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Communication in a changing world Increasing the impacts and benefits of scientific research activities

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Title:

Communication in a changing world;
Increasing the impacts and benefits of scientific research activities

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Sammendrag:
Sammendrag (på norsk obligatorisk hvis åpen rapport på engelsk)

Summary:
The overall goal is to professionalize and strengthen the disseminating and communicating elements of protected areas in Vietnam in order to increase the impacts of projects, and to establish a set of "best practise" recommendations/manual that can be common protected areas. A workshop and a training course has been conducted, and the manual is planned to be completed and tested late 2013.

<i>Country:</i>	Vietnam
<i>County:</i>	-
<i>Municipality:</i>	-
<i>Lokalitet:</i>	Part 1: Da Lat, part 2: Cao Lanh

Approved

Project leader

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Name

.....
Name

Communication in a changing world; Increasing the impacts and benefits of professional activities in protected areas

A pilot project based on “best practise” from selected organisations.

Background

Communicating information, news and results from research and development activities is becoming more and more important in management of protected areas. In many cases the dissemination/communication strategy and methods used is either weak or lack proper focus and thus severely reduces the potential benefits and impacts of professional activities. It's important to be visible and target the communication to audience in order to make results effective, operational and applicable. Communication will have to meet the needs of different target groups at various levels, and requires use of different channels or methods depending on type of project, need and purpose for which the activities are carried out. Well-constructed communication strategies can give substantial impacts without much burden on the organisations involved. The idea of disseminating is not a new one, but when, to whom and how is changing rapidly, meaning that it is a dynamic area that requires special focus. Especially, when projects are complex covering different scientific disciplines and involving managers, researchers and stakeholders at many levels, a proper dissemination strategy is one of the important keys for achieving project goals.

Bioforsk has experience from large and complex projects in several countries, and the focus on dissemination/communication activities as an integrated part of projects are increasing. We believe that there is a wide potential in sharing experiences from past and on-going projects at Bioforsk and our partner organisations in other countries.

The project

Bioforsk wanted to establish a pilot project covering information and communication activities connected to various projects, with the aim of improving and becoming more efficient in presenting, disseminating and creating interest and awareness. We wanted to look into the potential of exchanging methods and experience between research organisations and protected areas in Vietnam, covering a broad spectre of possibilities, challenges and opportunities. We believe that the knowledge from the different organisations, cultures and realities could be beneficial to the others. Diverse organisations could together work out recommendations and exchange experience, and by that enhance the focus on communication and dissemination in various projects.

At the outset of the project, it became clear that the participating organisations, as national parks, were on quite different levels concerning the knowledge and awareness of communication activities. It was therefore decided, together with CBD, to focus on establishing a common knowledge base of the participants through a workshop and a training course. In parallel to this, participating organisations would collect and present some selected examples of “best practice”. This should be based on practical examples from past or on-going projects, but also the organisation's practice, routines or steering documents on the topic should be presented.

The different inputs from the participants was discussed at the workshop and later at the training course, and the most relevant input form the basis for a common document based on the workshop input:

Communication manual for protected areas

The final product could be in the form of a small leaflet, with guidelines, templates and examples. The leaflet can be used and tested in on-going or planned projects in the last phase of the project. The manual is in the process of being described on further detail. The overall goal is to professionalize and strengthen the disseminating and communicating elements in order to increase the impacts of projects, and to establish a set of "best practise" recommendations that can be common for all participants.

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- Step one: Identifying participating organisations and their skills in the area.
Step two: Joint workshop, with recommendations. Practical training course.
Outline of manual.
Step three: Short programme to implement/showcase methods from the manual in on-going projects

Topics covered in the workshop:

- Enhance the awareness of communication in projects, from the inception to the final results
- Communication between stakeholders and researchers
- Communication between project and (local) community
- External communication, with special emphasis on funding bodies
- Other target groups
- Methods/channels/practical solutions
- Organisation of a one year project (workshops/exchange of personnel/focus on particular project for each of the participating organisations)

Results

The feedback from the participating institutions indicates that the awareness and practical skills related to communication work has improved. At the outset of the training, the participants expressed both the need and the motivation for knowledge in the communication field. During the two gatherings, they have achieved greater understanding, practical skills and an increased ability to see communication activities as a strategic element in the development of both institutions and projects.

