitudes **A** to happen.

The rationale is that, **ultimately**, the desired impact of your communication efforts is a change in practices (**P**), on the side of important stakeholders.

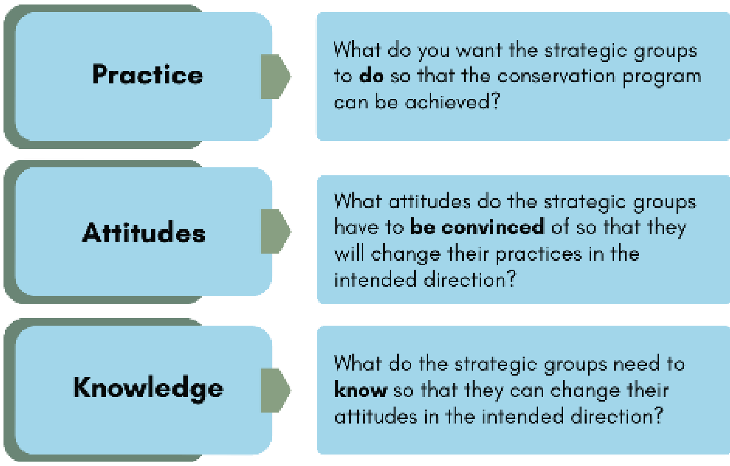


Fig. 22. Practice, Attitudes, & Knowledge. © Manfred Oepen. ACT Assist.

The seed **Communication Objectives** (Seed **3.1**) provides you with questions to determine KAP-related objectives of your communication strategy. These are best formulated in a SMART way, i.e., they should be **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**ttractive, **R**ealistic, and **T**imed.

Once you have defined the objectives, this is a good moment to clarify how you are going to monitor and evaluate the strategy at a later stage. How are you going to see whether you are on the right track? And how will you evaluate whether the communication strategy has been successful or not? A simple seed you may use for this purpose is the **Indicators for Communication Objectives** (Seed **3.2**).

If your KAP survey – or other methodology – in Step 2 has provided you with quantitative, empirical baseline data, you can compare the data before and after your communication intervention, sometimes down to the level of individuals. If you do not have such quantitative data, there are other, more modest methods available such as desk-research of existing information, focus groups and/or expert interviews within your community of practice, questionnaires, web surveys, interviews. Often a combination of methods can be used.

Provita

Provita converted expected bird-friendly changes into results-oriented, measurable objectives defined as specific, practical and within a time frame. In the case of the Amazon parrot, one knowledge objective was, for example, to "improve the reach of informative posts about the campaign activities by 10% by the beginning of 2023, based on a baseline of 0 followers in 2021". In terms of attitudes, the goal was that "promoting positive values towards campaign activities will increase their reach (number of shares) and impact ("likes," "cares," etc.) by 10% by the beginning of 2023." And as related to social norms, the campaign wanted "publications aimed at promoting participation show a 10% increase in reach and impact at the beginning of 2023."

#NatureForAll

As a movement, #NatureForAll seeks to encourage and support individuals and organisations who are helping people engage in more meaningful interactions with nature, thus creating and enhancing benefits from nature for their communities. Our vision for inspiring a new generation to act for nature is a future in which millions more people connect with, love, value, and conserve nature. This focused on the actions needed to better connect a new generation to nature as well as opportunities to better empower young people as tomorrow's conservation leaders.

#NatureForAll encourages organisations to chronicle their stories and their successes, to learn from one another, to share resources, and to connect with one other to reach a broader audience through collective platforms and opportunities. It's about celebrating all achievements towards those goals and highlighting how the diversity of nature supports all peoples, all species, all ecosystems, and all cultures every day. The ultimate objective is to broaden support and mobilise action for conservation with new audiences across all sectors, around the world. It focuses on addressing a key indirect driver of change – disconnection from nature – as a strategy for delivering on the IUCN programme and ultimately helping more people engage in meaningful interactions with nature.

Step 4: Testing the hypotheses

What this step is about

Key question: What is the big picture, and how much money, time and staff do you really have available?

Relevant seed: Seed 4.1, IF – THEN matrix

Step 4 is really the **pivot point** of your communication strategy because you look back at the 'homework' you have accomplished in Steps 1-3 and then look ahead at Steps 5-10. This a process that passes through three phases: vision – reality check – conclusions.

Vision: It all starts with a vision of what you strive to achieve in the long run, over the whole period of your communication strategy or campaign. Of course you take the situation analysis (Step 1) and the audience profiles (Step 2) into consideration. But you also try to imagine what type and extent of impact you hope and dream of reaching as expressed in the communication objectives (Step 3), and with the budget, time and staff resources you have available. And this 'dreaming' takes you to a preliminary stocktaking of partners (Step 5), media mix (Step 6), message design (Step 7), media production (Step 8) and use (Step 9), and monitoring (Step 10). Along the way, you imagine how a given set of interventions is expected to lead to specific environmentally friendly knowledge, attitude and practice changes. This is an explicit process of thinking through how a programme is supposed to work, why it will work, and who it will benefit how. Especially in applied behavior change (or ABC, see Chapter 2) approaches, this process is often called a Theory of Change or Intervention Logic, which is based on data-driven assumptions and hypotheses. To avoid subjectiveness it is necessary to test your hypotheses and vision by seeking feedback and dialogue with others.

Reality check: This is where a reality check comes in. You may realise that so far you have been thinking BIG in terms of potential solutions to the problems identified and the communication activities you imagine to employ. But when you critically assess now, at Step 4, how much money, time and staff you really have available, you may become aware that the approach must be much more humble. Hence, the vision or Theory of Change should regularly draw on a causal analysis based on available evidence. At the same time, a reality check also implies honest feedback from and dialogue within your team and with partners, intended beneficiaries and technical experts.

Conclusions: The reality check usually leads to a careful revision of Steps 5-10 in accordance with budget, time, and staff resources. Back to the drawing board, a more realistic and modest planning may imply downsised objectives, involvement of more partners, phasing the timeline by doing some now and more later, or prioritising certain elements of the overall plan. On the other hand, you may also arrive at the conclusion to bargain for more budget, time and staff so that you don't have to downsise the original objectives of your communication strategy or campaign.

In more detail, the **Assessment** stage of Steps 1-3 so far has resulted in baseline data on situational challenges, problems, and needs (Step 1), information and/or hypotheses about the conservation programme stakeholders, their knowledge, attitudes and practices (Step 2), and communication objectives (Step 3).

Based on this assessment, the actual **Planning** can begin. Step 4 consists of a first broad look at all the remaining steps. It is about outlining the overall **strategic** communication process ("What to do?") and doing an initial reality check from a **management** perspective ("How to do it?").

This involves basic decisions regarding 'what', 'who', 'how', 'where' and 'when':

- **What** action are you – and others – going to take?
- **Who** is to carry out the action?
- **How** exactly is the action to be carried out?
- **When and where** is the action to be accomplished?
- **How to measure** success, progress, and impact through meaningful indicators?
- **How much** will be needed in terms of resources (budget, staff, time, logistics), and how can these resources be obtained?
- **What** service providers, intermediaries and distribution channels need to be in place for the outreach of the communication strategy (see the example from Laos below)?

The planning also incorporates **cost-benefit analyses** of intended activities, especially the most cost-effective media mix in Step 6. Instead of insufficient budget allocations made in many cases organisations need to earmark substantial budgets for communication activities.

In addition, there are many **timeline or coordination tools** that may assist practitioners in organising and coordinating different elements of their communication strategy and the usage of media produced (Steps 6 & 8) in field implementation and retro planning (Steps 9 & 10). Have a look, for example, at Miradi (see also **Seed 4.1**), LinkedIn, Slidegeeks, Slide Team or Office Timeline.

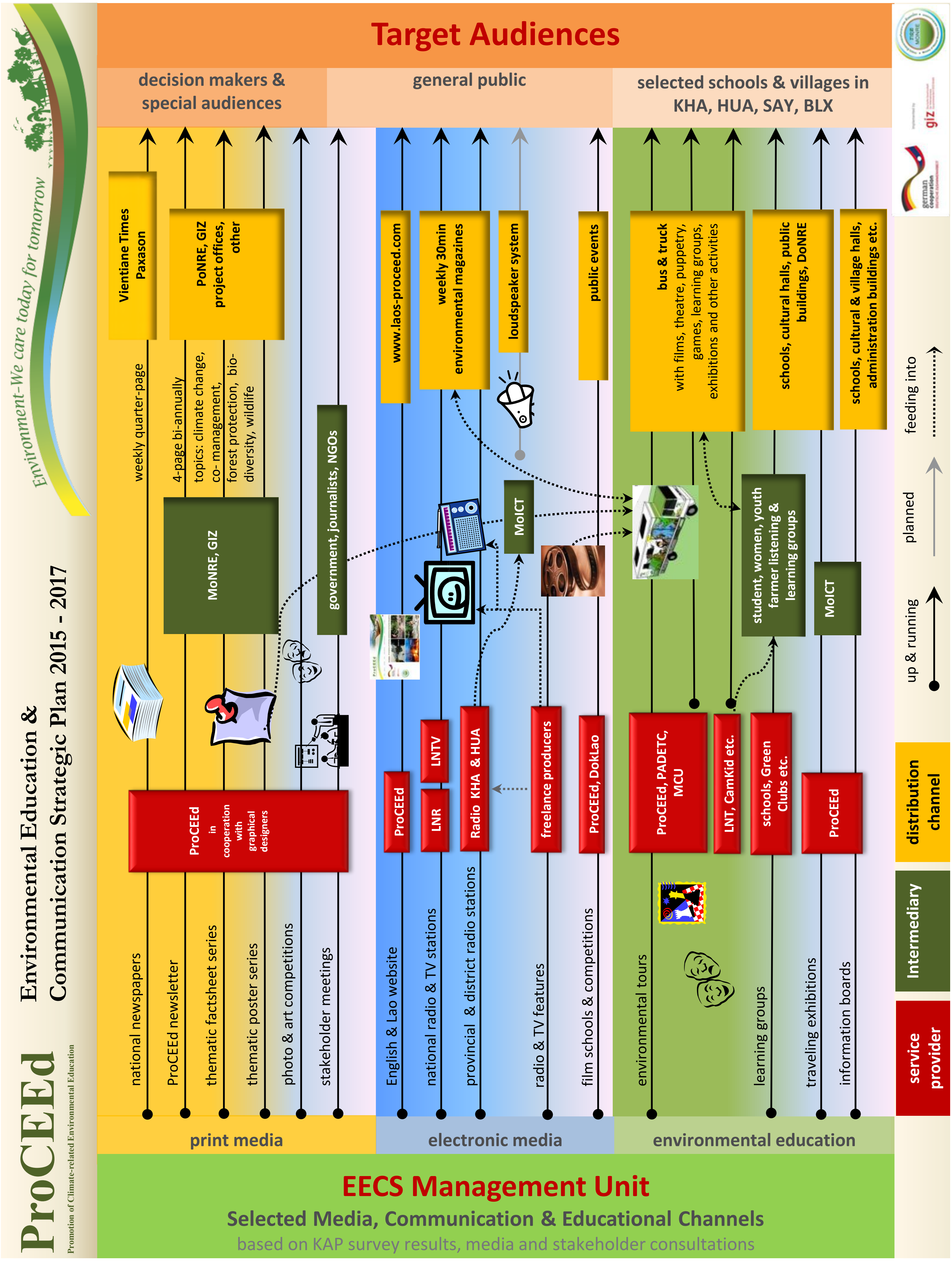


Fig. 23. Environmental Education & Communication Strategic Plan 2015-2017. © Manfred Oepen. ACT Assist.

At this point, remember that communication is a dynamic process: planning and implementation *cannot* be fully separated – certainly not when the aim is to affect changes in knowledge, attitudes, and practices (KAP) of stakeholders. Rather, communication is an iterative, two-way process. It is therefore important to involve stakeholders early, by planning and implementing the strategy *with* them rather than *for* them. The following chart illustrates some options for doing this.

in → / on ↓	Planning ("What")	Imlementation ("How")
Knowledge sharing of facts, data, information	Agenda setting and facts on • the conservation program issue at hand • potential solutions offered by relevant organizations • actual options for joining potential activities • surveys on acceptance of planned activities	Step-by-step information on • actual state of the conservation program issue at hand • ongoing activities • necessary changes of practices • possible incentives and sanctions • acceptance and success of actual activities • success stories of 'early adopters' • opportunities for the 'majority' to join in
Attitude motivating and mobilizing for action	'Look and feel' throughout the conservation program process • highlighting the conservation program's advantages and incentives through success stories told by 'early adopters' and change agents • creating a sense of inclusion among the 'majority' and 'laggards' regarding advantages arising from the conservation program • surveys that highlight positive views on the conservation program, best presented by change agents and opinion leaders	
Practices action orientation, change towards desired practices	Identifying ways to • get involved in the conservation program process and its activities – and then talk about it • communicate key conservation program messages through available media as convincingly and impact oriented as possible • win over the 'late majority' and 'laggards' • support conservation program communication directly or indirectly through networking, alliances, and co-operation, including shared media coverage	Involving stakeholders in • actively implementing decisions regarding the conservation program – and then talk about it • keeping the co-operation among different stakeholders lively and dynamic at all levels of the conservation program implementation • winning over the 'late majority' and 'laggards' • monitoring & evaluation, and modifications of on-going activities • deriving lessons learned for the future

Fig. 24. Planning & Implementation. © Manfred Oepen. ACT Assist.

How you can take this step

Step 4 is about determining the general direction and priorities of your communication strategy based on the KAP findings. Based on your earlier analyses in Step 4, the seed **Testing Your Hypotheses** (Seed **4.1**) helps you summarise the level of knowledge, attitudes and practices (KAP) of key stakeholder groups and draw initial conclusions regarding strategic priorities and the type of communication channels you are going to use. It also helps you assess similarities between certain stakeholder groups, so that you can later group some of them and partly address them together.

Seed 4.1 is organised as a simple **IF – THEN** overview. Consider, for example, the case of group C in the following table:

IF the stakeholder (individual or group) already has a high level of knowledge and a relatively positive attitude towards the conservation programme policy at hand, but has not yet turned that into practice,

THEN the strategy should focus on action: There is no need to provide more information or motivate them much further. Instead, you may want to provide, for example, skills training or coaching. Mass media will play a subordinate role in this case, while platforms for dialogue or training as well as interpersonal communication will be very important.

	IF			THEN				
	Stakeholder POSITION regarding			Communication Strategy FOCUS			Communication Channels FOCUS	
STAKE-HOLDER	Knolwedge K	Attitude A	Practice P	Main **Purpose**	Main **Approach**	**Questions** to Address	**Information Dissemination** one-way	**Interactive Communication** two-way
A	low/ medium	low	low	informative	create awareness, identify needs	what + why	high: e.g., mass media	medium: e.g., participatory appraisal
B	medium	medium	medium	motivational, action oriented	discuss + test alternatives	why + how	medium: e.g., newsletter, brochure	medium: e.g., workshops, demonstrations
C	high	medium	low/ medium	action oriented	train skills, coach for action	how	low: e.g., website	high: e.g., peer-to-peer meetings, training, coaching

Fig. 25. IF–THEN. © Manfred Oepen. ACT Assist.

This exercise will give you a clearer picture of the overall communication approach for various stakeholder groups and allow to you find a suitable mix of communication channels for each of them. This general orientation will be further specified in **Steps 5, 6 and 7** of the planning and design process, and will be put into practice in **Steps 8, 9 and 10,** when messages and communication channels are being used and evaluated.

Provita

The Provita core team comprised two biologists, a communicator, a graphic designer, an educator, an ecologist & data analysts, and a manager, 5.5 full-time equivalent, with 62% of female representation. The team used a Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) approach, which proposes that the intention to adopt a behavior is a function of three components: attitudes influenced by knowledge, social norms describing social influence, and perceived control describing how the barriers and opportunities for adopting a given behavior are perceived. The practical process of how to design interventions involved segmenting the audience into groups of people with similar behavioral and demographic characteristics, defining the pros and cons of alternative behaviors, describing the expected changes, and planning strategies, activities, assumptions and indicators of intervention progress and impact. The next step was to think about how you will implement and monitor the expected changes by defining objectives. Then, there was the process of aligning. For example, the list of activities to be implemented was reduced from 20 to 5 items, considering cost, opportunities, and the capacities of both Provita and the stakeholders. Ultimately, the BCC in two Macanao communities of 12,000 people each from June 2022 to October 2023 decided to promote social norms and positive attitudes towards outdoor activities as a way to enjoy birds without keeping them captive. It mainly targets women aged 30-50 and satisfies fundamental motivations and desires of companionship, while reducing the perception that pet keeping is necessary. Core outdoor activities include bird watching, interpretive trails, and practical experiences such as building artificial nests, bird banding, etc.

#NatureForAll

The #NatureForAll initiative was presented at numerous international for a, through presentations, pavilions and side events. What started out as a idea focused on inspiring young people to connect with nature quickly grew to an all-encompassing movement focused primarily on the concept of love for nature. Discussions with various constituencies and stakeholders highlighted challenges in bringing the concept of this “Inspiring a New Generation” campaign to life. The term was confusing, the target audience wasn’t clear, the call to action was too broad. In addition, the concept didn’t capture the core focus on building the constituency of support for nature conservation. A task force was formed, bringing a diverse group of conservationists, young and old from around the world, to develop a a broad umbrella under which partner programmes can unite, so otherwise isolated activities can be seen as being part of a broader global movement.

Step 5: Involvement of partners

What this step is about

Key question: Which partners do you need to contribute to your campaign?	
Relevant seed:	Seed 5.1, Involvement of partners Seed 5.2, Forms of co-operation and roles Seed 5.3, Negotiation Seed 5.4, Chairs in the corner

The involvement of partners is a **success factor** in any communication strategy. You cannot run a successful communication strategy alone. You may have included partners from the start, from Step 1 or Step 2. Or, you may have realised the need for partner support during the 'reality check' in Step 4, when it becomes clear that your own resources, networks, and skills fall short of the strategy's goals. You should aim at involving the beneficiaries of your communication efforts as partners, and not just as receivers of information. The chances that people will change their environmentally relevant practices are much higher if they have a say in planning, implementing, and evaluating the action for change.

Fig. 26. Promotion of a radio drama "Love and Greed in the Valley of the Cashmere Goats." Belegsaikhan Nyamdorj. © GIZ.

At times, partnerships evolve at later stages of a communication strategy. In the case of **"My Green Mongolia"** (MGM, see p. 20), for example, the campaign on environmental protection, originally launched by GIZ, had already been rolling for almost a year when new partners came on board and contributed their own products and services. One of the biggest news outlets in the country, Icon.mn, offered a regular bi-monthly section called "Nature Whisper" under the MGM brand name. Other big players such as UNDP ENSURE, UNDP ADAPT or GGGI, which had run their own media activities on biodiversity conservation and climate change, joined forces with MGM. In early 2024, ENSURE financed additional episodes to a radio drama series that MGM started in 2022 and re-broadcasted in 2023/2024. Therefore, it is always worthwhile to look for interfaces with other organisations' communication initiatives to boost vertical upscaling and joint efforts in your community of practice.

Although partnership involvement is presented as one step in this guide, collaborating with partners should be a continuous, not a one-shot effort.

Let's briefly distinguish three major **types of partners:**

- The **target audiences** of your communication are the intended beneficiaries of successfully implemented conservation measures, but are also asked to improve their knowledge, attitudes, and practices for a healthier planet. The benefits are appreciated as positive outcomes, but the necessary changes in practice are often regarded as a socio-cultural price these groups must pay.
- Your **organisational partners** cooperate with you throughout the whole programme as a government agency, a national NGO or a local community group, etc.
- Temporary or functional **intermediaries**, e.g., non-governmental or religious organisations, trade unions, local resource user groups, etc. may help your communication strategy be more economical, effective and efficient.

