Module 3 & 7: Developing an impact strategy and creating communication out put of the IEA (DRAFT)

Overview

This module will focus on methods to position and deliver a national IEA findings and recommendation and creating communication of it. This can have real impact on environmental policy and practice at a series of levels, ranging from local to national.

Why bother with developing an impact strategy and creating communication of the IEA outputs?

Each day the general people and decision-makers get numerous text information. This involves times to read out of 24 hours of his day. Simply providing yet another report to your senior bureaucrats and political leaders won't be enough to ensure that they read your findings, let alone act upon them.

Before you start producing your main report and other products, you need to make a series of important decisions. By identifying your target audience(s), you will be better able to shape your message and select the right content, and later, the right presentation format. By carefully considering our budget, you will be better and more able to make realistic decisions about the kind of product you feel will be most beneficial. You will have to decide what kinds of information products best suit your message.

We want to take you through the steps that will help you determine how to engage the right people to listen to you and respond to your work. This impact process takes time; and involves a real emphasis on being clear and strategic in identifying the changes that you want to see as a result of your assessment and how well the findings can be communicated. The module discusses strengths and weaknesses of different channels and how to go about approaching the media.

The process focuses on building relationships with key people, finding out what they know already and what they need to know and how best create the communication of the IEA outputs. With that understanding, you can then seek out and create the opportunities to get your messages across, to generate dialogue, and gain the attention and support of those who may have in the past appeared non-responsive to your work.

A portion of this training will be presentational in nature. However, most of your time will be spent in pairs or small groups to discuss local political and social factors that could affect whether and how your reports are used. Small groups also will be used to practice building the components for an impact strategy for your reports where assessment output communication will be the major focus.

Outputs of this training module

- The primary output should be an outline of communication and impact strategy for your next state of the environment (SoE) or GEO-based national integrated environmental assessment (IEA) report.
- At the end of this module, we anticipate that you will see yourself as someone capable of having ability to build long term communication strategy to have real impact on decision-making.

Course Materials

1. Introduction and learning objectives

This module will focus on methods to position and deliver a national IEA outputs so that it can have real impact on environmental policy and practice at a series of levels, ranging from local to national.

At the end of this module, you should have increased your ability to ensure that an IEA has an impact.

1. You will be able to articulate reasons for doing an integrated environmental assessment that can cover but also go beyond mandated requirements.
2. You will have a greater understanding of the political process and context of what you are doing, such as how changes are made in policy and practice.
3. You will be able to develop effective communications strategies to achieve impact by systematically implementing the most important steps of a dissemination plan, while choosing the most appropriate communication outputs, and ways of reaching audiences;

4. You will be able to demonstrate an ability to link target group(s) and content with their choice of presentation format and communications channels, considering budget constraints;
5. You will understand that achieving your desired impact requires more than the production of a report at the end of the assessment. Strategic positioning of your work and planned communications are essential components of your work that should be undertaken in parallel with all stages of the assessment.
6. You will understand the importance of production and distribution/dissemination process, with special emphasis on approaching the media.

2. Understanding impact

In this section you will learn:

- why it is important to have an impact strategy;
- how to understand the external environment (context) for an assessment;
- how to recognize an issue cycle (using media, polling data, etc.); and
- how to communicate the output of the assessment.

2.1 What is an IEA output communication and impact strategy?

A communication and impact strategy consists of the steps you take to ensure that the work you do will lead to real progress on key issues or concerns. It is proactive in nature, and adaptive in a public policy environment where priorities of governments and citizens can shift and change.

2.2 When do you prepare an impact strategy and who is responsible for it?

An impact strategy should be prepared once you have initiated the process for an integrated environmental assessment. It is initiated as part of the "institutional setup" stage of a GEO-style IEA process. It is formalized in the "scoping and design" stage, implemented stages 4 through 6, and regularly monitored, assessed and improved (see Module 2). The manager, or management team, for the IEA process should be responsible for:

- ■ developing the impact strategy, or ensuring that an impact strategy is developed;
- ■ implementing the strategy; and
- ■ monitoring performance on the strategy to ensure that it is achieving the results you are seeking, and modifying or adjusting it, if necessary.

2.3 Why do you need an impact strategy?

In many jurisdictions, SoE assessment or sustainable development reports are now mandated by statute and regulation. In others, there may be a strong policy context that has led to a government undertaking or participating in an assessment as a voluntary initiative.

By their nature, most SoE/integrated environmental assessments are not detailed scientific assessments. They may, however, lead to more attention being paid to problem areas, and they may recommend a more detailed scientific assessment of root causes and downstream effects. The result of an assessment can shift the mood of the public, and lead to political pressure. It may educate a wide range of audiences on key issues, and as a result it may trigger further detailed studies that are more directly linked to specific issues and decisions.