Step one and two is completed, with the workshop in December 2011 and training course in March 2012. A communication manual for protected areas is a proposed next step in order to systematize and test new ways of working with communication challenges. A draft outline of the manual is attached. CBD is developing the draft manual and going to organise a workshop to get feedbacks from communication officials of national parks, as well as comments from professional experts. The manual will be tested by conducting selected communication activities at 3 protected areas (including national parks and nature reserves) in the Mekong Delta region. Finally, the revised manual will be published in the end of 2013.

Program:

CBD and Bioforsk, Workshop, Da Lat City, Vietnam, December 5 – 7, 2011

Communication in Research Organizations

Introduction of the Institutes and Participants

- How can we work together?
 - Cultural challenges
 - Different expectations
 - Different possibilities
 - Different skills and strengths

Communications in projects: Why, importance

- Organization/Institute
- Financial supporters
- Public interest and obligations
- Special considerations in international activities

Building a long term reputation

- What is reputation and why does it matter?
- Relevance for scientific organisations

Different target groups, different strategies

- Who are we reaching out to and why?
- Do we have the same target groups in different countries?
- Reaching out to young people

The importance of a good strategy; presentation of (possible) strategic goals

“Traditional” communication activities

- Visible in the media
- Web pages
- Banners, stickers, posters, clothing e.g.
- Project name and logo
- Brochures

New media and new communications channels as an integrated part of a project

- Communications handbook as an example of simple recommendations

Documentation throughout the project: Routines, recommendations, formats.

(Written material/multimedia...)

- What is needed
- Open access to technical briefs, reports, newsletters etc.
- The importance of good photos and illustrations
- Sources - Where do we find good photos?

- Organizing our own photos (and videos)
- Sharing our photos (and videos)

A strategic tool for Communications: Outlines of a Best Practice Manual

- Group discussions on different chapters
- Group discussions and preparation of input to plenary



Dr. Vu Ngoc Long (CBD) and Le Buu Thach (CBD).

Program:

CBD and Bioforsk, Training Course, Cao Lanh City, Vietnam, March 6 – 8, 2012

Communication for Conservation

Introduction to Communications and conservation (based on DaLat workshop) (Bioforsk)

- Target groups
- Strategies
- Reputation
- Methods
- Channels
- Documentation and routines
- Public interest and obligations
- Trends

Training course (Bioforsk)

Picture management

- Indexing
- Export to web
- Basic editing
- Resizing
- Making slideshows with music/sound track
- Use of pictures for different purposes; what works?

Project information

- Communication challenges: Management and leadership
- Discussions and inputs from participants
- How to collect basic information
- How to sort project information
- How to write a good text
- How to become more visible on Google and other search engines
- Logical structure
- Document formats
- Pictures and illustrations

Field trip to Tram Chim National Park (CBD)

1. Morning:

Topic: Meeting & interview different targets: local communities, local authorities and schools

- What channels/methods to use for different targets: Meetings, Communication events; Loud-speakers, training, study tour, documents, leaflets....
- Practical experience on what works (and doesn't work..) from the NP's own and local people's experience?

Practical task: Gather information/interviews and pictures in order to present information day three on a chosen project in the park. Groups of 4-5 persons.

2. Afternoon:

Topic: Visit the Tram Chim National Park

Practical task: Take photos showing the biodiversity values of the NP

Group activities, making website/presentation based on information from field trip.

Groups of 4-5 persons. (CBD and Bioforsk)

- Importing and indexing pictures
- Create Web pages/structure or slide presentation
- Key questions and discussion

Presenting results

- Each group give a 10 minute presentation of results and experiences

Follow up from DaLat: Input to manual for protected areas (CBD)

- What is needed
- Key questions and discussion
- Produce a collection of cases from NP's based on input from participants

Training Course - Cao Lanh City, March 6 - 8, 2012

Communications for conservation via Internet

Introduction to new media

During the first meetings in Vietnam, in December 2011, one of the themes was focused on the use of new media and new communications channels.

Social media has changed the way we communicate. By social media we tend to talk about the most important channels, such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and blogs. Among younger generations this is, in some areas of the world, about to become the only way to interact. When in need of support or contact at any level with officials, social media has become a channel where many nowadays expect to be heard, seen and answered.