The keyword here relevant to beneficiaries and permanent partners of your programme is **ownership**. The term should be taken quite literally in terms of media products and communication processes not ***for*** or ***about*** people but ***with*** and ***by*** the people themselves. This approach safeguards programme sustainability and achieves the media mix that is best suited to the socio-cultural context. While it is difficult to 'own' TV, video, or radio because of the financial, technical and skills levels involved, it is much easier to 'own' a people's theater production or other community media that are managed and produced by local people towards local ends. This does not imply, however, that participation should be constrained to the 'community media' (see Step 6).


Dress rehearsal for a community theatre performance on protected areas in Mongolia. © GIZ.

Another note of caution here to avoid confusion over terminology. **Stakeholders** – at times also referred to as **intermediaries** – support the design and implementation of an intervention, while **beneficiaries** – at times also referred to as **target audience** – are the focal group whose practices the intervention seeks to influence. Beneficiaries may become stakeholders through empowerment or involvement over time. All these groups are considered **partners** in this Step.

Instead, you could build strategic alliances with the 'mass media' to strengthen what is called the '**upward compatibility**' of the communication processes – e.g., a local theater performance on people's action related to an environmental problem is recorded on video, edited professionally and broadcast on TV as a feature film or news cast. **Participation**, here, is understood as a process of motivating and mobilising people to use their human and material resources to take their social, economic, and ecological aspirations into their own hands.

Does that mean that everyone should always participate in everything? No. That would be neither possible nor desirable. Not everybody is interested in all aspects of a given process. And, while participation supports ownership, it also requires time and other resources. The balance to be struck varies according to the problem at hand and the related stakeholders. For example, certain technical aspects of a conservation programme may be important for applied research or the private sector, while political decision makers may only need a general understanding of these issues. In turn, policy makers will be more interested than business or academia to know the implications of different strategic, legal, and institutional options for implementing a conservation programme.

Degrees of stakeholder participation range from simple information-sharing to full empowerment. The degree of participation of particular stakeholders is determined through a negotiation process. However, those who lead the process (e.g., the Focal

Point of a conservation programme) can influence that degree when designing the strategy. So, let's have a closer look at the different degrees of participation:

Information: Participation at this level is close to zero: Stakeholders are informed about what is going to happen but have no chance to express their views. The information is 'owned' by professionals or experts. Simply informing may be appropriate in some situations – e.g., when there is nothing left to decide. Press conferences or road shows are examples.

Fig. 27. Step by Step.
© Manfred Oepen. ACT Assist.

Consultation: Decision makers listen to stakeholders providing information and views. However, the consulted groups have no control over the results of this process. Others define the problem and the solutions, while the stakeholders' views may or may not be considered. Whether or not the proceedings are shared is up to those who control the process. Public hearings or panel discussions with interest groups are examples.

Joint planning: Stakeholders participate in situational analyses and the definition of action plans. This process typically involves interdisciplinary methods that allow integration of multiple perspectives and make use of structured learning opportunities. All views are considered in a transparent process – although not everybody may have a chance to control the final decisions derived from this process. An advisory committee is an example.

Decision making: Based on joint analyses and planning, stakeholders participate in the final decision making together with policy makers related to a conservation programme. This fosters shared meaning and responsibilities for any outcomes that may result. Decision making also involves negotiation among stakeholders, which will reflect degrees of leverage exercised by individuals and groups. This works best when the level of knowledge and information among the participants is similar. An inter-sectoral commission or task force is an example.

Empowerment: Stakeholders jointly analyze a given situation and derive conclusions and decisions, based on legal or other formal provisions, but without being subject to external interventions in the process. In this approach, stakeholders control their own decisions and of the consequences that follow. Such self-initiated mobilisation and collective action may challenge an existing inequitable distribution of wealth or power. Multi-stakeholder steering groups are an example.

While broad stakeholder involvement is crucial to making a conservation programme work, 'more' is not always 'better'. It all depends on the issue at hand, on the interest that stakeholders have in this issue, and on the role that they play in resolving it. While it may be frustrating for people to feel left out, it is also possible to put stakeholders off by trying to involve them intensely in processes that they are not interested in.

How you can take this step

One key to clarifying the appropriate level of stakeholder participation is to develop the communication strategy together with a small selection of individuals who represent all the main stakeholders. They can help you decide who should be involved where, when, and how. The seed **Involvement of Partners** (Seed **5.1**) supports your reflections and discussions.

Forms of Co-operation and Roles (Seed **5.2**) helps you analyze cooperation patterns and roles within a particular conservation programme. More of a general approach than a seed are the Harvard techniques for **Negotiation** (Seed **5.3**), which are summarised in the Seedbox. In turn, the exercise **Chairs in the Corner** (Seed **5.4**) illustrates the benefits of co-operation as compared to competition. For example, it can be used as an educational warm-up exercise at a multi-stakeholder workshop.

Finally, an important key to managing the participation of stakeholders well is *transparency*. Don't pretend that you're after joint decision making when you just want to consult certain stakeholders. People react quite negatively to what is sometimes called 'pseudo participation'. The mid- to long-term effect is that they will lose respect and interest – and you will lose credibility. So, be careful.

Provita

Involving local partners was something Provita did early in the planning process because the TPB should be developed together with them to facilitate buy-in and governance. A map of local partners was created based on their role and level of involvement, which helped identify the most appropriate frequency and channels of communication for each group of partners. Government partners provided logistical support for activities implementation while educational institutions and private tourism enterprises supported venues and locations for core activities. A Catholic priest and community-based organisations spread campaign messages and promoted participation in the outdoor events. The Rural Finance Foundation helped verify that tone, language and complexity in our questionnaires were in accordance with social and cultural context, and the Universidad Simón Bolívar improved questionnaire and analysis approaches. International partners such as IUCN, the Smithsonian Institution, and advisors helped enhance and strengthen the regional collaboration network in Latin America.

#NatureForAll

The initial concept for #NatureForAll started with a handful of organisations – IUCN CEC and WCPA, Parks Canada, Brandwein Institute, Canadian Museum of Nature, Canadian Wildlife Federation, New South Wales Office of Environment and Heritage and PCI Media Impact. Collectively, these organisations built a movement that would encourage more partners to get involved, to take ownership of the initiative and incorporate its concept into their own work – that the more people connect with and learn about nature, the more they will take action for nature.

This grew quickly to more than 100 partners signing on at the start of the initiative in 2016. It has grown now to almost 600 partners in 86 countries. Partners use the logo, share stories, resources and their expertise with one another, leverage the community to reach new audiences and grow the movement itself. Now, a small core group of partners – CEC, WCPA, Parks Canada, Alana Foundation, Children & Nature Network and Sustainable Forestry Initiative – support and guide the initiative on behalf of all the partners. At different times, task forces were formed, with representatives from around the world, to re-assess the initiative and provide guidance and strategic input into the initiative.

Better Eating Campai
with UNICEF in Timor
Leste. © Sean Southey

Step 6: Media selection and mix

What this step is about

Key question: Which media and communication channels should be used to reach diverse stakeholder groups?

Relevant seed: Seed 6.1, Media selection & mix
Seed 4.1, IF – THEN matrix

This step will introduce you to various materials, media, communication channels, and delivery channels that you can use to reach your audience and partners effectively.

Fig. 28. Materials, media, channels, & delivery. © Manfred Oepen. ACT Assist.

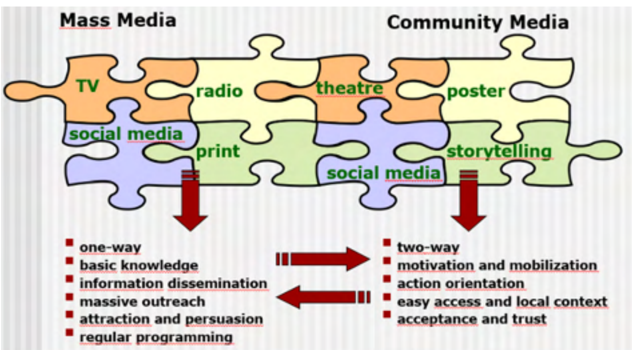


Fig. 29. Media puzzle.
© Manfred Oepen. ACT Assist.

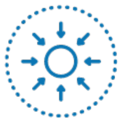
It is also helpful to distinguish linear **mass media** (one-way) and interactive **community media** (two-way), creating an effective mix of media and communication channels for different types of audiences as shown in the adjacent illustration. The demarcation line is defined by ownership and participation (see Step 5). While it is difficult to 'own' TV, meetings, theater, or other community media can be managed and produced by local people and means. In between that spectrum are media that can be 'owned' and operated both ways.

In both cases, different channels are used to address specific audiences. Interactive communication, however, necessarily implies feedback, dialogue and shared meaning, while one-way information dissemination through the mass media does not. Yet, participation doesn't need to be limited to two-way community media. For example, strategic alliances with the mass media can be useful for information dissemination regarding a conservation programme.

In developing an appropriate **multi-media mix,** results of audience and KAP analyses should be considered, especially on

- information-seeking habits,
- preferred information sources,
- media access,
- media consumption patterns,
- communication networks,
- and group communication behavior.

A coherent, coordinated, and reinforcing system of communication should address specific problems and needs of intended beneficiaries through messages geared towards knowledge gains, attitude, and practice changes. As no medium is effective for all purposes or audiences and as **different media and communication channels can complement and reinforce each other,** you should – in an ideal case – select and use media:



- for a single or specific goal rather than for different goals,
- that have unique characteristics or advantages for a specific purpose,
- that target audiences already are familiar with and have access to,
- that can easily accommodate 'localised' messages,
- that can be locally developed, produced, and operated,
- that complement and reinforce other media while holding distinct functional strengths and emphases.

An interesting research finding is that one-way 'broad band' communication is more relevant at the early stages of a change process. As an **innovation spreads from early adopters to majorities,** specific and interpersonal communication becomes increasingly important for people to decide whether they are ready to adopt the innovation. Put differently: While TV, newspapers, brochures etc. can play an important role in the awareness and interest phase, face-to-face communication with peers (friends, colleagues, partners etc.) takes over when it comes to assessing, trying, and adopting or rejecting a new idea. This tends to be particularly true if the innovation is complex and its implications are difficult to grasp – which is the case with most conservation programme issues.

Again, the important thing to note here is that some channels are good for one-way information dissemination, while others are good for interactive communication, that is, dialogue. Each medium has unique characteristics and particular advantages, which are useful to accomplish specific purposes. However, **some communication channels complement and reinforce each other, while others don't.**

For example, TV or radio are quite suitable for emotional appeals ('A' like attitudes) and may complement information provided by print media ('K' like knowledge) and interpersonal guidance or training ('P' like practice). In contrast, a flyer, a brochure and a comic book often do not complement each other but are just technically different ways to provide the same information ('K' only). However, note that much also depends on the *design* of each channel: For example, an interactive website or a participatory study may well address people's hearts as well as their minds ('A' and 'K').

The effectiveness of a communication channel depends on the target audience, message type, and communication goals. **Combining different channels and balancing their advantages and disadvantages** in a strategic and integrated way can often yield the best results. Here's an overview:

Media & Communication Channels	Advantages	Disadvantages
Print Media	• tangible and permanent • easily archived and referred to • longer shelf life compared to digital media	• limited interactivity • high production and distribution costs • limited outreach compared to digital channels
Television & Radio	• wide reach • combines audio and visual elements • reaches diverse audiences	• costly production and airtime expenses • limited audience interaction • short-lived exposure compared to print or digital media
Internet, Social Media	• high interactivity and engagement potential • instant information access • global outreach • cost-effective distribution	• information overload and potential for misinformation • short attention spans • digital divide for poor and other demographic groups • potential lack of permanence
Social Media	• Potential for real-time interaction and feedback • viral potential for content • targeted social marketing options	• potential spread of misinformation • privacy concerns • potential for cyberbullying • algorithmic biases and filter bubbles
Email	• direct and personalized • efficient for one-on-one or targeted messaging • traceable and archivable	• spam and information overload • limited visual impact compared to other media • depends on recipient's attention and responsiveness
Face-to-Face Communication	• immediate feedback • high personalization • builds trust and rapport	• geographical limitations • time-consuming • not easily scalable for large audiences
Mobile Communication	• easy access and convenient • high response rates • allows multimedia content sharing	• potential for misinterpretation • can be disruptive • depends on network availability

Fig. 30. Advantages & disadvantages of different media channels. © Manfred Oepen. ACT Assist.

How you can take this step

The question to be answered in Step 6 is: Which materials, media, communication channels or educational materials – or a combination thereof – should be used for the specific purpose, audience, and message(s) in question to achieve an intended effect? Generally, these **media should be selected for specific objectives** related to KAP. A combination of one-way information dissemination through mass media and interactive communication through two-way community media tends to be most effective.

For example, business people tend to prefer information that is brief, concise and to the point. A short email or article, a few bullet points on a slide, the most important arguments outlined in a two-minute speech may attract a senior manager's interest. Approaching a local chief in the same way might have the exact opposite effect.

The seed **Media Selection & Mix** (Seed **6.1**) helps you assess advantages and disadvantages of different channels and find the combination of channels that will be the most suitable for your audiences.

Communication channels should be appropriate to the audiences'	Select and use individual communication channels
▪ information-seeking habits,	▪ for specific rather than multiple objectives or purposes,
▪ preferred information sources,	▪ that have a unique characteristic or advantage,
▪ ability to access,	▪ which can easily accommodate 'localised' messages,
▪ media consumption patterns,	▪ that can be locally developed, produced, and supported,
▪ communication networks.	▪ that complement and reinforce other channels of the same strategy, while offering distinct functional strengths.

Fig. 31. Media selection.© Manfred Oepen. ACT Assist.

Of course, you may not always be able to produce a specialised mix of communication channels for each stakeholder group. The good news is: Based on your stakeholder analyses (Step 2), your KAP-related objectives (Step 3), your strategic outline (Step 4) and the envisaged degrees of participation (Step 5) you may group **types of stakeholders** within your conservation programme and address them together with a suitable mix of channels. The rationale is that a coherent, coordinated, and self-reinforcing system will cover differentiated knowledge, attitude and practice (KAP) objectives of different types of groups.

The **IF – THEN matrix** (see Seed **4.1**) introduced in Step 4 may also help you create an effective media mix for your conservation programme.

In addition, there are digital tools such as social media analytics platforms and dashboards that can assist with media selection and mix, and an initiative's performance across its different social networks. For example, Brandwatch or Hootsuite can help you keep an eye on follower count, likes and favorites, reach, replies and comments, mention volume, story link, website clicks, etc. Dashboards such as Tableau or Google Data Studio are visual displays that summarise key data, metrics and indicators in a single screen to track progress and compare performance. In this context, setting up a feedback loop in order to continuously evaluate the efficacy of the selected media mix is a crucial measure.

Now, let's have a look at how the two case studies tackled this step.

Provita

For the Amazon parrot campaign, communication activities comprise Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp groups. Radio and local press are used to invite participation in campaign activities. Brochures with information on the benefits of participating in outdoor activities, a guide for birdwatchers, and a good hiker's guideline were distributed at campaign activities.

#NatureForAll

#NatureForAll initially launched with a small, trilingual website and on social media with Twitter and Facebook. A presence at large international conferences was identified as a prime opportunity to recruit new partners and encourage participation in the movement. As such, brochures, pamphlets and even giveaways were developed to encourage participation and promote awareness. An important part of the initiative is communicating directly with partners. As such, a regular emailed newsletter has been a constant means of information dissemination. As partner needs and communication methods have changed, so have the tools. New websites were added, like the #NatureForAll Discovery Zone and the Sounds of Your Park platform. Instagram quickly became the go-to social media platform to connect with partners. Youtube became a useful tool to share new tools and promote partner efforts.

School visit by mascot in St. Lucia. © Sean Southey.

Step 7: Message design

What this step is about

Key question: What are the most important messages for your target groups?

Relevant seed: Seed 7.1, Message design

Workshop word association.
© Sean Southey.

Now that you have clarified the media and communication channels you can use to reach your audiences, it is time to define the messages that you intend to send through the different channels.

The **messages are directly related to the communication objectives – but they are not the same.** The objective is what you want to achieve – the change in knowledge, attitude, or practice of a particular group of stakeholders. The messages are what you want to talk about – the new ideas, suggestions, and practical recommendations you want to get across to a particular audience. For example, communication objectives such as the ones suggested in Step 3 are the desired results of communication activities. These now need to be 'translated' into an informational, motivational or action appeal, and to be packaged in a way that is tailored to the characteristics of the respective stakeholder group.

The main difference between communication objectives and messages of a conservation programme is that you do ***NOT*** necessarily talk about the conservation programme itself. This may sound surprising – but the fact of the matter is: Most people are not interested in a conservation programme. What they want to know is: "What's in it for me and my group or community? How does it affect me and my constituency?" That is, people are interested in the **advantages** they can get out of the innovations a conservation programme promises. And they want to know the **costs**, i.e., the price they will have to pay or the effort they will have to make in return for enjoying the advantages. For example, "If you participate in this dialogue with other stakeholders, you will be able to influence the design of policies and regulations that work well for you and your peers / sector / community / constituency."

So, instead of talking about how complex and conflictive all these conservation programme issues are, you draw an attractive image in front of your audience of how great the future will feel and look like once people start engaging in your conservation programme – in the ABS example on page 40, this will be providing access to and sharing the benefits from the use of genetic resources. Successful salesmen and social marketing companies call this "selling the sizzle" instead of the sausage – because it's the desirable sounds and smells that whet people's appetite. The lesson to learn is not to make a conservation programme an expert issue for scientists or lawyers. Instead, you should look at it from a marketing perspective, as something to sell.

As most audiences today suffer from information overload, messages need to be strategically positioned to stand out. Otherwise, they may go unnoticed, regardless of how relevant they may be for the target audience. A few reflections from social marketing may help you choose the right media, communication channels and messages. At its core lies the proposition that individuals, groups and organisations exchange resources for perceived benefits of a product or service. A commonly used model is that of the "**5Ps**" of marketing: **P**roduct, **P**rice, **P**lace, **P**romotion and **P**ersonnel.

Fig. 32. 5Ps of social marketing. © Manfred Oepen. ACT Assist.

The aim of communication interventions is to create voluntary exchanges: A **Product** or service for a **Price** or costs involved. Translated to a conservation programme, the "product" is the idea you want to sell or the particular practice you would like to see stakeholders adopt. The "price" may be conceived as the stakeholders' effort when changing from practice A to practice B in order to reap any promised advantages from the innovation. The communication interventions take **Place** at various levels: individual, group, community, sector, country etc. At these different levels, people need to be made aware of the innovation through **Promotion**, by means of attractive media and communication channels, and convincing messages. This requires skilled **Personnel** who are familiar with the related objectives and communication techniques. In an extended version of the "Ps", the **"7Ps"** of marketing, customer-oriented process management and physical evidence of, e.g. an attractive point of sale or customer retention exercises are added.

For example, you may want different stakeholders to participate in a series of dialogues where the overall national strategy of your conservation programme will be defined. The "product" in this case is the representatives' participation at events where they can contribute their views. This product comes with a "price" – in this case, for example, they will need to spend time in workshops, and they will only do so if there is "something in" for them. The "place" where the "promotion" takes place may be formal invitations, but also, for example, a series of strategically placed newspaper articles or social media posts. Once the conservation programme is on the news it creates public attention. In both cases, you will need skilled "personnel" who can put together an attractive invitation and/or an interesting mass media input.

Many **messages carry psychological and/or social appeals.** They promise incentives or rewards, arouse fears, work with role models, make appeals to civic

Social marketing recommendations

Big picture

Make connections, demonstrate long term thinking, blow myths

Technically correct
Be trustworthy, provide transparency, give real facts

Be cool
Be sexy, mainstream, non-patronising, brave – stand out!