The administrations of the Vietnamese national parks have different target groups they would like to reach out to, and to network with. On a global context, use of the Internet as an information channel, supplemented with social media, is a natural development in the communications pattern. In Da Lat, a presentation about how Bioforsk uses the Internet and social media was given. We also gave a short analysis of how we would like to see our web pages and use of social media change in near future, with referral to the expected development in this area.

The national parks will need to use different communications tools in order to reach out to all their target groups. Traditional media such as brochures, printed newsletters and TV/radio and stakeholder meetings still is the most important channels, however, social media should be added to the portfolio in order to meet expectations from the public, and in particular younger generations.

Training course in new media

During our training course held in Cao Lanh in March, the participants were trained in practical use of the Internet and social media.

The training was held in two separate groups, which made the discussion and interaction good. Among the themes covered during the class were how to communicate in an easy and understandable way, and how a message should be formed. It is important to be aware of what the message is, and how it should be structured and presented. To focus on as few topics as possible, is a key element in order to better reach the audience.

To focus on target groups are also important while working with communications. Some channels are better of used towards some groups, than others. But also to be aware of which channels that we already use, in a conscious or non-conscious way.

A few of the participants already have well developed internet sites, with great features. Others have sites that are not as developed, while some of the participants did not have Internet sites at all. During the training course we gave the participants ideas to how they can develop internet sites, or work better with what they already have. How to form a message for web, choose a template, address - and also the use of pictures, were the main topics.

We also gave a short introduction to the use of blogs, as a cost-effective alternative to traditional Internet-sites. The participants worked in groups, and created blog sites by using Wordpress.com, to learn the tools.

Picture management

Photos and illustrations are important parts of any news stories or information campaigns. An image is indeed worth more than a thousand words. Good images in articles and press releases can affect how they are viewed, how they are picked-up, and how they are re-published.

However, buying stock photos can be quite expensive and organizing your own photo library may therefore be a good alternative.

During the training course in Cao Lanh we spent a couple of hours learning how to build and organize a photo library. We introduced the Adobe Photoshop Lightroom software and learnt how to use the main features of the software:

- How to import photos to your library
- How to index your photos by adding metadata
- How to export your photos to web
- How to do basic photo editing
- How to resize and crop your photos
- How to make slideshows with or without a soundtrack
- How to use different photos for different purposes

The participants made a lot of good photos during the field trip to Tram Chim National Park. Afterwards they worked in groups to organize their photos and make them useful for different communication purposes.



Sharing expectations at the training course in Cao Lanh City.



Group work at the training course in Cao Lanh City.



Dr. Vu Ngoc Long (CBD) leading the excursion through Tram Chim National Park.



Lotus Blossoms in Tram Chim National Park.



Excursion through Tram Chim National Park.



Media training in Tram Chim National Park.



Domestic Asian Water Buffalo in Tram Chim National Park.



Sarus Cranes in Tram Chim National Park.

Attachments

- Report from CBD:Workshop on Communication in Research Organizations
- Report from CBD: Communication Training Course for Conservation
- Communication Manual for Protected Areas in Vietnam
- List of Participants: Workshop in Da Lat
- List of participants: Traing Course in Cao Lanh

Report from CBD:

Workshop on Communication in Research Organizations: “Communication in a changing world- A strategic tool for increasing Impacts & Benefits of Scientific research activities”

On December 6-7, 2011, Center for Biodiversity and Development (CBD), under Institute of Tropical Biology Ho Chi Minh City in cooperation with The Norwegian Institute for Environment and Agriculture Research (Bioforsk)- Norway organized a workshop on “Communication in Research Organizations: “Communication in a changing world- A strategic tool for increasing Impacts & Benefits of Scientific research activities” at Dalat City, Lam Dong province. The workshop is funded by Bioforsk.

Participants of the workshop are conservationists and project managers from key protected areas such as BiDoup-Nui Ba National Park, Tram Chim National Park, Hon Ba Nature Reserve, JICA’s project in Bidoup Nui Ba NP, WWF’s project in Cat Tien NP; and researchers from University of Science of HCMC, Institute of Environment and Natural Resource and Institute of Tropical Biology.

The objectives of the Workshop are: (i) Imparting knowledge and generating interest and awareness; (ii) Communicating actively and purposefully so as to reach as many people as possible who will benefit from - or be interested in our projects. (iii) Improving familiarity and knowledge about communication; then use communication and dissemination as strategic means to underpin our objectives. (iv) Generating confidence that brings in new assignments and dialogue internally within the organization. (v) Building long-term reputation for organizations. The communication strategy is designed to support overriding strategy for organization.

The first day of the work was time of presentations, discussions and sharing experiences on several topics such as the importance of Communications; building a long term reputation; different target groups, different strategies; the importance of a good strategy; “Traditional” communication activities and new media and new communications channels as an integrated part of a project.

Group discussion was conducted at the second day to develop a strategic tool for communications. All participants had worked together to set up a “Communication Best Practice Manual for Protected Areas in Viet Nam”. An outline of the manual was formed and this will be further discussed by all participants after the workshop for a detail outline. The next steps of the workshop will be a project to publish the Manual, and use the manual as material to provide training on communications for staffs of key protected areas in Vietnam. Bioforsk will provide technical assistances and help to find findings.

Report from CBD:

COMMUNICATION TRAINING COURSE FOR CONSERVATION

On March 6-8, 2012, Center for Biodiversity and Development (CBD), under Institute of Tropical Biology Ho Chi Minh City in cooperation with The Norwegian Institute for Environment and Agriculture Research (Bioforsk)- Norway organized a Communication Training course for conservation at Cao Lanh City, Dong Thap province. The training course is funded by Bioforsk.

The objectives of the Training course are to develop communication tools and skills for conservation organizations, Management Boards of Special Use Forest to improve the communication activities for biodiversity conservation and environmental protection in Mekong delta region.

Participants of the training course included 35 communication officials and scientists from several agencies and organizations in southern areas such as Tram Chim NP, Nui Chua NP, Bidoup Nui Ba NP, Lang Sen NR, U Minh Thuong NP, U Minh Ha NP, Phu Quoc NP, Bac Lieu sanctuary NR, Lung Ngoc Hoang NR, MuiCa Mau NP, Hon Dat - Kien Ha protection forest Management unit, Vietnam River Network, Institute of Oceanography and Center for Biodiversity and Development.

In the first day, (Mar 6, 2012) the training course focused on introduction and sharing experience on communication activities for conservation such as how to identify group targets, principles in communication, how to transfer message effectively, building up a long term reputation. The participants also learnt how to manage and edit pictures using Adobe Photoshop Lightroom 3 software as well as conduct communication for conservation via internet.

In the second day, a field trip to Tram Chim National Park was organized. Participants were split into two groups. Group 1 was given a practical task of introducing biodiversity and community living around the Tram Chim NP using posters and video clips. Group 2 conducted a short communication program on the project titled "Landscape and sustainable livelihood development in Tram Chim NP" by building up a website.

In the last day, the two groups made website/presentations based on information from field trip. Comments and suggestions of lecturers for each group's presentation are key questions for plenary discussion. The last section of the training course was spent to discuss on a communication manual for protected areas in Viet Nam. Outline of the communication manual and next steps were agreed based on input from participants.

COMMUNICATION MANUAL FOR PROTECTED AREAS IN VIETNAM

1. **Importance of communication**
2. **Objectives, goals**
3. **Identify targets and methods**
 - 3.1. Local communities
 - Meetings: movies, presentations, leaflets, discussions,
 - Communication events (competitions, exhibitions...)
 - Loud-speakers, training, mobile-visiting
 - 3.2. Local authorities
 - Meetings: presentations, discussions
 - Training (short-time), visiting
 - Documents, leaflets
 - 3.3. Schools
 - Extra curriculums
 - Events
 - Field trips
 - Internet
 - Publications
 - 3.4. Visitors:
 - Internet, publications, broadcasting, volunteers, souvenirs, events
 - Movies
 - 3.5. Publics:
 - Internet, mass media, media press, events
4. **Tools and methods to implement**
 - Internet
 - Movies
 - Leaflets, brochures
 - Posters
 - Media press
 -
5. **Evaluation**
 - What are indicators for each target group?

List of Participants:
COMMUNICATION WORKSHOP- DALAT 6-7 DECEMBER 2011

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List of Participants:

COMMUNICATION FOR CONSERVATION TRAINING COURSE- CAO LANH CITY 6-8 MARCH 2012

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