Belong
Join a massive worldwide change, start positive conformity, join a success

Only stories work Empathy and emotions are powerful, use stories to hold people's attention

Optimism
Nature conservation is achievable, avoid too much guilt

Glory button
Nature conservation makes you a great person and we love you for it

Change is for all
Break stereotypes, use inclusive language and images, push mass ownership

We need more heroes
Introduce icons to emulate – 'be like me'

Personal circle
Relate big ideas to everyday life, give them a familiar context

duty, etc. They may also support the communication strategy and its objectives by being particularly humorous, popular or informal, by providing facts or suggesting conclusions.

Effective messages also need to fit the selected media and communication channels. In fact, **"the medium is the message"**: If you choose the wrong media, your well-designed message may be lost or destroyed. For example, if you disseminate information about your conservation programme through media that your stakeholders' mistrust, they will doubt the credibility of the message as well. This is why messages should only be formulated at later stages of the strategy development, when you know enough about the stakeholders and have a clear picture of who trusts whom.

Effective positioning or framing requires the messages to have certain qualities that also apply to good journalism. Messages have to be accessible, accurate, verifiable, complete, timely and relevant. Social marketing experts often add a few recommendations for communicating sustainable development in general.

In a nutshell, this framework suggests making the intended practices of a conservation programme **desirable and accessible** to relevant audiences by looking at the related messages from a stakeholder's perspective. What are the barriers that obstruct people from buying in? What are the advantages and benefits of a new, environmentally friendly practice that will make people

How can you take this step

The **First Golden Rule** for creating successful messages is simple enough: ***KISS AIDA,*** which stands for

Fig. 33. Kiss AIDA. © Manfred Oepen. ACT Assist.

The **Second Golden Rule**, as mentioned above under Getting Started, is: "The worm has to be tasty to the fish, not the angler". How effective a communication strategy is dependent largely on how clear and attractive the messages are **for the target audience**. **They** must understand and like the messages – **not you**. Any message should therefore be designed to suit the specific characteristics, the educational and intellectual background, and the values and aspirations of the respective stakeholder group.

Message design is also the step where recommendations for behavioral interventions in nature conservation are most often applied in the psychological and/or social appeals the messages carry. Some behavioural change considerations are mentioned here.

Illusion of transparency: There is the tendency for people to overestimate the degree to which their personal images and perceptions of the world around them is known and shared by others. But words or mental images do not mean the same to all of us. How your audience interprets your messages is shaped by ***their*** background, world view, experience, and culture, not ***yours***. Which is why it is so important to design your message from your audience's perspective.

The human brain does not deal well with complexity: The bad news is that most of us humans deem the remote future as irrelevant – as can often be observed in the climate change debate.

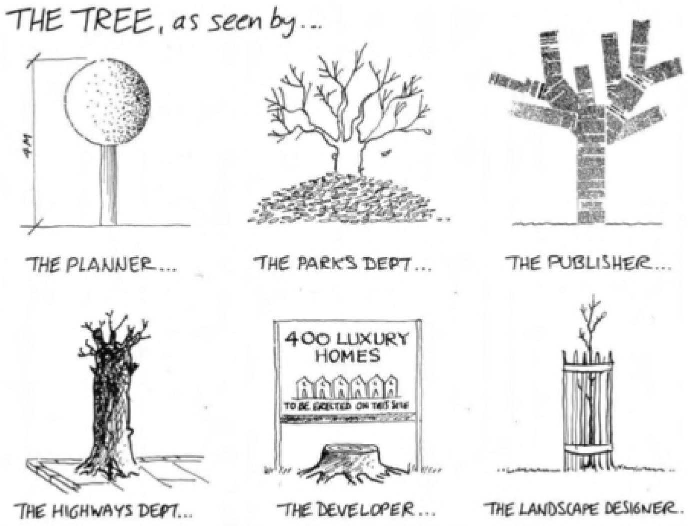


Fig. 34. The Tree. © European Forest Institute. www.cyburbia.org.

The good news is that we can encourage short-term forms of investment and efforts – including those for nature conservation – that will gain acceptance when it pays off near-term and in a specific situation. This is important to keep in mind as you are designing messages that deal with complexity and longterm planning as is often the case in conservation programmes.

Bans or appeals to sacrifices need alternatives: When entrenched habits and common practices are supposed not to be valid any more people tend to look for alternative practices. Therefore, most bans or appeals to sacrifices will only be effective if an alternative to the practice to be banned or sacrificed can be offered. Look at the successful bans on smoking in public places, on CFCs in refrigerators, or on lightbulbs, which were followed through because there were social respectively technical alternatives in place. The same can be said for sacrifices that work better if there is hope, positive goals and narratives like "I want to live in a world in which all humans strive for a balance with nature" in the near future.

One crisis at a time: The human brain has difficulties dealing with multiple crises at a time – as we can observe in public opinion polls and actions when people are asked to deal with, for example, the wars in Ukraine and in Gaza in 2023/2024 at the same time. Hence, in your message design you should focus on one crisis only at a time. The good news is that if we humans concentrate on a problem, we are able to look at it from a fresh perspective and often come up with creative solutions. This is also what communicating conservation is all about.

Fig. 35. Majorities & minorities. https://x.com/lichtstifter/status/1902674570156396708.

In Step 2, we mentioned change agents, influencers, and innovators a lot, i.e., **minorities who ultimately win over the majority** within a large group or society. The related process is tricky however. For example, the more dogmatic a minority position is perceived in the public eye – whether 'right' or 'wrong' – the less are chances to win over a majority towards that position. Ultimately, critical minorities need at least a quarter of the group or society to be won over. Instead of segregating groups in society the key to success is the opposite, namely embracing the 'others' by creating inclusive messages and a common identity just as Gandhi or Martin Luther King or the Fridays for Future movement did.

One good way to begin message design is to imagine you are at a stakeholder's door and you have one minute to engage and convert him or her to your cause. What do you say? You need a clear, compelling, and short introduction that does three basic things, namely

1. giving your neighbor a **reason to care** about your issue, by appealing to values, e.g. *"We care about our family's health, and we feel a responsibility to protect their quality of life."*
2. **describing a threat** and who is responsible for the problem, e.g. *"The local water catchment area, which helps to clean our air and water, gives us beauty and recreation, and is home to many plants and animals, is about to be destroyed by a large-scale car factory."*
3. **providing a solution** by describing what action will address the threat and by giving people something to do, a call to action that allows them to respond to the threat, e.g. *"We can prevent this destruction by making our views known at the next regional council meeting. Here's the date. Please come and bring a friend."*

However, you need to be very aware that sometimes **what we are saying is not what our audience is hearing.** Different audiences have different perspectives on issues, especially on conservation. No one set of preferred words or phrases may be appropriate for all circumstances. So, the best advice is to be sensitive to your audience and use language that speaks to your audience.

Here are some other general pieces of **guidance**: Avoid using bureaucratic words and acronyms to describe a problem. Calling for standards is often better than demanding regulations. Speak of protecting rivers and forests instead of talking about natural resource protection. Ecosystem in comparison to habitat has the added virtue of conveying that all things in the environment (eco) are connected for a purpose (system). It is one of the best words to use when describing biodiversity. Having a human anecdote or story that illustrates and amplifies your message is critical to a successful communication effort. A true story could be about benefits—including lives saved—from the protection of threatened and endangered species. Pictures and images tell a story, evoke emotions and appeal to values if chosen carefully. Images should reflect the message, including a positive appeal to values and a description of the problem.

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When using facts, be specific as the public has become skeptical of information presented by advocates. Better provide the number of acres of the mentioned water catchment area instead of "vast amounts." Use facts that relate to people's daily lives or experience, such as "the water we drink every day".

Once messages have been designed, make it the mantra that is repeated over and over again. You should have a maximum of 3-5 key messages and stick with them. A high diversity of messages would result in a lack of clarity and focus. To this end, a **message map or board** is highly efficient as it helps organise the messages you want to communicate to your audience. It ensures consistency and alignment across all media and materials and incorporates core and supporting messages, and audience segmentation related to the problem or theme to be addressed. Often, also, the call to action is specified, i.e. what you want your audience to do after receiving the message. In the pilot case of My Green Mongolia (see Entry Points, p 20), for example, stakeholders engaged in environment education and media experts co-created a **message board** and a story arch for a 26-episode radio drama series that became a success in the country.

All three elements of message design – **message, audience and messenger** – should complement each other. Conservation messages are most credible when they come from people affected by an issue or problem and when their issues are told through a story. Using endangered species as an example, most people are aware of endangered species issues but they often think of them in terms of rescuing a particular mammal or bird or whale. Therefore, it is important to broaden the audience's concern to the habitats on which wildlife and plants depend. The **key values** you are seeking to tap are responsibility to family and future generations, protection of human health and well-being, enhancement of our quality of life, and nature's right to exist. An **overarching message** that works could be "We have a responsibility to protect the health of our families and to maintain a healthy environment for future generations. Nature's habitats provide us with clean air and clean water, make our cities livable, give us beauty and recreation, and protect hundreds of species of plants and animals. We humans need a balance with nature so that habitats and species are protected, and the needs of future generations can be met". **Appropriate messengers** include citizens who steward and care for sensitive habitats, a business owner benefiting from species protection and resulting tourism adjacent to a protected area, a cancer patient who benefited from treatment with pharmaceuticals derived from wild plant species, or grandparents, parents, young children concerned about the future.

The seed **Message Design** (Seed **7.1**) differentiates messages for different stakeholders and helps you design attractive and persuasive messages by 'packaging' them with different kinds of appeals.

And here is a look at how the two case studies have designed the messages for their initiatives:

Provita

Messages for the Amazon parrot campaign avoid patronising but emphasize the cultural and social values that the Macanao communities hold for parrots while stressing the health and family ties advantages of outdoor activities. The cognitive PEEL strategy (Point, Evidence, Explanation, Link) is used to write factual press releases, video scripts, or articles. A tool called Message Box is used to develop emotional posts for social networks, for example. Here, the second sentence after an introduction of the focal problem describes why the issue raised is relevant to the audience. The third sentence describes feasible actions that the audience can take to contribute to the solution of the problem. Finally, the fourth sentence describes what benefits the audience gains in the short term from solving this problem.

#NatureForAll

When developing the #NatureForAll initiative, there was always a desire to focus on the positive, i.e. the work being done to connect people with and to take action for nature, as opposed to the negative, e.g. climate change is destroying our planet. And given the research showing the importance of connecting with nature, of loving something in order to protect it, messaging quickly focused on that aspect. There was a concerted effort to have love of nature underpin the whole movement, and .to focus on the successes and the positive actions being taken as opposed to the daunting task at hand. As such, messaging to existing partners was "share your work inspiring love of and action for nature" while messaging to potential partners and the general public was about "be inspiring to connect with, fall in love with and take action for nature".

Comic book design with UNICEF in Liberia.
© Sean Southey.

Step 8: Media production & pretesting

Meet your audience where they are, not where you want them to be.

What this step is about

Key question: Who are the best producers for the media you have in mind?

Relevant seed: Seed 8.1, Media production and pretesting

So far you have assessed the situation (Step 1) and the stakeholders in it (Step 2), have defined the communication objectives (Step 3) and outlined the process (Step 4), have assessed or negotiated various degrees of stakeholder participation (Step 5), selected suitable media and communication channels with and for different groups (Step 6), and drafted key messages to convey to each of them (Step 7).

Step 8 takes you from preparation to **operations** – it's time to jump into the water and swim, to create brochures or posters, produce radio or TV broadcasts, launch a series of articles, prepare for meetings with stakeholders, design and organise workshops and dialogues, and more. But remember to choose your media and communication channels carefully. There is no point in producing a radio or TV broadcast if your identified key stakeholders are best influenced by interpersonal discussion. We all have a bias towards the media and resources we have available and which we have used in the past – usually for other purposes. Keep in mind the adage: "to a hammer, everything looks like a nail". So, instead of using the same media again and again for different conservation programmes, stick to the **recommendations in Step 6**: Each media should be appropriate to the audiences' preferred information sources and media consumption patterns, and each media should be used for specific rather than multiple objectives or purposes.

© GIZ

Most communication strategies have this famous **'Aha!' moment or eureka effect** when planners and people involved suddenly understand a previously incomprehensible problem or concept and all the pieces of a puzzle fall into place. This often happens in the planning or production phase. The "My Green Mongolia" (MGM, see p 30) campaign, for example, really took off during a 4-day co-creation workshop for a 26-episode radio drama series when planners, media professionals and environmental experts, guided by the authors of this guide, developed and acted out the drama's characters and story arch.

Then, these participants took sketches from one episode on stage for a dress rehearsal. There were bad guys, an attractive heroine, a love triangle, sleezy hustlers, lots of tempting business opportunities, sex,crime, and quite a number of cashmere goats involved in the drama on biodiversity conservation and environmental protection. And the invited guests and MGM stakeholders just roared with laughter at the info-training and authentic play. At that moment, the MGM stakeholders felt that the campaign would fly.

To increase **media effectiveness,** the media or material selected should not be mass produced too early in the elaboration of the communication strategy. The implementation of a multi-media communication strategy has a greater chance of being successful if its impacts are assessed by means of a built-in formative (continuous) and summative (ex-post) evaluation. In addition to the variety of Monitoring & Evaluation methods that will be covered in Step 10, we provide some examples below of how to pre-test the media and materials.

Another issue is some simple advise on visual design in the media production process as outlined below.

Guidelines for Using Visual Aids

Title
All visual aids should have a title.

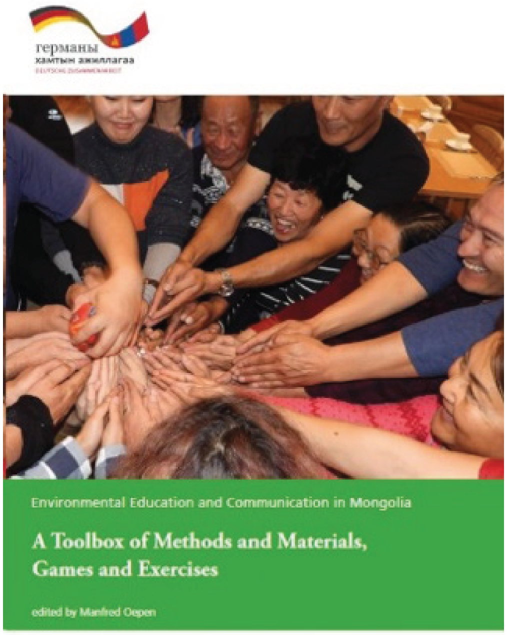
Structure
Less is more: Viewers should be able to grasp the essence of a visual aid at a glance. Assign the headlines and sub-titles different colours. Form visual blocks. Leave spaces blank instead of overloading posters, transparencies, or a PowerPoint slide.

Graphical Support
As pictures tell more than words, use diagrams, illustrations, or drawings in addition to text.

Colours
A poster or transparency will look more lively and attractive when some basic colours are added. Colours also help structuring information, but use them selectively and systematically.

Literacy
"You see what I mean?:" Visual information needs to be interpreted, too, and the 'visual literacy' to do so is not shared interculturally. This often makes pretesting necessary.

Legibility
Big visual aids such as posters or info boards should be legible from up to eight meters."



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How you can take this step

The most important recommendation at this point is: **involve professionals** who have experience with the specific communication channels that you selected earlier. For example, trained journalists are good at writing grammatically correct text in a plain language style that appeals to a wide audience. A graphic designer has an eye for attractive layouts of brochures, flyers, or posters. Producing video clips or entire films is a profession in itself. Meetings, seminars or multi-stakeholder workshops are best designed and implemented with the help of experienced facilitators using **moderation and visualisation** methods and tools such as MOVE. This will help project teams hold more effective discussions and make joint decisions with better judgement based on informed choice. Step 9 below provides more details on MOVE.

Ideally, some of those specialists will already have contributed to earlier steps of creating the communication strategy. Writers, designers, producers, facilitators, etc. who have not been involved so far should now be briefed thoroughly about the target groups, objectives, desired contents and messages, the set of selected media and communication channels, etc. Each of them should know which other elements are incorporated in the strategy. In turn, they will be able to advise you on the **most effective ways to use each element**, for example, regarding suitable layouts and design, typical persuasion and retention rates of different media, or effective workshop dynamics and methods. You may find this a rather time consuming exercise, but it pays off!

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This is also a good moment to put together an integrated **production schedule** that includes all media and communication channels to be employed in the strategy. Within your team, everyone should be informed about his or her role in the process and about the timing of different strategy elements. Some team members may need to be trained or updated to be able to fulfil their role effectively. Be realistic in the amount of time needed to reach the project outputs, and the time and inputs needed for the **organisational process.** This is especially important when your conservation programme closely works with partners and intermediaries.

As the saying goes, you only have one chance to make a good **first impression.** It is very difficult to undo a bad first impression made by misguided and ineffective elements of communication strategies. Therefore, especially where large quantities of material are to be produced, **pre-testing the strategy, media, and messages** can prevent costly mistakes. Pre-testing is an opportunity to consult with and listen to stakeholders to ensure that the mentioned elements respond to and meet the audience's needs, and it involves the latter in the design and fine-tuning of the communication strategy.

To pre-test the effectiveness of media and communication channels, you can employ a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods. Here are some examples to choose from:

Define objectives: Outline the goals of your communication strategy, and Identify the key performance indicators (KPIs) you want to measure, e.g. outreach, engagement, call to action, etc.

Choose relevant channels: Identify potential communication channels based on your audience's preferences that you have identified through a KAP survey, for example.

Qualitative research: Conduct interviews, surveys, or focus group discussions to gather subjective feedback. Ask participants about their preferences, perceptions, and experiences with different communication channels.

Quantitative research: Use analytics tools to measure quantitative data. Track metrics such as reach, click-through rates, or engagement on each channel. t

A/B testing: Implement A/B testing to compare variations of your content or messages. Test different headlines, images, or calls-to-action to determine what resonates best with your audience.

Feedback mechanisms: Include feedback mechanisms within your channels, such as comment sections, surveys, or polls. Analyze the feedback to understand how your audience is responding.

Competitor analysis: Analyze the communication strategies of your competitors. Identify which channels they are using successfully and learn from their approaches.

Cost-effectiveness analysis: Evaluate the cost-effectiveness of each channel. Compare the cost for each channel per click or conversion, i.e. the occurrence of a desired action.

Monitor trends: Stay informed about trends and changes in consumer behavior. Adjust your communication strategy based on emerging trends.

Iterate and optimise: Use the insights gained to refine your communication strategy. Continuously optimise your content and channel selection based on performance data.

By using some of these research methods, you'll gather valuable insights into the effectiveness of different media and communication channels, enabling you to make informed decisions and optimise your strategy over time.

It is useful to do a pre-testing on several levels. The strategy itself – as outlined in Step 4 at the latest – can be pretested through participatory processes that involve intended stakeholders through focus group discussions, rapid surveys, or in-depth interviews. In this way, people who will be affected by the strategy have an opportunity to provide feedback on improvements or things to be avoided. The results of such a pretest usually provide information needed to revise the strategy before it is implemented on a community, regional, or national level. Pretesting the strategy could be done any time between Step 4 and Step 8. In some cases, as early as at Step 2, involving audience and KAP analyses, relevant practices and products can be pretested. Observing people engaged in desired activities in forest management or using new environment-friendly products, for example, may identify barriers and benefits that will improve subsequent steps and elements of the communication strategy.

At the same time, it is useful to **pre-test media and messages** by using prototypes of print and mass media materials with groups or individuals who are representative of the target audience. The latter is important because "the worm has to be tasty to the fish, not the angler", i.e., the message should suit the specific characteristics, the educational and intellectual background, and the values and aspirations of the respective stakeholder group.

Hence, it would not make sense to pretest a comic book meant for rural adults with a group of urban university students. Often, multiple versions of the same message or material are developed, and people are asked which ones they like better and why. The relevance, textual and visual clarity, potential to motivate and/or induce action, and the acceptance or credibility of the media and messages can also be tested in this way.

When working with local communities, you may want to focus on **co-creation with your partners.** This means spending significant time in the field to dig deeper into local experiences and learn about community members' day-to-day lives. For the same reason you should compensate people for their time and effort, and you should make a commitment to share pre-testing results with those who participated in the test and to incorporate the results into the media and materials you produce. Yes, pretesting, qualitative research and co-designing solutions with community members takes time, but these approaches are key to success of your communication strategy.

The seed **Media Production and Pretesting** (Seed **8.1**) helps you summarise the information gathered.

And here is how Provita and #NatureForAll, the case studies, dealt with media production and pretesting.

Provita

The Provita action plan for both campaigns comprise four stages. In the launch phase, the overall objectives and general strategy was published, aiming at knowledge gains. This was followed by the conversion stage that captured the attention of the audiences to convert them into participants by promoting positive attitudes toward the alternative behavior. In the commitment and the change stages, the Provita team has been strengthening its relationship with its audiences and, most importantly, promoting the social norms that will lead to engagement and ultimately the desired change. In addition to the social, broadcasting and print media mentioned in Step 6, local comedians serve as trendsetters promoting participation and fun perception to increase social influences. Testimonials from community members highlight their experience and shared problems. During the pretesting of media and messages, the Provita team faced a crucial barrier to adopt the proposed behavior, namely the stakeholders' perception that outdoor activities are boring. Therefore, a brainstorming workshop was held with communities representatives, which allowed the team to design core activities that align with campaign objectives, are enjoyable for the audience, and are easy to implement based on our current resources, technical capacities, and logistics.

#NatureForAll

When creating media content for #NatureForAll, it was important to use language and images that people from around the world could relate to. Using a polar bear on ice might work for northern communities, but people in Australia, Kenya or Argentina wouldn't relate to that type of content. In addition, because #NatureForAll is about people connecting with nature, it was important to showcase diversity in the images used so that people could see themselves in the campaign messaging. For example, the threepart video series Imagine, Living and Love #NatureForAll was created in 22, 28 and 42 languages, in order to reach as many people as possible. In addition, and particularly through Parks Canada's involvement, #NatureForAll was able to work with experienced graphic designers and web developers to create content – often in English, French and Spanish – that ensured the effectiveness of the materials produced.

Step 9: Media use in the field

What this step is about

Key question: How do you disseminate and effectively use the media and materials you produced in the field?

Relevant seed: Seed 9.1, Media use & field implementation

A multi-media communication strategy has the best chance for success if the combination of media, materials and dialogue platforms is well coordinated. Good coordination means that the different media and messages used complement and build on each other – and, most importantly, that messages are timely and actionable.

One of the greatest **obstacles to success of a communication strategy** is that the messages are untimely or unactionable. For example, large-scale battery recycling schemes in the Netherlands or organic waste collection bins in Germany in the 1980s initially failed because awareness raising campaigns were launched before the actual physical collection logistics were in place and working. This frustrated people – and many did not even want to listen any more during similar campaigns some time later. Therefore, the best advice is "Be ready when the people are".

Fig. 36. Media use & field implementation. © Manfred Oepen. ACT Assist.

Similarly, a delay in communication activities may trigger domino effects. For example, you may have succeeded in motivating all the main stakeholders to participate in a conservation programme workshop, but a key input – a study, for example – is not available by the time of the event. The resulting frustration of the participants may undermine your credibility in any future communication.

In short, running a multi-channel communication strategy requires a **good information management** system that provides rapid feedback on key activities. This will enable you to adjust the strategy when necessary. The information system should enable the proper and timely coordination of various activities, which often need to be carried out simultaneously. Also, the **capacity-building efforts** of local partners that began in the assessment and planning and design steps need to continue throughout implementation. In order safeguard the sustainability of your conservation programme, implementation should be locally run, with outside technical guidance provided only as needed.

At this point it is also good to remember that change does not happen overnight. Instead, change is a process that moves along a **continuum of practice changes.** In general, there are five stages commonly observed as the process of changing practices unfolds. During the **awareness** stage, a stakeholder group is exposed to something innovative but is not interested in altering practices in order to address an environmental problem. It takes the **interest** stage for them to look for detailed information before, in the **decision** stage, they weigh the advantages and disadvantages of the innovation and either adopt or reject it. In the **implementation** stage, they use and evaluate the new practice, and finally, in the **confirmation** stage, they decide to continue using the innovation or finally reject it.

awareness	interest	decision	implementation	confirmation
I have no idea about the environmentally friendly innovation but do not want to change my practices	hm, now that I know more, this doesn't sound like such a bad idea – maybe I should try it out	okay, I'll give this new practice a try and will decide then whether to adopt or reject it	I have put the new practice to use, sometimes successfully, sometimes no	well, finally my conclusion is to continue using/reject the environmentally friendly practice

Fig. 37. AIDIC. © Manfred Oepen. ACT Assist.

People need different kinds of messages, materials, training, and support in each of these stages. For example, people who are unaware that their practices are harmful to the environment may need better information from sources they trust. Others who are thinking about trying out a new environmentally friendly practice may need social support and skills training. When people first try a new practice, they may experience confusion and frustration. At this point, they need encouragement and recognition. Ultimately, for a behavior to be maintained, **repetition is critical.**

Hence, assess where your target audience is on the continuum and then take steps to support them to move on from one stage to the next, from passive onlookers to actively engaged individuals or groups.

How you can take this step

The seed **Media Use & Field Implementation** (Seed **9.1**) helps you gather and keep track of the most essential management information.

Media	Audience	Communication Context	Production & Distribution Responsibility	Budget & Other Resources	Timeline

Fig. 38. © Manfred Oepen. ACT Assist.

As mentioned earlier, it's important to make realistic **time estimates** – both per media and communication channel and per stakeholder group, considering the most appropriate events, occasions, times, and places. For example, you can plan workshops back-to-back with other events where some key stakeholders are already present. Also, you can **use or create events** where you can 'stage' and present inputs such as culture festivals, VIP visits, etc. Where mass media are being employed, try to plan other activities around them as to harness public attention. Try to **'cross-fertilise' different channels,** e.g., the emotional appeal of the radio with the factual one of print media. It is also possible to achieve multiplication and feedback effects among various media. Consider a decision maker who, on the same day, reads about your conservation programme in the newspaper, finds a brochure on it on her desk and is asked by a colleague what she thinks about the latest social media posts in relation with your programme. Compare that to a decision maker who learns about your conservation programme only through a monthly electronic newsletter. In summary: Try to 'piggy-back' and **combine media and communication channels** as much as possible, and to get 'free rides' on existing media, platforms, events, or other communication channels.

Participant in a Lao environmental communication training using MOVE. © Manfred Oepen.

In interpersonal communication what helps is balancing advocacy and inquiry by laying out our reasoning and thinking, and then encourage others to respond and to question the view presented. This is best achieved in **interactive dialogue formats** such as facilitation or MOVE – Moderation and Visualization for Group Events. In essence, "moderor" is Latin and means to lead, navigate, or control while the Latin origin of "facilitation" means to make something easier. The focus is on processes that make it easier for a group to share knowledge and generate new ideas by comparing and choosing between options, and making decisions and plans for implementation.

Dialogue has at least two dimensions: the 'What' and the 'How,' meaning the technical subject matters and the methodological know-how. Technical and professional **expertise alone is not enough**. Rather, it is equally important 'how' conservation subject matters are conveyed. Conservation professionals often rely on their technical competence and analytical skills. In this guide, we stress the need for an approach to communication between us and our stakeholders that cultivates the individual and institutional willingness and ability to learn in an interactive and participatory way. This will help project teams hold more effective discussions and make joint decisions with better judgement based on informed choice.

To this end, MOVE is an effective method. It elicits ideas and reach group consensus on key issues or courses of action interactively. The process needs a skilled moderator who stimulates communication by posing precisely formulated questions that the group works on. Each individual is given time to think and to note down main ideas on cards. The cards are then presented, discussed and clustered to represent the collective reflection of the participants. The method is based on three major working principles - moderation, visualisation and **experiential learning** - and a set of major features: Transparency in decision making, needs orientation, cooperation & participation, learning by self-reflection, 10% theory/60% group work/30% discussions, professional moderation and visualisation, and evaluation.

It is also useful to have a few prepared '**elevator speeches**' at hand to use whenever an opportunity arises, for example on the supporting, provisioning, regulating, and cultural functions of ecosystem services that are the basis of life on earth. An elevator speech or pitch is a brief, think 30-90 seconds, way of introducing yourself and your cause, getting across a key point or two, and making a connection with someone. The goal is to convince that person or group of a conservation idea or concept in an exciting style so that further contacts or meetings can be arranged. Be ready for such occasions – and grab them. While it is good to plan communication strategically, it is also necessary to be prepared for any unforeseen or unplanned opportunities, especially in communication with top-level decision makers who are hard to reach. Although prepared in advance, an elevator speech should not sound memorised but conversational and natural. You want to appear confident, enthusiastic, poised, and professional.

Now, let's have a look at how #NatureForAll tackled this step.

Fig. 39. Ecosystem Services. Melanie Vogelpoh, Deutsche Bundesstiftung Umwelt.

Provita

Have a look at the Provita case study in Step 8.

#NatureForAll

The website has been a place to showcase partner stories, case studies and successes. It allows partners access toolkits and resources they would otherwise not be able to develop on their own, but also share their own materials so others can benefit from them. It also provides space to assemble, learn from, and share evidence-based research. Social media channels allowed partners to coalesce around a rallying hashtag, to have their work amplified to a different audience and to connect with a global community.

Example of an Elevator Speech

"We provide sustainable energy solutions that reduce your company's environmental impact and cut energy costs.We believe that going green should benefit both the planet and your bottom line. As a matter of fact, we helped ***[company that works in the same industry]*** *cut the electricity costs at their offices* ***[in half]****! We think that's something you'd be interested in, as you could use the freed-up funds towards* ***[current goal of the company]****. Let's talk further and discuss this more!"*

Step 10: Monitoring and evaluation

What this step is about

Key question: How do you know you are successful with your campaign?	
Relevant seeds:	Seed 10.1, Monitoring & evaluation Seed 3.2, Indicators for communication objectives

Assessing the effectiveness of communication strategy is complex because its interventions are not isolated events. As most target audiences are bombarded constantly with messages from many sources, **it is hard to attribute outcomes or effects to any one element of your strategy**. Even if an effect has been observed and measured, one should not deduce from this that the result came about through your conservation programme alone. This is called an 'attribution gap'. However, it is not always necessary to prove that a particular input has had a specific impact. It is often sufficient to make a case for the fact that the programme as a whole has contributed to the observed change.

Another way of minimising the risks of attribution gaps is to involve intended audiences and local people not just as sources of information but as active participants. If stakeholders are proactively integrated into the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) procedures, they evaluate as insiders while you as an outsider facilitate the process. M&E then means additional human capacity development of stakeholder for analysis and problem solving. This process will build commitment for implementing conclusions and recommendations of your conservation programme. So – **don't do M&E just by yourself** but do it together with your stakeholders and partners.

M&E have two major objectives: they support you in steering the communication strategy, and they help all involved to learn from both success and failure. M&E should therefore be a continuous effort throughout the communication strategy – from planning to implementation. It should focus on the efficiency of strategy implementation, and on the relevance and impact of individual activities or the overall programme.

There are different types of M&E: **Ex-ante appraisals** are part of the planning to assess the envisaged outcomes and impacts. **Formative evaluation** is done during implementation and helps you check whether the programme is on course. **Ex-post impact assessment** after implementation assesses the effects of the intervention and rates the sustainability of those effects.

To make evaluations useful and to reduce their cost, determine during the assessment stage the **indicators needed to measure success** and focus the evaluation on measuring those specific indicators, the yardsticks of your strategy. For example, if the goal of your communication strategy is just to increase information, then focus the evaluation on measuring knowledge gains. If the goal is to change practices, focus on measuring the specific environmentally friendly practices you want the target audiences to achieve. Often, your communication strategy in Step 3 has defined knowledge, attitude and practice (KAP) objectives. In this case, a combination of several related indicators will be your yardsticks of choice. Have a look at the example overleaf which is related to communication objectives and their KAP indicators as defined in Step 3.

Knowing whether your communication strategy has made an impact requires a comparison of current conditions with a previous status, another site, or a different group of people. Changes in knowledge, attitudes, and practices may be measured by comparing levels before and after your interventions. Changes may also be measured by comparing the actions of people who were involved in an activity or exposed to communication such as television or radio spots, billboards, or printed materials, for example, with people who were not. If there is no comparison, there can be no evaluation. This is why often pre- and post-KAP surveys are conducted.

But keep in mind that **M&E should be done regularly** throughout implementation so that its results can be used to refine and re-plan the strategy and its media, messages, and materials. Evaluation can also provide vital information that decision makers, practitioners, and donors can use to guide the development and implementation of your conservation programme. Don't wait until the project is over to evaluate but use smaller, in-between evaluation samples and methods so that related results can still be applied to make necessary in changes in the management and implementation of your communication strategy and conservation programme.

How you can take this step

The best way to implement M&E is to assess whether the (KAP-related) communication objectives¬ of a campaign or communication strategy have been reached. These objectives were formulated in Step 3 for each stakeholder group. Let's take the example we used in Step 3, i.e. *"within May – September in the year N, we want 30% of registered visitors of the Paradise Mountain protected area (PA) to collect their garbage and drop it at designated disposal sites"* as overall conservation programme objective. In this example, KAP-related communication objectives were formulated and you can measure whether or not your campaign has been successful in reaching these goals. Here is an example. More ways how to **measure the impact** of a communication strategy or campaign are listed overleaf.

	Communication Objective for registered visitors of the PA	**How will you know that you have been successful?**
K	▪ to **inform** within five months at least 70% of registered visitors of the PA about 'Leave no Trace' principles regarding littering in PAs	▪ a fully-fledged KAP survey before and after the campaign would measure knowledge gains related to 'Leave no Trace' principles through a questionnaire or personal interviews ▪ alternatively, the PA administration could distribute 'Leave no Trace' flyers with, or put respective QR codes on to visitors' tickets
A	▪ to increase the proportion of registered PA visitors regarding their positive **attitude** towards the willingness to collect their garbage and drop it at designated disposal sites from the present 25% to 75% within the period of May–September in the year N	▪ a fully-fledged KAP survey before and after the campaign would measure relevant attitude changes by means of a questionnaire or personal interviews ▪ alternatively, the disposal sites could be set up at PA exit points or shops inside the PA, where visitors' attitudes could be randomly checked by PA or (paid) shop staff before and after the campaign
P	▪ to **persuade** registered visitors of the PA to collect their garbage and drop it at designated disposal sites, and to increase this practice from the present 5% to 30% within the period of May– September in the year N	▪ a fully-fledged KAP survey before and after the campaign would measure practice changes through a questionnaire or personal interviews ▪ alternatively, random and measured checks regarding the amount of dropped garbage at the disposal sites inside the PA could be

Fig. 40. KAP Chart. © Manfred Oepen. ACT Assist.

It is often not possible – and not always necessary – to commission a largescale study for M&E. Don't worry about this: A 'light' version of M&E will often be sufficient. The most important thing is to think **in advance** how you will notice success: How will you see, hear, or feel that you have reached your objectives? The second most important element is to define and assess this **together with others** – with a handful of colleagues, or at a workshop with stakeholder representatives. This is because different people perceive and interpret things differently, and it is very difficult if not impossible to evaluate the effects of a communication strategy all by oneself. The seed **Monitoring & Evaluation** (Seed **10.1**) provides a format for this exercise. Also, the key indicators defined in Step 3 (**Indicators for Communication Objectives**, Seed **3.2**) help you assess the outcomes of communi¬cation interventions and track the inputs and processes that contribute to success.

In addition, involving and training community members to measure practice-oriented and environmental indicators, is another emerging and powerful tool to shape and measure change. It is powerful because it **assists citizens in making informed decisions** – that is, to seek, organise, and use data to improve both their built and natural environments. In addition, sharing research results with stakeholders builds constituencies and advocates. It also ensures that everyone learns from successes and avoids common mistakes. Involve key decision makers and influencers early to develop understanding of and commitment to the M&E process. This helps ensure that these results will be shared and used. Holding press conferences or informing journalists about M&E results encourages media coverage of conservation issues. As an additional benefit, increased media coverage provides reinforcement of the desired environmental practices.

Here are some questions you may want to consider in the context of M&E:

About the issues that are being communicated

- Who 'owns' the issues?
- How relevant are the issues to the audience?
- To what extent does the audience understand the root causes, dynamics, consequences, etc. of the issues?
- Do the issues generate emotions: interest, anger, frustration, etc.?

About the media selection and mix

- How suitable is the media selection and mix in light of the audience's preferences audio-visual literacy?

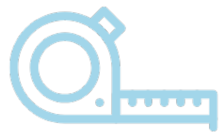
- How appropriate is the amount of information provided – is there an overload or a shortage?
- To what extent do the selected media and messengers help strengthen the message?
- Does the choice of media respect the socio-cultural sensitivities of the audience?

About the impact

- Is the core message oriented towards people rather than technical issues or projects?
- Does the core message support values, self-confidence and initiative of local audiences?
- Are the best possible messengers engaged in order to increase message effectiveness?
- Is the message heard, understood and accepted as intended?
- To what extent does the message boost confidence and initiative?
- To what extent does the message motivate people to change their attitudes and practices, and mobilise for action?

Measuring the impact of a communication campaign is crucial to assess its effectiveness and make informed decisions for future strategies.

Here are several ways how you can **measure the impact** of a communication strategy or campaign:



Set Clear Objectives and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs): Define specific and measurable objectives for your campaign. Identify key performance indicators (KPIs) that align with your goals, such as increased brand awareness, website traffic, lead generation, or sales.

Surveys and Feedback: Conduct surveys before and after the campaign to gauge changes in audience perception, attitudes, and behavior. Collect feedback through online forms, interviews, or focus groups to understand the impact on the target audience.

Website Analytics: Monitor website traffic and user behavior using tools like Google or Facebook Analytics. Track changes in the number of visitors, page views, and the time spent on the site during and after the campaign.

Social Media Metrics: Analyze social media engagement metrics, including likes, shares, comments, and follower growth. Use social media analytics tools to track the reach and impact of your campaign across different platforms.

Media Mentions and PR Impact: Measure the quantity and quality of media coverage related to your campaign. Evaluate the sentiment of media mentions and assess how the campaign has been portrayed in the

Conversion Rates: Track conversion rates, i.e. occurrences of a desired action related to your campaign, such as sign-ups, downloads, or purchases.

Brand Awareness and Recognition: Monitor changes in brand awareness and recognition, and evaluate whether the campaign has positively impacted brand recall among the target audience.

Email Campaign Metrics: **If your campaign includes social marketing through** emails, track measure the impact of this communication on user engagement and conversions such as open rates, click-through rates, and conversion rates.

Cost-Effectiveness: Evaluate the cost-effectiveness of the campaign by comparing the results achieved with the resources invested.

Stakeholder Feedback and Reviews: Monitor stakeholder feedback and online reviews to understand how the campaign has influenced stakeholder satisfaction and loyalty. Assess whether there are notable changes in sentiment and perception among your stakeholder base.

By choosing from or combining these methods, you can gain a comprehensive understanding of the impact of your communication campaign and make data-driven decisions for future initiatives. By choosing from or combining these methods, you can gain a comprehensive understanding of the impact of your communication campaign and make data-driven decisions for future initiatives. Throughout the implementation phase, stress the value of **frequent check-ins** through real-time monitoring.

Retro planning is another M&E approach used to plan and organise tasks and activities in a logical order. However, its specificity is that it starts backwards from the expected project completion date. This is particularly useful when you have to keep milestones and deadlines. In addition to Miradi (see also Seed **4.1**) and concept mapping tools, retro planning tools such as Reetro or Wimi that allow for better time management, breaking down tasks, allocating resources and staff, etc. as part of team work.

Now, let's have a look at how the two case studies tackled this step.

Provita

In the case of the Amazon parrot (YSA), Provita conducted 362 interviews in relevant Macanao communities. In 2022, i.e. before the campaign launch, to assess demand and behavior indicators. Intention to acquire YSA was low (72%) while 17% of interviewees reported keeping YSA. Perception of parrots as part of the family was predominant (82%) but poaching prevalence was low (3%). Results from a intermediary evaluation survey after 10 months of implementation show that participation in core outdoor activities (72% women) increased from 28 adult women to 380. Almost all participants (96%) had positive perceptions of the activities, with high interest in future participation (69%). Participation of youth and seniors increased from 0 to 10-14%. Communication reached 22% of the total population. The campaign reached 5,420 Facebook accounts (22% of the total population). Demand and behavior indicators were again monitored in October 2023, and Provita expects to observe similarly low values of demand intentions and keeping of YSA, but higher prevalence of social norms supporting the alternative behavior. Provita is now analyzing the results of the post-campaign survey, which was conducted after 21 months of campaign implementation.

#NatureForAll

Measuring the impact and success of #NatureForAll has proven to be difficult – how do you measure whether people are more inspired and care for nature, and can you attribute that directly to efforts inspired by #NatureForAll? Success, therefore, has been measured through partner numbers, social media metrics and web traffic as well as partner uptake of #NatureForAll messaging, logos and products. In addition, online surveys captured partner insights into the value of #NatureForAll to their efforts.

Annex: SEEDBOX

Creating effective environmental communication strategies

Seedbox contents

Introduction

This annex offers a selection of aids that enable you to apply the 10 Step Guide to your own conservation context and initiative. We decided to call these aids 'seeds' instead of 'tools' as this term better reflects the very nature of our conservation ambitions.

Structure of the Seedbox

The seeds are organised and numbered according to the ten steps of strategic communication. There is at least one seed – and often several – for each step.

Some seeds complement each other, for example in **Step 3: Communication Objectives** (Seed **3.1**) and the **Indicators for Communication Objectives** (Seed **3.2**). Other seeds are interchangeable, even if they are related to the same step. They may offer different lenses through which to view similar questions. Where there are several seeds for a particular step, you don't necessarily need to use them all.

Nature of the Seeds

Most seeds are designed to help you organise your thoughts or structure a group discussion about a particular issue or set of questions. They often come with matrices or graphs to support the visualization and documentation of the results.

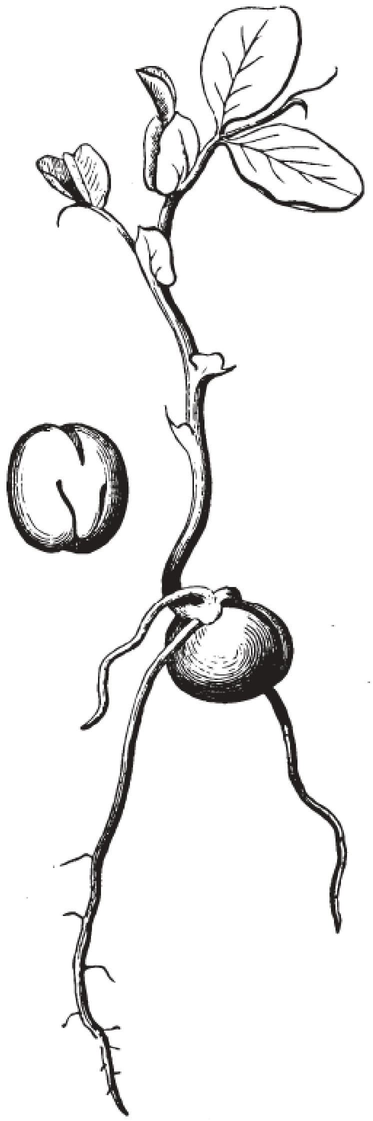
Other seeds are general approaches to a particular activity, for example **Negotiation** (Seed **5.3**). The related descriptions summarise some key principles that have proven useful in the context of multi-stakeholder processes in the field of environment and/or international co-operation.

Using the Seeds

Every seed is described on a maximum of two pages, so that you can easily print or copy it and take it along to a meeting or workshop.

We strongly recommend that, wherever possible, you use the seeds in a team or workshop setting. Of course, it is possible to use the seeds on your own – only you, a pen and a sheet of paper. But it is not a good idea. Developing an effective communication strategy requires many different types of expertise and perspectives. A group of colleagues and/or stakeholder representatives is simply more knowledgeable, experienced and creative than one single person. You will get better results if you involve other people, and this will make your communication strategy more effective and successful. Put differently: You may not always have the budget to commission a study or hire a consultant to help you develop the strategy. But it is always important to bring in diverse perspectives by working together with others.

For group discussions, we recommend that you copy and use the visual aids (tables or graphs) on a flipchart or pinboard, so that all participants can see what is being written down. This helps you focus the discussion and makes it easier for them to contribute to both the process and the results.



Step 1: Situation analysis

Einstein

You may ask why so much time is put into the assessment stage (steps 1-3) of the communication strategy. Albert Einstein had an answer: *"If I had one hour to solve a problem, I would take 45 min to study the situation in which the problem occurs, 1o min to design a solution and 5 min to implement the solution."*

Seed 1.1 Situation analysis

When to use the Seed

Before you start wondering how to communicate, you need to clarify what you want to communicate: What are the issues, and what do you want to achieve?

Implementing conservation programmes is a socio-political change process. For example, the change in different fields of action may consist of: Moving from parliamentarians' unawareness of conservation issues to the ratification of laws and regulations. Moving from a lack of or inconsistencies in conservation policies to a broadly accepted, coherent set of conservation policies in an area or country. Moving from unclear roles and responsibilities to a transparent landscape of conservation-related institutions. And so on.

This simple seed helps you clarify what you actually need to achieve in particular fields or problems of a conservation programme, considering the specific situation of your community, area or country. It will also shed light on some of the challenges you may face along the way.

An important term here is "**critical practice**" – a paraphrase for all those new ideas, suggestions, calls for action or practices you intend to introduce. Like in any other change process, this means moving through a series of phases (see page 78): (1) Awareness – people **know and think about** a particular issue, (2) Interest – for example, they **participate** in a stakeholder meeting or workshop, (3) Decision – they **consider** the options, what to do about the issue, (4) Implementation – they **evaluate** the advantages and disadvantages of recommended new practices, (5) Confirmation – they continue using the new practices or finally reject it. In each of these phases, there is something new that you put on the agenda or ask others to do or decide about. This is what "critical practice" means.

How to use the Seed

Use the format on the next page to discuss and note down:

1 – Critical practices: What are your intentions? What are the critical practices you want to see happening to solve the problem identified?

2 – Key opportunities: What supports your intentions? What may promote the critical practice? And who is on your side?

3 – Key challenges: What stands against your intentions? What is hampering the critical practice? Who is against you?

4 – Alternatives: What if you don't succeed, if the critical practice doesn't prevail? Which second-best option could you pursue?

Step 1: Situational analysis			
Critical practices	**Key opportunities**	**Key challenges**	**Alternatives**
What are your intentions? What are the critical practices you want to introduce to solve the problems identified?	What supports your intentions, what may promote the critical practice? And who is on your side?	What stands against your intentions, hampering the critical practice? Who is against you?	What if you don't succeed, if the critical practice doesn't prevail? Which second-best option could you pursue?
practice 1			
practice 2			
practice 3			

Fig. 41. Situational Analysis. Adapted from: Training material "Strategic Communication." © Manfred Oepen. ACT Assist.

Seed 1.2 Policy field analysis review

When to use the Seed

This seed helps you establish the system boundaries of a conservation programme. Departing from a variety of sources, it helps you clarify which institutions and social groups are truly relevant, so that the scope, audiences and activities of the communication strategy become well focused.

As the term "review" implies, this seed requires the use of existing policy analyses. The questions below should not be discussed in a vacuum but based on solid established sources.

One very useful source for this seed are the analyses of Step 2, in particular the stakeholder map and the analysis of the knowledge, attitudes and practices (KAP) of key stakeholders.

How to use the Seed

1 – Collect relevant documents

To begin, you will need to obtain a picture of the information available for analyzing the policy fields relevant to the problems identified. There are usually various sources – e.g. IUCN data on the status of species or ecosystems, national or sub-national policy, local zoning codes, corporate policy or strategic plans, municipal long-term plans, relevant NGO activities or programmes – from which this information can be taken. Some may be available within, others outside your own sector or institution. In order to utilise these for learning purposes, they will now all be combined to produce a single picture.

2 – Review policy field analysis with reference to key questions

From these sources, it may be helpful to answer the following key questions when producing a coherent overall picture of the policy field:

- Who (organizations, institutions, individuals) possesses which resources, and by what logic are these utilised and distributed?
- What knowledge and what core expertise are particularly important in the respective policy field, and what knowledge and experience are lacking?
- Who is pursuing which interests?

- What are the dominant coalitions in the policy field?
- How does the policy cycle work in this policy field?
- How and by whom are the key problems of the policy field defined?
- What is the history (of experience) behind the problems as currently defined?
- Which factors influence agenda setting in the policy field?

3 – Identify learning objectives for stakeholder groups to achieve the policy goals

Questions to be raised here include:

- How can we change or utilise the settings and framework conditions for learning?
- Which organizational capacities need to be developed among our partners so that the policy goals can be achieved sustainably?
- Which capacities need to be developed so that the stakeholders will be able to engage productively in the process?
- How would we be able to determine whether change has taken?

Adapted from: Capacity WORKS Manual, GIZ 2015.

Seed 1.3 Big picture chart

When to use the Seed

Before you can draft a clear and effective communication strategy for any conservation programme, you need a clear and agreed set of objectives for this programme. This seed helps you formulate a high-level strategy for supporting the objectives through the communication strategy.

Ideally, the individuals who are steering the process have already established the goals in documents to which you have access. Otherwise, you may need to clarify them in personal conversations. Once you know what the objectives are, you can assess how the communication strategy may best support these goals.

How to use the Seed

Use the format on the next page to discuss and note down:

1 – Policy and practice change objectives

List the established objectives in the first row of the table.

2 – Identify driving and restraining forces

Identify any driving forces and restraining forces that you can think of in the respective programme. Driving forces are circumstances that support the objectives, restraining forces are circumstances that stand against them. Driving forces carry you toward attaining the objectives, restraining forces bring about resistance.

If the restraining forces are stronger than the driving forces, the objectives are unlikely to be achieved. When the driving forces are stronger, chances for success are obviously much greater. List the driving and restraining forces in the two corresponding columns.

3 – Ways to maximise driving forces and minimise restraining forces

Think of ways to trengthen the driving forces and weaken the restraining forces to the point where the driving forces are stronger.

Discuss and take notes on how your communication strategy could be used to capitalise on the driving forces and minimise the impact of the restraining forces.

The chart you create with this seed will be a valuable guidepost for developing and implementing your communication strategy.

Big picture chart				
Policy and practice change objectives • •				
Driving forces	Ways to **capitalize** on the driving forces		**Restraining forces**	Ways to **minimize** the restraining forces

Fig. 42. Big Picture Chart. Adapted from: Communication Strategy Tool Kit, Miller Consultants.

Seed 1.4 Miradi

When to use the Seed

Miradi is a project management software tool developed by the Conservation Measures Partnership (CMP) specifically designed for conservation practitioners. You can use the tool to assist in the planning, monitoring, and evaluation of conservation projects, supporting practitioners in making informed decisions and achieving their conservation goals effectively. It's built upon a structured approach to conservation planning known as the Open Standards for the Practice of Conservation.

Key components and features of Miradi include:

- Conservation planning: Miradi helps users systematically plan conservation projects by guiding them through a step-by-step process. This includes defining the project's scope, identifying key threats and opportunities, setting clear objectives, defining strategies, and creating action plans.
- Logic model framework: The software employs a logic model framework to help users conceptualise their conservation interventions. It breaks down the project into key components such as inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes, and impacts. This framework aids in understanding how actions lead to desired conservation outcomes.
- Adaptive management: Miradi promotes adaptive management by allowing practitioners to monitor and track the progress of their projects. It enables them to collect and analyze data, assess the effectiveness of their strategies, and make adjustments as needed to achieve better conservation outcomes.
- Collaboration and communication: The tool facilitates collaboration among team members by providing a platform for sharing project information, documents, and progress updates. It also supports communication with stakeholders by generating reports and visual representations of project plans and results.

Using Miradi typically involves the following steps:

- Project initiation: Define the project's goals, objectives, scope, and stakeholders involved.
- Planning: Use the software to create a detailed plan, including strategies, activities, and indicators for monitoring progress.

- Implementation: Execute the planned activities while continuously monitoring progress and collecting data.
- Evaluation: Assess the effectiveness of strategies and interventions based on collected data.
- Adaptation: Make necessary adjustments to the project based on evaluation findings and lessons learned.

How to use the Seed

Full descriptions, examples and training modules on Miradi are available on the Conservation Measures Partnership website. You can customise Miradi to fit the specific needs of your conservation projects, allowing for flexibility in the planning and management process. It helps streamline project management tasks, promotes evidence-based decision-making, and fosters adaptive management practices in conservation efforts.

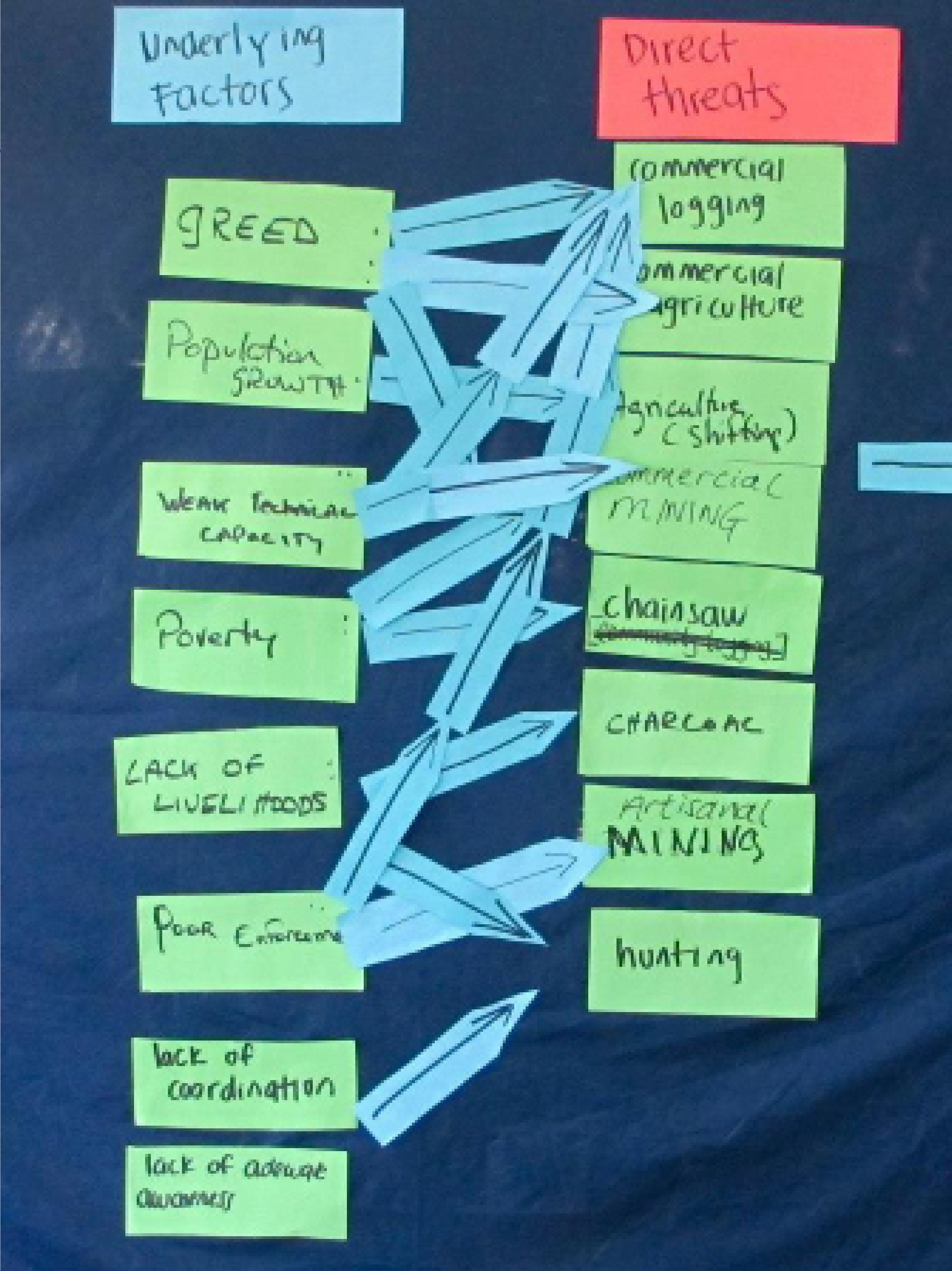
Miradi has elements that make it an effective tool to facilitate communication planning within conservation projects. Miradi was built on the belief that effective communication is crucial in ensuring that all stakeholders involved in a conservation project are well-informed, engaged, and aligned with the project's objectives and progress. Miradi offers several features that can directly support your communication planning:

- Stakeholder engagement: The software helps identify and manage stakeholders involved in the project. It allows users to record and analyze stakeholder information, including their interests, concerns, and roles within the project. This information can be used to tailor communication strategies for different stakeholder groups.
- Document sharing and collaboration: Miradi provides a platform for sharing project information, documents, and updates among team members and stakeholders. This feature enables seamless collaboration and ensures that everyone involved has access to the latest project details.
- Reporting and visualisation: The tool generates reports and visual representations of project plans, progress, and results. These reports can be customised to suit different audiences, making it easier to communicate project achievements, challenges, and goals effectively.
- Customizable communication plans: Users can develop communication plans within Miradi, outlining strategies for effectively communicating with various stakeholders throughout the project lifecycle. These plans can include communication objectives, key messages, preferred communication channels, and timelines for engagement.

- Adaptive communication strategies: Miradi's adaptive management approach allows for adjustments based on evaluation findings and stakeholder feedback. This flexibility extends to communication strategies, enabling practitioners to refine their approaches based on the evolving needs and preferences of stakeholders.

By incorporating communication planning into its framework, Miradi assists conservation practitioners in ensuring that communication efforts are intentional, targeted, and aligned with the overall goals of the project. Effective communication helps build support, manage expectations, and foster collaboration among stakeholders, ultimately contributing to the success of conservation initiatives.

Fig. 43. Conservation Standards. Miradi. https://www.miradishare.org/ux/about#miradi-an-essential-tool-for-conservation.



Forest protection campaign design exercise in Liberia

Step 2: Stakeholder and KAP analysis

Seed 2.1 Overview of strategic stakeholders

When to use the Seed

Based on the situational analysis in Step 1, you can now examine the stakeholder landscape.

How to use the Seed

Use the table on the next page to discuss and take notes:

1 – **Strategic stakeholders.** List all the strategic stakeholders. Two groups are considered "strategic":

- **Primary stakeholders,** i.e. individuals, groups or institutions who have an interest or rule power relevant to the conservation programme issue in question. These are the people whom you expect to change from one type of attitude or practice to another – or from inaction to action.
- **Intermediaries,** sometimes also called 'secondary stakeholders, i.e. individuals, groups or institutions who may help you achieve your policy and communication objectives by reaching out to other stakeholders and lobbying for support.
- Make sure that the groups you list are relatively homogeneous, i.e., the people within each group share similar characteristics. For example, decision makers of different organizations may have more in common than the middle management of the same organizations.

1 – Core interests. For each stakeholder (individual, group or institution) list what their main interests are: What are the driving forces or motivation behind their observed attitudes, practices and positions? Note that **positions** are open expressions of ***what*** people really want. The **interests** are the motivation behind the position – ***why*** people want or do something. This is not always apparent at first sight. The interests tell you how people perceive risks, opportunities, incentives and other values which may later become crucial elements of your communication approach.

2 – Critical practices. List for each stakeholder what you want them to ***do*** – the action you want them to take or the new practice they are supposed to adopt.

3 – 'Allies' and 'adversaries'. Finally, try to identify potential 'allies' and 'adversaries' in each group: Who will probably stand against your intentions, and who is likely to be on your side? You can later involve the latter as promoters or change agents, and you will need to win over at least some of the former.

Step 2: Overview of strategic stakeholders			
Strategic stakeholder	**Core interests**	**Critical practices**	**‚Allies‘ and ‚adversaries‘**
Primary stakeholders and intermedi-aries	Driving forces or motivation behind observed practices and positions	The action you want them to take or the practice they are supposed to adopt	Individuals who are likely to stand for or against your intentions.

Fig. 44. Overview of Strategic Stakeholders. Adapted from: Training material “Communication Strategy Design.” 2022.

Seed 2.2 Stakeholder map

When to use the Seed

A stakeholder map allows you to visualise the landscape of individuals, groups and organizations who play a role in the conservation programme you are working in. It is a very flexible seed that can be structured according to your needs. It also provides you with insights about both the relative importance of each stakeholder, and their relationships to each other. There are several forms of stakeholder maps. The one we suggest here takes the shape of an onion.

How to use the Seed

As is the case with most other seeds, a stakeholder map is best created in collaboration with others. The discussion about who the actual stakeholders are, how relevant they are and where they should be placed vis-à-vis one another brings out interesting insights that you can use later in the process.

Ideally, use colored cards, felt pens and a pin board or flipchart for this seed. If you don't have cards, you can easily produce them by cutting paper into pieces, about the size of an envelope or three equal pieces of an A4 sheet.

1 – Define the structure

Define three broad categories into which you will group the stakeholders. For most conservation programme purposes, distinguishing state, private sector and civil society makes most sense. In some cases, a structure of, for example, global, national and local players may be a useful alternative.

2 – Prepare the map

Draw the "onion" onto a flipchart or a large board, as shown on the picture: with an inner circle for "primary stakeholders" and an outer circle for "intermediaries", and with marks for the three defined categories.

3 – Collect the stakeholders

Brainstorm all the stakeholders you can think of in this particular programme. Write each of them on one card, using different colors for each category of stakeholders (for example, yellow for state, blue for private sector, and green for civil society).

4 – Place the stakeholders on the map

Put the cards on the map, according to the three categories and two circles. Use the distance from the center as an indicator for the relative importance of each stakeholder, and place stakeholders that have a close relationship – for example, because they co-operate – near to each other on the map.

5 – Add any additional relevant information

Finally, you can add information on individual stakeholders or the relationships between them. For example, you can mark veto players by putting a "V" on the respective card. Or you could draw solid and dotted lines between certain stakeholders, indicating the relative strength of their relationship.

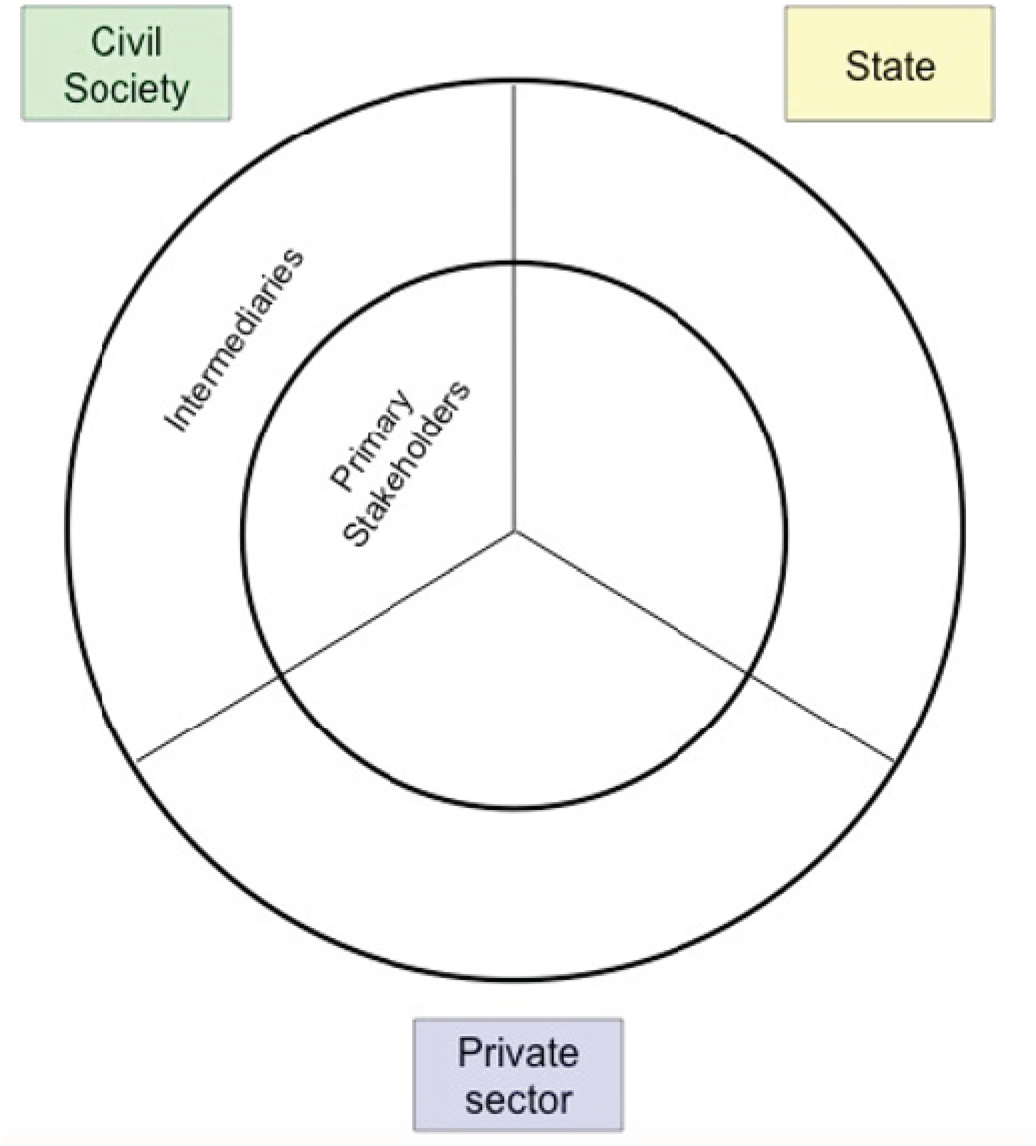


Fig. 45. Stakeholders Circles. Adapted from: Capacity WORKS Manual, GIZ, 2015.

Seed 2.3 Four-field analysis of stakeholders

When to use the Seed

This seed helps you develop and structure hypotheses and insights about individual stakeholders, so as to assess their willingness and capacity for dialogue and co-operation. It can be used in two ways:

- Before the beginning of a process, you can build hypotheses about each stakeholder group. This provides you with hints on how to address the different groups, and on opportunities and challenges that may arise in the co-operation.
- If done together with stakeholders, for example, in a joint workshop, it can contribute to a better mutual understanding, and to overcoming disturbances in the co-operation. A basic level of trust between the stakeholders is, however, required for a participatory process like this.

The results of a Four-Field Analysis may vary for different fields of action, even for the same group of stakeholders. This is because the different policy objectives can bring about different perspectives held by individual groups. It is therefore useful to repeat the analysis from time to time.

How to use the Seed

As the name implies, this seed looks at stakeholders from four different angles: interests, relationships, organization, and perception. The best way to use it is to copy the format shown on the next page onto a large board and fill in the following aspects for each stakeholder group:

1 – Interests

Interests are basic motives of individuals and organizations, linked to priority needs in a certain context. Typical interests are access to resources, safety, recognition, a sense of belonging, or self- determination. Interests should not be confused with positions in negotiations. A position is a single expression of an interest, while the interest may be much broader. Positions tend to be inflexible, while there are usually several options to satisfy an interest. Important aspects of interests are:

- Interests related to the **topic** at hand: These are frequently based on values and convictions, and/or they may have a strong material motive. For example, business organizations are very concerned about profits, protecting ownership, etc., while civil society organizations put much emphasis on their mission and on safeguarding their credibility vis-à-vis their constituencies.

- Interests related to the **co-operation partners:** Individuals and organizations also have an interest to secure their own standing in a set of partners. For example, they may feel a need to demarcate and protect their identity, or be concerned about their relative power and influence.

2 – Relationships

Every stakeholder is part of a network. This includes allies and opponents, suppliers and customers, authorities, etc. The characteristics of different types of relationships will influence the practices and room for maneuver among stakeholders. This is usually not discussed openly, but it always plays a invisible role at the negotiating table. Important aspects of relationships are

- mutual dependencies, obligations and responsibilities,
- the level of existing or potential benefits that stakeholders derive from co-operating,
- the degree of competition and the level of trust,
- their joint history: old rivalries or friendships, successful vs. failed co-operations.

3 – Organization

Understanding the internal structures and processes of stakeholder organizations makes it easier to design realistic dialogues and to understand the stakeholders' behavior. In addition, it allows assessing the stakeholders' mutual capacity for co-operation. Important aspects of organization are

- Decision making: Who are the decision makers, and how long do they take to make a decision?
- Mandates of representatives: What can they decide, and what must first be legitimised by internal consultation processes?
- Practical constraints: Shortages of resources, and how the organization deals with them.
- Planning culture: How long-term and binding are plans in the organization?
- Communication culture: What is considered 'good' communication: Comprehensive, oral and participatory? Or to the point, decisive and written? How are emotions and rationality rated?
- Interfaces: How does the organization shape its internal and external relationships, e.g. through official contacts, or through personal contacts and informal "trust building"?

4 – Perception

Every person, group or organization has images and ideas about itself and others. These perceptions influence how they look at others, e.g. are they "good" or "evil", "friends" or "enemies", how they interpret information provided by others, etc. Important aspects of perception are

- What are their fundamental values, principles and ideals?
- What is their overall goal or mission?
- What are things that they are proud of?
- Which motives and values do they attribute to other stakeholders?
- Which practices does the organization approve or disapprove of in other stakeholders?
- How does the organization distinguish between "friends" and "enemies"?

5 – Conclusions from a Four-Field analysis

A thoughtful Four-Field analysis is likely to provide you with new and interesting insights and hypotheses about individual stakeholders. After completing the analysis, you can use it to draw further conclusions and check

- which specific aspects may support or obstruct the willingness and capacity of individual stakeholder groups to co-operate,
- where different stakeholders are similar and where they are different – and whether this presents an opportunity or a potential difficulty in the process. Note that differences are not necessarily obstacles – they may as well be complementary.

Four-Field analysis of stakeholders

Four-Field analysis	**Stakeholder:** ___________
Interests • • •	**Relationships** • • •
Organization • • •	**Perception** • • •

Fig. 46. Four-Field Analysis of Stakeholders. © Manfred Oepen. ACT Assist.

Seed 2.4 Force field analysis

When to use the Seed

This seed illustrates the relative power of different stakeholders when it comes to influencing the outcomes of a dialogue or negotiation. It departs from the idea of mutual dependence of the stakeholders, who are all trying to optimise their individual advantages. The seed allows you to assess to what degree person or group X is able to influence the outcome for person or group Y. The Force Field Analysis can be applied to any number of stakeholders and will help you find out which stakeholders you need to focus on, and by which approach, in your communication strategy.

How to use the Seed

1 – Assess the relative influence of each stakeholder

Use the format below – adapted to the number of stakeholders of your case – to assess how much influence each stakeholder has on the advantages that can be reached by the others, using a scale where 0 = no influence, 1 = little influence, 2 = moderate influence and 3 = strong influence.

Example for four stakeholder groups

Influence on the advantages of →	Stakeholder A	Stakeholder B	Stakeholder C	Stakeholder D	**Active total**
Stakeholder **A**		3	1	1	**5**
Stakeholder **B**	2		1	1	**3**
Stakeholder **C**	1	1		0	**2**
Stakeholder **D**	3	2	2		**8**
Passive total	**6**	**6**	**4**	**2**	

Fig. 47. Four-Field Analysis Example. © Manfred Oepen. ACT Assist.

Sum up the totals of each row and each column. The sums of the rows indicate "active influence", i.e. how much influence each stakeholder has over all others. The sums of the columns indicate "passive influence", i.e. how much influence is exerted on this stakeholder by all others.

2 – Creating and interpreting the landscape of influence

Use the diagram on the next page – copied onto a flipchart or board – to position each stakeholder according to the active and passive totals you calculated in the last step.

The highest totals achieved are entered at the ends of the x- and y-axis, respectively. All other values are entered according to their proportion, a socalled relative scale.

From this you can derive insights into each stakeholder's negotiating power, their motivational strength, and whether they play a critical or a more passive role in the network of relationships.

Critical: These stakeholders are central, bridging figures. They strongly affect the results of the process and the advantages that others can achieve. In turn, they also depend on most other stakeholders. In most cases, this makes them eager to co-operate. In terms of communication, these people should always be involved in the process. No effort is too great to satisfy their need for information.

Active: These stakeholders are central and often dominant figures: The others strongly depend on them – but not vice versa. If they leave or block the process for any reason, the entire co-operation may fail. There is a risk for these stakeholders to dominate the process, and they may try to functionalise the co-operation for other than the stated objectives.

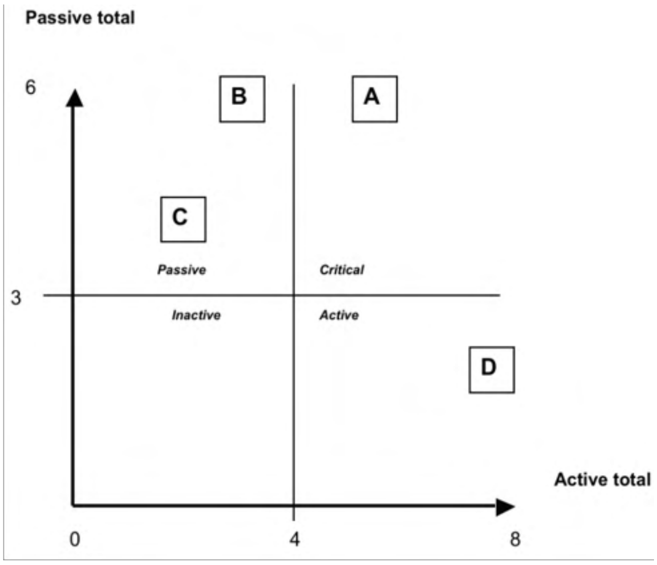


Fig. 48. Example: Diagram showing stakeholders' relative influence and negotiating power. © Manfred Oepen. ACT Assist.

Regarding communication, these people need information and should be satisfied, but they don't want to be swamped with too much detail. Regular progress summaries may be sufficient.

Passive: These stakeholders are very interested in co-operation and dialogue, as they strongly depend on others – but not vice versa. They don't have much influence on the success of the others, so that the latter tend to be indifferent about the presence or absence of "passive" stakeholders. In some cases the latter are even mobbed by the others. In relation with your communication strategy, these people can be very helpful when the process needs specific support. They should therefore be kept appropriately informed and not made to feel excluded.

Inactive: These stakeholders are candidates for dropping out. Their success depends little upon the other stakeholders – and they hardly influence the outcome for other stakeholders. Since their presence doesn't make much of a difference, the motivation to include them in the dialogue is generally low.

In communication, these people should be kept in mind, but not be bothered with information that they never asked for and presumably don't want.

3 – Assessing the forces at play

The insights gaied from this seed can be further refined by using the **Big Picture Chart** (Seed **1.3**) applied to individual stakeholders, to identify forces for and against a particular proposal within relevant stakeholder groups.

Fig. 48. Force Field Analysis Forces. Adapted from: Kurt Lewin, 1943.

Force field analysis for four stakeholder groups

Influence on the advantages of ➔	Stakeholder **A**	Stakeholder **B**	Stakeholder **C**	Stakeholder **D**	**Active total**
Stakeholder **A**					
Stakeholder **B**					
Stakeholder **C**					
Stakeholder **D**					

Fig. 49. Force Field Analysis. © Manfred Oepen. ACT Assist.

Seed 2.5 Knowledge – Attitudes – Practices (KAP)

When to use the Seed

Based on your identification of the most relevant individuals, groups or organizations in the process – e.g. from Seed **2.1, Overview of Strategic Stakeholders**, or Seed **2.2**, the **Stakeholder Map** – you can proceed to analyze what those stakeholders know, feel and do about a particular conservation programme. This will provide you with key hints for the definition of communication objectives in Step 3.

How to use the Seed

1 – KAP

Use the table on the next page to list all the relevant stakeholders. Then try to assess what each of them knows (**K**nowledge), feels (**A**ttitudes) and does (**P**ractices) about your current conservation programme, and the related environmentally friendly commitments, activities or innovations the stakeholders are supposed to engage in?

2 – Drivers for adoption

Here, you look at the positive side of things: Which individuals or sub-groups, and which existing practices can the communication strategy build on? List the driving forces for each group, the advantages that will motivate most of them to make the change from attitude and, most importantly, practice A to B. These advantages are not necessarily monetary. Recognition or socio-cultural values such as fair play, solidarity, pride or honor may be just as important. Your communication strategy will be built on incentives you can identify and promise. Individuals who are clearly on your side may later become your change agents or innovators, helping you win over the majority of the entire group.

3 – Reasons for rejection

Here, you build hypotheses around factors that may make a stakeholder group reject the desired practices. Most important to look at are the reasons for negative attitudes or rejection. For example, is it a matter of understanding? Are people afraid of risks – which risks? Do they mistrust the communicator, e.g. the conservation programme focal point or the political party advocating the conservation programme? Are the incentives or advantages of the new practice not promising enough? Are there other, political, economic or social reasons that make people skeptical? Later, you will need to counterbalance at least part of these reservations. This is where the mindset of the late majority (see page 34) of the groups, organizations or individuals you will need to win over will turn out to be a crucial factor to make your communication strategy a success.

4 – Media preferences

Finally, for each group, list the preferred media, communication channels and sources of information regarding conservation. Look at media consumption preferences – but don't stop at mass media: experience shows that interpersonal communication – e.g. among neighbors, colleagues, participants in group meetings, etc. – can have also be impactful. Ask who the groups usually ask for information regarding environmental issues and related issues. The resulting findings will later play a role in your selection of partners, media and message appeals (Steps 5-7).

Step 2: Knowledge – Attitudes – Practices (KAP)				
Stakeholder group	**KAP** What each stakeholder knows (**K**nowledge), feels (**A**ttitudes) and does (**P**ractices) about the conservation program and the intended activities, commit-ments or innovations.	**Drivers towards adop-tion** Who are innovators, early adopters or other change agents and what practices ex-ist on which your can build the communication strategy?	**Reasons for rejection** Reasons or causes for negative attitudes and the potential rejection of new practices regarding the conservation program	**Media preferences** Stakeholders' preferred com-munication channels, sources of information and media con-sumption preferences regard-ing conservation program.
1.				
2.				
3.				

Fig. 50. Knowledge – Attitudes – Practice Worksheet. Adapted from: Training material "Communication Strategy Design," 2022. © Manfred Oepen. ACT Assist.

Step 3: Communication objective

Seed 3.1 Communication objective

When to use the Seed

At this point, you have already assessed the overall situation (Step 1) and the knowledge, attitudes and practices (KAP) of the strategic stakeholders (Step 2). That is, you have an idea of what the relevant individuals and groups know, feel and do about your conservation programme.

Based on those results, you can use this seed to develop the communication objectives for each stakeholder group. This is closely related to the KAP results and other information you collected and analyzed in Step 2. In fact, you now look at knowledge, attitudes and practices again – just in reverse order. Ultimately, you want people to do something different, something more environmentally friendly from what they are doing now. So you start by defining the desired practices (P) of the stakeholders, and then ask what attitudes (A) they need to adopt and what knowledge (K) is necessary for them to change their practices.

How to use the Seed

Use the format on the next page to discuss and note down for each stakeholder:

1 – Practices

What are the practices (P) that you want to see as a result of your communication efforts? What practices do you want the stakeholders to adopt, what action do you want them to take, what type of commitment(s) do you need from relevant individuals and groups? Define precisely what you want them to do, so that the policy objective in a particular conservation programme can be achieved.

2 – Attitudes

Now, clarify which attitudes (A) are necessary for the change in practices to happen: What do relevant individuals or groups need to feel, think and believe, so that they change their practices in the intended direction?

3 – Knowledge

Finally, move further down to the knowledge (K) that is necessary for the attitude change to happen, and define: What knowledge do the strategic groups need to have or gain, so that they will change their attitudes in the intended direction?

As a general advice, try to formulate all objectives in a **SMART** way, that is, make them **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**ttractive, **R**ealistic, and **T**imed. Look at the communication objectives in the "Paradise Mountain" case of Step 3 (see page 41) as an example.

Step 3: Communication objectives	
Policy objective:	
Strategic stakeholder (individual or group):	
Communication objectives (SMART)	
Practice(s) What do you want this stakeholder to do, so that the policy objectives in a particular conservation program can be achieved?	
Attitude(s) What does this person or group need to feel, think and believe so that he/she/they will change the practices in the intended direction?	
Knowledge What knowledge does this stakeholder need to have or gain so that his/her/their attitudes will change in the intended direction?	

Fig. 51. Communications Objectives Worksheet. Adapted from: Training material "Communication Strategy Design," 2022. © Manfred Oepen. ACT Assist.

Seed 3.2 Indicators for communication objectives

When to use the Seed

The purpose of this seed is to help you assess how effective your communication strategy is for achieving the objectives, which you defined in Seed **3.1, Communication Objectives.** The indicators that you formulate now will later serve as a reference for monitoring and evaluating the success of the strategy (see Step 10).

How to use the Seed

Looking back at the KAP objectives you defined for the different stakeholder groups, use the table on the next page to reflect and discuss: How will you notice that your communication efforts are leading to the desired effects? How will you know whether you are on the right track?

1 – Define indicators of positive change

List any events, practices or other aspects that enable you to observe whether your communication strategy is effective. Examples include the degree to which members of the strategic groups:

- support, encourage and participate in debates about conservation programme,
- ask for additional information, and/or show interest in learning new skills related to conservation programme,
- show that they are familiar with and understand the information that they received from you,
- demonstrate a willingness to contribute to conservation programme processes, and/or initiate their own processes,
- react positively to your messages.

2 – Define how to measure the indicators

For each indicator, record how you will measure it and how you will track the measurement. Also, indicate whether the measure you selected is a quantitative or qualitative one. Quantitative measures provide numbers for easy comparison, such as the percentage of people who attend a presentation or respond to a mailing, and differences in favorable ratings before and after you communicate a message. Qualitative measures are anything that you can observe but not count. Examples include the content of reports, of minutes of meetings, or of feedback you receive from others. A positive atmosphere at a conservation programme-related conference, a constructive dialogue between two stakeholders who don't usually talk to each other, or a request for information from a relevant ministry may also be considered qualitative indicators of success.

Note that you may not be able to foresee everything that will happen as a consequence of your strategy – and neither will you be able to observe each and every indicator you define up-front. Don't worry about that: The indicators are there for steering and learning – not for control. At any rate, thinking well about how you will be able to see that you are on the right track helps you focus your attention on the effects – rather than just the activities – of your strategy.

Indicators for communication objectives			
Indicator	**Measure and tracking method**	**Is this a quantitative or qualitative measure?**	
		Quantitative	**Qualitative**
		❑	❑
		❑	❑
		❑	❑
		❑	❑
		❑	❑
		❑	❑
		❑	❑
		❑	❑
		❑	❑
		❑	❑

Fig. 52. Indicators for Communication Objectives. Adapted from: Communication Strategy Toolkit, Miller Consultants. © Manfred Oepen.

Step 4: Testing the hypotheses

Seed 4.1 IF – THEN matrix

When to use the Seed

By now, all steps of the **Assessment** phase have been completed. You have collected information about the situation with its opportunities, challenges and needs (Step 1). You've gathered information and hypotheses about the stakeholders and their knowledge, attitudes and practices (Step 2). And you have formulated the communication objectives (Step 3). Now it is time to move to the **Planning** phase.

Step 4 is at the interface of understanding where you are (Steps 1-3) and designing where you want to go. This seed allows you to summarise the information gathered during the assessment, and to draft a first sketch of everything that follows (Steps 5-10).

How to use the Seed

1 – Summarising the assessment

Use the "IF" columns of the matrix to summarise your KAP assessment of the strategic stakeholders. For each of them, note down how you rate their current degree of knowledge, attitudes or practices regarding your conservation programme Field: 'high', 'medium' or 'low'. For attitudes and practices, you may alternatively want to think in terms of 'positive', 'intermediate' or 'negative'.

2 – Drafting a sketch of the strategy

Use the "**THEN**" columns of the matrix to sketch out the **focus** of

- **a.** your communication strategy with different stakeholders, based on the communication objectives for each of them,
- **b.** the communication channels you deem suitable in each case.

For instance, **IF** a stakeholder group already has a high level of knowledge and a relatively positive attitude towards the conservation programme policy at hand, but has not yet turned that into practice, **THEN** the strategy should focus on action: There is no need to provide more information or motivate them much further. Instead, you may want to provide, for example, skills training or coaching. Mass media will play a subordinate role in this case, while platforms for dialogue or training as well as interpersonal communication will be very important. Have a look at the example provided in Step 4 (see page 48).

Step 4: Drafting the communication strategy								
	IF			THEN				
	Stakeholder **POSITION** regarding			Communication strategy **FOCUS**			Communication channels **FOCUS**	
Stakeholder	Knowledge **K**	Attitude **A**	Practice **P**	Main **purpose**	Main **approach**	**Questions** to address	**Information dissemination** one-way	**Interactive communication** two-way

Fig. 53. Drafting the Communications Strategy. Adapted from: Training material "Communication Strategy Design," 2022. © Manfred Oepen. ACT Assist.

Step 5: Involvement of partners

Seed 5.1 Involvement of partners

When to use the Seed

Now that you have defined where to focus your communication efforts (Step 4), you can proceed to the actual planning of the strategy. You will now look more specifically at different media and communication channels, and at the messages that you need to convey to different stakeholders. The important point here is: Don't do it all by yourself!

Communication processes – using media products or implementing dialogues – should **not** be prepared **for or about** stakeholders. It is much more effective to develop them **with and by** these groups. The key word is **ownership**: The earlier and the more you involve your strategic stakeholder groups, the more open, interested and committed will they be in the end. They can be intermediaries or contributors. For example, you may ask stakeholder representatives to help you outline and later review a conservation programme brochure that you are writing. Representatives of relevant institutions whom you involve in planning a meeting may open the door to decision makers – who may then offer to hold the meeting at their premises, or to give a speech at the opening. Members of a community may tell you about preferred communication channels at the local level, and what type of messages will be most motivating. In any case, participation of stakeholders in the planning process will promote creativity and improve the socio-cultural flavor and validity of your communication approaches.

This seed helps you decide whom to approach for what type of involvement.

How to use the Seed

1 – Primary stakeholders. List the primary stakeholders on whom you focus with your communication strategy, i.e., individuals, groups or institutions who have an interest or exercise power in the particular conservation programme.

2 – Intermediaries. Link the primary stakeholders with intermediaries, i.e. individuals, groups or institutions that can help you reach out to the primary stakeholders and achieve your policy and communication objectives. Intermediaries often control or have influence over specific media or communication channels that you may otherwise not be able to access. Remember also that a primary stakeholder can, at the same time, be an intermediary with regards to another stakeholder. You may want to consult the results from the Stakeholder Map (Seed 2.2) and Force Field Analysis (Seed 2.4) to assess how much influence individual stakeholders exercise over others.

3 – Communication channels. Draft a list of the media that you consider most suitable for reaching out to the primary stakeholders.

Step 5: involvement of partners			
Primary stakeholder (Individuals, groups or institutions who have an interest or exercise power relevant to the particular conservation program issue.)	**Intermediaries** (Individuals, groups or institutions who may help you achieve your policy and communication objectives by reaching out to others.)	**Communication channels** (Types of media or platforms)	**Specific involvement** (as intermediary, producer, contributor)

Fig. 54. Involvement of Partners. Adapted from: Training material "Communication Strategy Design," 2022. © Manfred Oepen. ACT Assist.

Seed 5.2 Forms of cooperation and roles

When to use the Seed

This seed helps you assess the developmental stage of the cooperation system in a particular conservation programme, and it allows you to identify patterns and roles within this system.

How to use the Seed

1 – Determine the stage of development

Any cooperation system consists of exchanges between two or more actors. The lowest intensity, a simple exchange of information, may evolve into to the most intense stage of coordinated or joint action, where all sides are equally empowered. Yet there are many co-operation relationships which, often for important reasons, remain at very low levels of development. To assess and understand the intensity of a given cooperation it is helpful to refer back to the five stages described earlier (see page ??): Information – Consultation – Joint planning – Decision making – Empowerment.

2 – Identify areas of potential conflict in the cooperation system

Cooperation systems develop over time. They vary in terms of purpose, size, openness, degree of formalization, etc. Each of these features is a potential source of conflict:

- **Number of actors:** Should few or many actors be involved? As the number of actors increases, the negotiation and steering requirements rise exponentially.
- Homogeneity of the actors: Are the actors similar in terms of sector, activity areas, size, life cycle, region of origin, etc., or do they differ? Homogenous groups may be perceived as boring, they lack innovation or tend to behave competitively. Heterogeneous groups have a high potential for innovation, but may disintegrate if their differences are not capitalised upon.
- Dominance of individual actors: Is there one or a small number of very dominant partners, or do all have a similar degree of influence? A lack of transparency in the division of roles and decision-making tends to disrupt the co-operation system.
- Openness of the cooperation: To what extent are the co-operation partners interested in involving new members? How easy or difficult will new partners find it to join the cooperation system? Too much openness can overstretch the co-operation system, as it constantly strives to

integrate new partners. Too little openness can stifle growth and the capacity to innovate.

- **Degree of formalization:** Are the decision-making processes rather formal, or do the partners work more on the basis of verbal agreements and personal relationships? A balance needs to be struck between a minimum of formal regulation and a maximum of informal flexibility. Otherwise, transaction costs will rise, and the confidence in the cooperation system will dwindle.
- **Intensity of coordination:** How necessary is it that the actors often see each other to coordinate activities? The costs of co-ordination must be proportionate to the anticipated benefits.
- **Duration of the commitment:** Is the cooperation planned to be of a short, medium or long-term nature? Cooperation systems can be institutionalised, but they can also become moribund if the benefit to the participants is not evident and there is no joint strategic orientation.

3 – Identify patterns of cooperation

To characterise an existing or future cooperation system, it is useful to compare three perspectives and identify the patterns of cooperation which then become evident.

Perspective 1: Where does our cooperation system stand today? Where should it be moving? What are sub-systems, and where are they?

Perspective 2: What are typical links between actors and actions in this co-operation system?

Perspective 3: How are power and influence exercised in this cooperation system?

4 – Understand roles

Another step toward obtaining a clear picture of the cooperation involves focusing on the various roles played by different actors. Some roles formally allocated, for example by job descriptions or institutional responsibilities. Perception also plays a role: The conservation programme focal point, for example, may consider himself a neutral facilitator, while some stakeholders may perceive him as a representative of government – and therefore a stakeholder, too. This implies that every player in a system may actually have several roles – depending on existing perceptions. Roles are not necessarily fixed, either. They may be negotiated, or they may vary with changing mutual expectations. Nevertheless, it can be helpful to reflect on the existing roles within the cooperation system, so as to prepare for the negotiation of possible roles and tasks within that system.

5 – Draw conclusions

Once you have a clearer picture of the developmental stage of the cooperation, its patterns and the roles involved, you may conclude by answering the following questions:

- Is the intensity / developmental stage of the cooperation conducive to achieving the objective? Do other stages need to be achieved in specific areas?
- Are the identified patterns of cooperation functional? Are any changes necessary?
- Are the roles that are performed and perceived by the cooperating partners suitable for achieving the objective? If not, what roles are missing, and who could take them over?

Some typical roles in cooperation systems

Stakeholder

Stakeholder have interests ("stakes") and therefore are not neutral. Stakeholders may coordinate a cooperation. In this case, however, others will closely observe their behaviour and they can easily find themselves caught up in a conflict of interests.

Broker

The notion of an "honest broker", who can integrate individual interests to the greater benefit of all. The broker has no interest of his own and therefore enjoys the trust of all stakeholders.

Facilitator

Similar to the broker, a facilitator is neutral with regard to both the issues and the stakeholders. Facilitators are experts of communication tools and skills that are required for dialogue events.

Expert

The expert contributes technical expertise to the dialogue. Because of their experience, experts are usually not entirely neutral, however they have no personal stakes in the issue at hand.

Eminent person

An eminent person is often used in dialogues with a high conflict potential. This is a neutral individual who usually has a high position in society and is respected by all stakeholders.

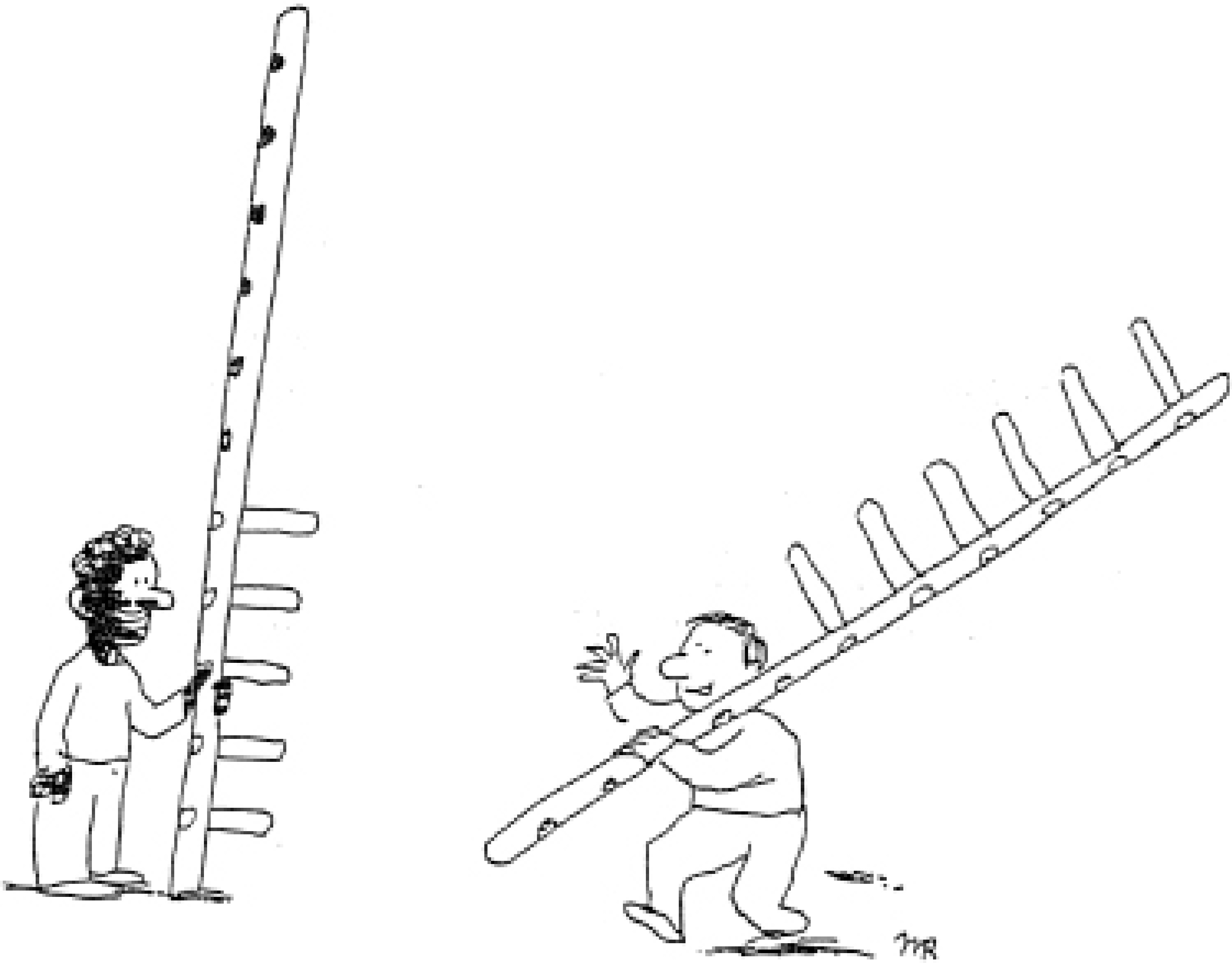


Fig. 55. Teamwork. Adapted from: Capacity WORKS Manual, GIZ 2015.

Seed 5.3 Negotiation

When to use the Seed

Involving stakeholders in your conservation programme – e.g. developing a national conservation programme system, policies, laws, institutions or specific implementation mechanisms – inevitably means dealing with a broad array of different interests. Individuals, groups and organizations come with different world views, interests, and objectives. And even when they agree on the objectives, they may still have considerably different ideas about the best way to reach these. This is the time for negotiation.

There are many different approaches to negotiation, and countless books have been written about it. For the purposes of this guide, this seed summarises a few valuable steps that have proven useful in the context of environmental policy development and project implementation.

In a nutshell, negotiation involves

- acknowledging different interests of the stakeholders,
- clarifying the advantages and drawbacks of different options,
- remaining open for new elements: other people, new ideas, unconventional solutions, and
- developing solutions that are better for the participants than no solution at all or than leaving the partnership.

How to use the Seed

1 – Separate positions from facts. To generate a fair and open partnership, it is helpful for all parties to declare their interests in the issues being negotiated. For a successful negotiation process, the participants ought to be as clear and transparent as possible about their own positions, as well as their reasons for holding them.

2 – Obtain new information jointly. Next, the issues of negotiation should be jointly analyzed in detail. At this stage it may be useful to obtain further information or listen to the opinions of experts. The feeling of having obtained new information jointly paves the way for the next step.

3 – Build trust. Good negotiation results are built on mutual trust. Often, possible favorable solutions require each party to show goodwill. Being open about mutual expectations and exchanging information on the issues at stake as well as on possible solutions helps to develop trust.

4 – Develop alternative options. Don't jump to solutions prematurely; instead, ensure that all available information has been gathered and is being used to develop alternative options. Try to promote creative thinking about different options. As new options emerge from a joint process, the participants will develop a sense of ownership and become open to select from those options.

5 – Agree on assessment criteria. Finally, decide jointly on a solution, and agree on criteria by which it can be assessed. At this stage, it is possible to include compensatory elements in case there is any remaining sense of unease.

You may use the checklist overleaf to note down ideas on how you will use the

Negotiation in a particular negotiation process	
Negotiated issue(s) and participants:	
Step	**How to go about it**
Separate positions from facts: declare interests, explain reasons for own position.	
Obtain new information jointly: analyze facts in detail, listen to experts.	
Build trust: clarify mutual expectations, exchange information on the co-operating partners.	
Develop alternative options: identify new information on the issues, promote creativity.	
Agree on criteria for assessment: evaluate solutions, consider compensation.	

Fig. 56. Negotiation in a negotiation process. Adapted from: Capacity WORKS Manual, GIZ 2015. © Manfred Oepen.

Seed 5.4 Chairs in the Corner

When to use the Seed

Cooperation and communication are more efficient than competition. This seed may serve as an eye-opener in trainings or stakeholder workshops. It brings out the advantages of cooperation over competition, and shows how conflict can be managed in a constructive way.

How to use the Seed

You need four chairs, a flipchart with the instructions, and 60 minutes for this exercise.

1 – Preparation (5 minutes)

Keep only four chairs in the room and remove all the other chairs. Put the four chairs in the center of the room. Split the participants into four teams of equal size. Each team gathers in one of the four corners of the room, which should be labelled A, B, C and D.

2 – Instructions (5 minutes)

Explain the exercise and ask all teams to carefully read the instructions on the flipchart:

- There are four chairs in the room, and four corners.
- Your goal as a team is to collect the four chairs in 'your' corner of the room.
- You have 20 minutes for this exercise.
- There will be a maximum of 12 rounds for this exercise.
- In each round, only one team is allowed to carry a maximum of three chairs. Then, the next team will follow. That means, group A will start in round 1. In round 2, group B can carry chairs. Etc.
- You are not allowed to communicate with the other teams during the rounds. Negotiations between the teams will only be allowed after rounds 4 and 8, for a maximum of five minutes.

3 – Exercise (approx. 20 minutes)

Run the exercise according to the instructions. Keep the time and ensure that the rules are observed. (Anything that is not in the rules is allowed to happen – but do not say this to the participants!)

4 – Debriefing (approx. 30 minutes)

Ask the teams to discuss and visualise the following questions:

- What happened during this exercise?
- How could a strategy be developed so that ALL groups can achieve their goal?
- Which conclusions can you draw for your daily work?

Often, but not always, the teams realise after a while that if they share the limited resources (four chairs), each team can still achieve its goal. For example, the four chairs can be collected in the four corners one after the other, so that each group has the four chairs for a while. The instructions do not imply that the chairs must be used for one's own team all the time.

You may use the image on the next page to conclude the debriefing: first, the two donkeys fight over two haystacks. Then, they find a way to eat all the hay – together, one haystack after the other.

Compete or cooperate?

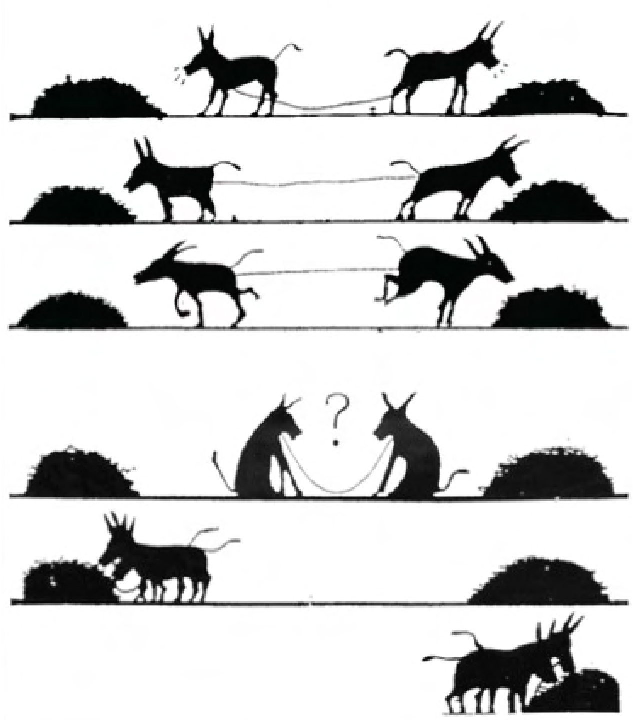


Fig. 57. Compete or cooperate? Adapted from: MOVE – Moderation and Visualization for Group Events, ACT & GIZ 2021.

Step 6: Media selection & mix

Seed 6.1 Media selection & mix

When to use the Seed

One communication channel does not serve all purposes. Each has its own advantages and disadvantages. Also, the channels need to be mixed to achieve an effective combination of one-way information dissemination and two-way, interactive communication. Before you decide which channels to use for your conservation program communication strategy, it is good to assess your options.

How to use the Seed

1 – Primary stakeholders

List the primary stakeholders again, as in Seed 5.1.

2 – Identify suitable communication channels

For each primary stakeholder, assign a suitable and balanced mix of different media and communication channels. As a general orientation, the mix should target 'K' as in knowledge, 'A' as in attitudes and 'P' as in practice, and it should cover different types of reception such as reading, watching, hearing – or even, where possible, experiencing (the latter, for example, by offering an interactive test on a website, or by organising a topic-related field trip or a learning game at a conference.).

3 – Assess different options and make a choice

Note down the advantages and disadvantages of each medium or channel in terms of your stakeholders' preferences. You may want to use your results of the KAP analysis (Seed 2.5) for this, and consider factors such as the socio-cultural characteristics of each stakeholder group, the overall thematic context and the production, distribution and maintenance costs involved.

Based on this assessment, you will be able to make a well-informed choice of suitable channels for your communication objectives with each stakeholder. Also, you will be able to check how your first-choice channels compare to other options in terms of budget.

Step 6: Media selection & mix			
Primary stakeholder	**Communication channels**	**Advantages**	**Disadvantages**

Fig. 58. Media Selection & Mix. Adapted from: Training material “Communication Strategy Design,” 2022. © Manfred Oepen. ACT Assist.

Step 7: Message design

Seed 7.1 Message design

When to use the Seed

Once you've decided which media and communication channels you want to use in order to reach your audiences, you are ready to design the messages that you intend to feed into the different channels. This seed helps you define messages with different kinds of appeals and approaches. The messages need to suit both the strategic groups and the specific communication channels you are going to use. Reaching the right people through the right channels with the right messages: this is the essence of your communication strategy and will help you achieve your objectives.

How to use the Seed

1 – Primary stakeholders. Once again, list the primary stakeholders, as in Seed **5.1**.

2 – Communication objectives. Summarise the communication objectives (from Seed **3.1**). If you need to prioritise, begin with the practice-oriented objectives (the 'P' in KAP). If it seems difficult to achieve these directly, target attitude- or knowledge-oriented ones first ('A' or 'K').

3 – Messages. Formulate 2-3 messages per stakeholder and communication objective. Remember that the communication objective is what you ultimately want to achieve: the change in knowledge, attitude or practice. The message is what you want to get across to the audience: what you write, show or speak about. This means, you need to 'translate' the objectives into an informational, motivational or action **appeal**, and package it in a way that is tailored to the specific characteristics of each stakeholder group.

4 – Media. Finally, assign the appropriate media and communication channels. For each objective and message there is a specific suitable media mix to transport the core message to the intended audience. Remember that different media are good for different purposes. For example, TV or radio are good for emotional appeals ('A' like attitudes) and may complement information provided by print media ('K' like knowledge) and interpersonal guidance or training ('P' like practice).

Communication objectives, messages and channels: an example

Consider an attitude-oriented objective such as: *"A representative mix of ... groups formulate the priorities they want to be covered in the national conservation program, and contribute these ... in multi-stakeholder workshops....".*

This objective could be 'translated' into a motivational message for private sector representatives as follows: *"Make your priorities and interests count in the National Conservation Strategy. Join the Stakeholder Workshop on ....".* A suitable channel for this busy target group – who likes to read short text – could be a flyer or poster. A second, last minute message related to the same group and objective could be, for example: *"Have you submitted your position paper on the National Conservation Strategy yet? Others have already used their influence. Don't let the opportunity pass by without your voice being heard!".* This time, the channel could be a personalised e-mail, to reinforce the appeal.

Step 7: Message design			
Stakeholder	**Communication objectives**	**Messages** and type of approach/appeal (information, motivation, or action?)	**Communication channels**
		1.	
		2.	
		1.	
		2.	
		1.	
		2.	
		1.	
		2.	

Fig. 59. Message Design Adapted from: Training material "Communication Strategy Design," 2022. © Manfred Oepen, ACT Assist.

Step 8: Media production & pretesting

Seed 8.1 Media production & pretesting

When to use the Seed

Publishing brochures or posters, launching radio or TV broadcasts, and holding stakeholder meetings or workshops, are all costly and time-consuming exercises. Therefore, before you start producing and implementing, it is wise to spend a little time and effort on pre-testing the impact of the media and platforms you intend to use. With this seed, you evaluate the text and visuals, thematic relevance, credibility with stakeholders, and motivating and mobilising potential.

You do this ***after*** you have completed the final drafts of written, audio and visual media, or of concepts for communication platforms, and ***before*** everything goes into print, production or action.

How to use the Seed

Large communication campaigns are ideally pre-tested professionally, using scientific methods. However, this is not always possible, either because the products or activities are too small in scale, or because there is no budget for comprehensive tests. Still, it is worthwhile to pre-assess the impact of your communication activities. You can do this by testing them with a small group of colleagues, and/or of people who represent the stakeholders you intend to reach.

1 – Preparation

List all the relevant media or other channels you have prepared in the left column of the matrix on the next page. Then, make two copies of the sheet.

2 – Feedback from the producer

Give the communication material you want to test to the producer, editor or planner, and ask them to look at it carefully. Give them only a few minutes for each product or concept. Then ask them to look at the matrix. What do they expect: how will the intended audiences rate the different aspects shown in each column? Ask them to (a) briefly describe and (b) score the effects (0 = low; 10 = high).

3 – Feedback from the audience

Ask the small group of colleagues and/or stakeholder representatives to do the same, on the second copy of the matrix. Again, limit the time to a few minutes per product or concept.

4 – Check for consistency

Compare the feedback of both sides. If it is the same – go ahead with producing the media or preparing the dialogue. However, should the producer's view differ substantially from that of the audience – then it is better to go back to keep working on the material.

Remember that "it's the fish, not the angler, who should like the taste of the bait". For example, a producer or editor ('angler') may well like a particular illustration or image ('bait') because of its aesthetical value and the meaning he/she puts in it. Still, a representative of the audience ('fish') may dislike the picture and misinterpret its meaning. If that is case, the worm (illustration) will not catch the fish (audience) even though the angler (producer/planner) found it tasty. This is particularly true for all types of visual information, with technical language in print and electronic media, and with a lack of visualization during events, which often suffer from text and information overload.

Step 8: Media production & pretesting					
(on a scale from 1 to 1o0, where 1 = low, 10 = high)					
Channel	**Text comprehension**	**Visual comprehen-sion**	**Thematic relevance**	**Credibility with stakeholders**	**motivating and mo-bilising potential**

Fig. 60. Media Production & Pretesting. Adapted from: Training material “Communication Strategy Design,” 2022. © Manfred Oepen. ACT Assist.

Step 9: Media use in the field

Seed 9.1 Media use & field implementation

When to use the Seed

At this point, you know who the primary stakeholders are and what they know, feel and do about your conservation program, and you've defined your communication objectives, the channels to be employed and the messages to be conveyed. Now it is time to prepare an integrated schedule for production and delivery.

A multi-channel communication strategy has the best chance for success if the combination of media and dialogues is well coordinated. Good coordination means that the various channels and messages not only complement each other, but that whatever is necessary for the audiences to adopt the desired change is available on time.

This requires a good information management system that provides you with rapid feedback on key activities, so that you can adjust the strategy if and when necessary. Therefore, you are well advised to keep using this seed throughout your communication strategy, until the very end.

How to use the Seed

Use the matrix on the next page to clarify:

1 – Channels and audiences

List all the relevant communication channels (publications, media, dialogues, platforms) you intend to use, and then add the related audiences (primary stakeholders).

2 – Context

Briefly describe the context in which each communication channel will be used. For example: will a film be broadcasted on TV, as part of an educational series on the environment, or be shown 'on stage' as part of a competition or festival? Is a particular event planned in the form of a traditional conference with presentations and lectures, or is it going to be a facilitated, interactive workshop?

3 – Responsibilities

Differentiate between production and distribution responsibilities. Include commitments of intermediaries who have offered to let you use their communication channels, e.g. placing a public announcement or an article in a newspaper or magazine or broadcasting your video on TV.

4 – Resources

List all monetary and non-monetary costs (staff, time, logistics) that are related to the communication channels and platforms you intend to employ.

5 – Timing

Ensure that the various production deadlines and starting points of individual elements of your multi-channel strategy are well synchronised. Try to 'cross-fertilise' different channels as much as possible with multiplication and feedback effects, so that, for example, a news article refers to an upcoming event, or that a film you produce makes it into an existing educational series on TV.

Step 9: Media use in the field					
Communication channel	**Audience** (Primary stakeholders)	**Communication context**	**Responsibilities** for production & distribution (including intermediaries)	**Budget and other resources** (including human and logistical)	**Timing**

Fig. 61. Media Use in the Field. Adapted from: Training material “Communication Strategy Design,” 2022. © Manfred Oepen. ACT Assist.

Step 10: Monitoring and evaluation & documentation

Seed 10.1 Monitoring & evaluation

When to use the Seed

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) help steer your communication efforts, by assessing the impact of individual activities and of the strategy as a whole. The simplest way is to assess to what extent the KAP-related communication objectives and indicators that you formulated in Step 3 have been reached.

This seed supports you in your M&E efforts. The focus is on internal, formative evaluation – not on external legitimization. You can monitor any time – and should do it regularly – during strategy implementation as well as for impact assessment after implementation.

The seed is best used in a workshop setting because this allows you to ask different people for assessment at the same time, and you can immediately discuss the result. Different people may have diverse opinions on the effects of your strategy, and it will be helpful for you to bring these opinions and their reasons to light.

How to use the Seed

Use the matrix on the next page to follow these steps:

1 – KAP objectives. Summarise the communication objectives (from Seed **3.1**) per stakeholder group, differentiating between practices (P), attitudes (A) and knowledge (K). Make copies of the sheet so you can give it to several people.

2 – Your assessment. Fill in the right column by yourself, by briefly describing what makes you notice that you have been successful: How do you see, hear, or feel that you have reached your objectives? Note down any changes you perceive in your conservation program. Are there any differences in the sta-teof-play or in opinions before and after having implemented the communication strategy?

3 – Other people's assessment. Ask a small group of colleagues or people who represent the primary stakeholders to do the same, by providing them with additional copies of the format.

4 – Compare, discuss, and draw conclusions. Compare your own assessment with that of the others. In most instances, different people will perceive and interpret things differently. If the results are similar and mostly positive, your strategy has been a success. If they are identical but mostly negative, chances are that you have failed to achieve the gains in the stakeholders' knowledge, the improvements of attitude and the changes in practice that you originally intended. If that is the case, discuss with colleagues and stakeholder representatives what went wrong, and how the strategy could be improved.

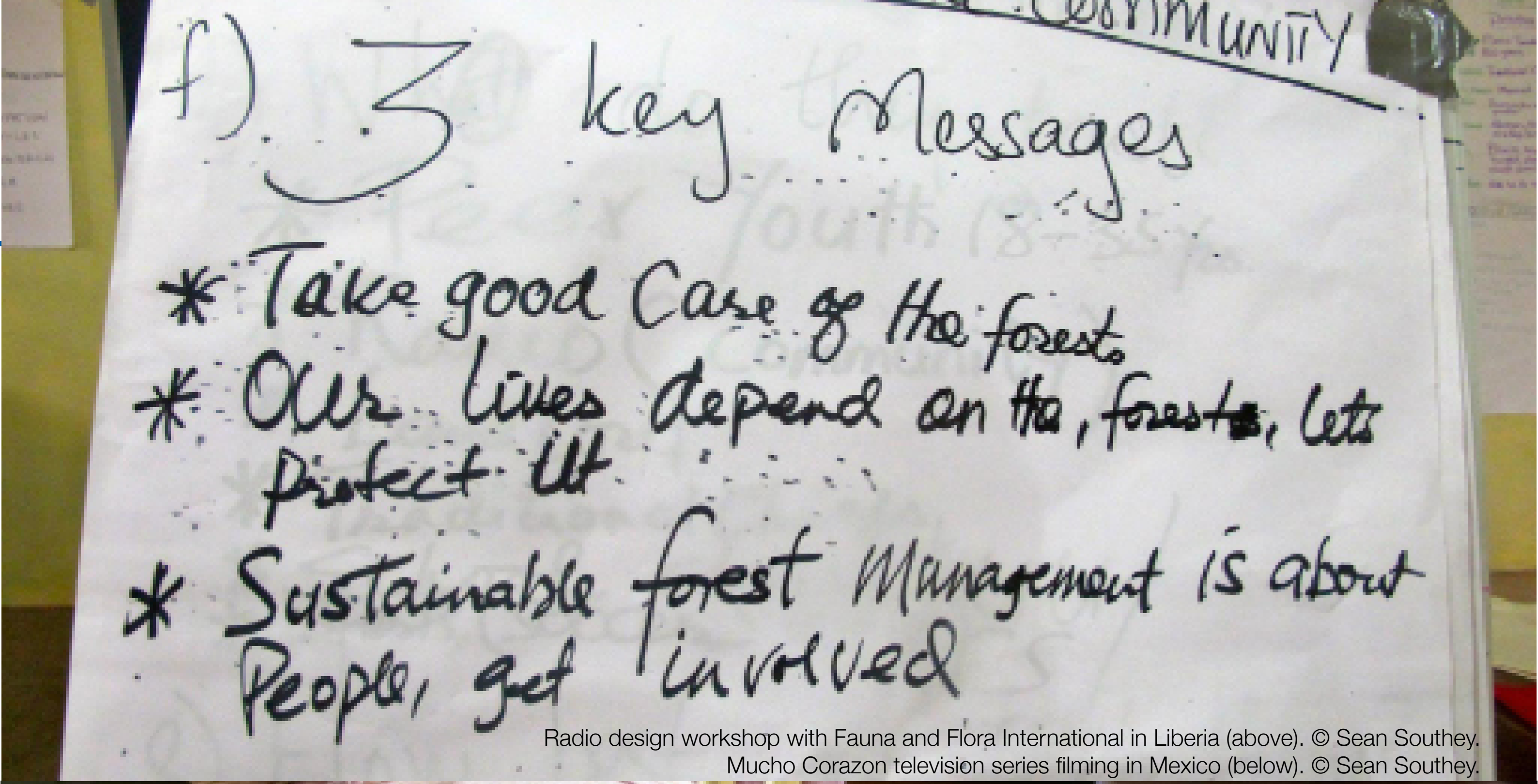
Step 10: Monitoring & evaluation	
Communication objective	**How will you notice that you are successful?**
Stakeholder 1 .... Practice Attitude Knowledge	
Stakeholder 2 .... Practice Attitude Knowledge	
Stakeholder 3 .... Practice Attitude Knowledge	

Fig. 62. Monitoring & evalutation. Adapted from: Training material “Communication Strategy Design,” 2022. © Manfred Oepen. ACT Assist.

You may also use the key indicators defined in Seed **3.2** Indicators for Communication Objectives to assess the outcomes of your communication process, and to track the inputs and activities that contribute or fail to contribute to success.

Indicators for communication objectives			
Indicator	**Measure and tracking method**	**Is this a quantitative or qualitative measure?**	
		Quantitative	**Qualitative**
		❑	❑
		❑	❑
		❑	❑
		❑	❑
		❑	❑
		❑	❑
		❑	❑
		❑	❑

Fig. 63. Indicators for Communication Objectives. Adapted from: Training material "Communication Strategy Design," 2022. © Manfred Oepen. ACT Assist.



Radio design workshop with Fauna and Flora International in Liberia (above). © Sean Southey.
Mucho Corazon television series filming in Mexico (below). © Sean Southey.

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Forest protection campaign design exercise in Liberia.
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