It is often an underlying assumption of reporting that good information will lead to good decisions. But while good information is necessary, it does not follow that decision-makers will act on it. Decision-makers are often quite well informed, but their priorities and intentions may be different from yours. The challenge is to take proactive steps to ensure that your assessment doesn't sit on a bookshelf once it is done, but that it provides good input to decision making. Your assessment will lead to recommendations for actions that may require changes in policy and practice by the government. Consider from the outset how the findings from your

assessment might be used, and how the priorities you identify can become the priorities of your government and your country.

An impact strategy begins with articulating the changes sought as a result of the assessment. This provides purpose beyond simply following through on the mandated requirement for the assessment. For those conducting an IEA for the first time, it may not be possible to articulate a specific policy-related change that might be necessary as there is no prior assessment which identified priority issues. For first timers, seeking better linkages between the findings of the report and formal decision-making process in government (e.g., departmental strategic plans, policy, priorities, and budgets) may be the main objective. Those who are conducting an assessment for the second or later rounds might be able to think more specifically about issues and necessary policy changes identified from the process.

2.4 Understanding public environment on assessment

There are many ways to get a sense of the external political and public environment in which the assessment is taking place.

- Review not only the relevant statutes and regulations that govern the assessment, but also review the debates in parliament and parliamentary committee minutes. Find the background white/green papers, or other relevant policy documents.
- Investigate with current/former bureaucrats their recollection of the process involved in securing the mandate to do the assessment.
- Review current debates in parliament. What are the hot button issues among the members?
- Monitor political and social coverage in the national media and what they think is worth reporting?
- Chat with colleagues in other departments about what the key issues are that they are addressing.
- Attend meetings of non-government organizations (NGOs) and community-based organizations within and outside of the environment sector. Find out what their priorities are. Hold focus groups to identify user needs and interests.
- Look at polling data. If you have the resources, commission a public opinion poll, or work with the government's communications department to commission a poll to find out what is important at the present time for the citizens of your country.

Be aware that if your assessment process serves only to produce a report simply to comply with a legal or policy instruction, then the impact—the ability to have the findings used to effect change—will be severely limited.

EXERCISE

Form groups of three–four with your neighbours and discuss the following questions. Be prepared

to share your answers in plenary.

1. What was the context for previous assessments with which you are familiar? Are you operating under a legal or policy mandate? Is your assessments part of a larger programme for government accountability?

2. Why were your assessments mandated, directed or commissioned? Were your assessments a high priority for your superiors? What other things concern them?

3. How did/will higher-level decision-makers use your findings?

2.5 Understanding issue attention cycles

In preparing an impact strategy, it is important to be aware of levels of public, political and bureaucratic attention to current issues, and to the issues being explored in the assessment. Levels of attention will influence the choice of actors to engage (and the likelihood of getting their support), and how to engage them. Understanding what is on the public radar screen will also help identify where your assessment might be useful in bringing new knowledge and recommendations for action.

It has been found that for environmental risks there is generally a pattern that resembles a "classic" issue attention pattern initially identified by Downs (1972) and subsequently confirmed by many scholars (e.g., Baumgartner and Jones 1993). Social attention to global environmental risks has tended to lag years and even decades behind scientific and technical developments. At some point,

it rises relatively rapidly, remaining high for a short period of time, and then drops off again (Social Learning Group 2001). In some cases, as with stratospheric ozone depletion in the United States, attention to the issue can occur in just two such cycles.

The research of the Social Learning Group suggests three phases of issue development (Figure 1).

During the first phase, before the issue first achieves widespread public attention, the principal functional change is the gradual build-up of scientific and analytic capacity through research, monitoring and assessment activities. Over a long period characterized by relatively low public attention, society's capacity to address new issues gradually accumulates within a relatively fixed group of institutions, largely determined by historical circumstances and the way the issue is perceived.

It is unlikely that new institutions will become involved to a major extent with the issue during this period of low attention.

The subsequent period of rapid rise in public attention marks a second phase in issue development. During periods of rapid rise in public and political attention to a new issue, there will be a renegotiation of leadership within already engaged institutions, and a need for new institutions will emerge. At this stage of issue evolution, it is important to recognize the need for coalitions of actors to push the issue forward. These coalitions provide the basis for a shared understanding of the problem and its possible solutions. Effective management of emerging issues will therefore encourage this coalition building rather than encouraging generally increased participation by individuals, or isolated groups of actors.

A third phase of interactions among management functions is associated with the period following the peak in public attention and continuing through the subsequent decline in attention. During this period, the linkages between the knowledge-intensive and action-intensive management functions increase in frequency and run in both directions: knowledge influences action and vice versa.

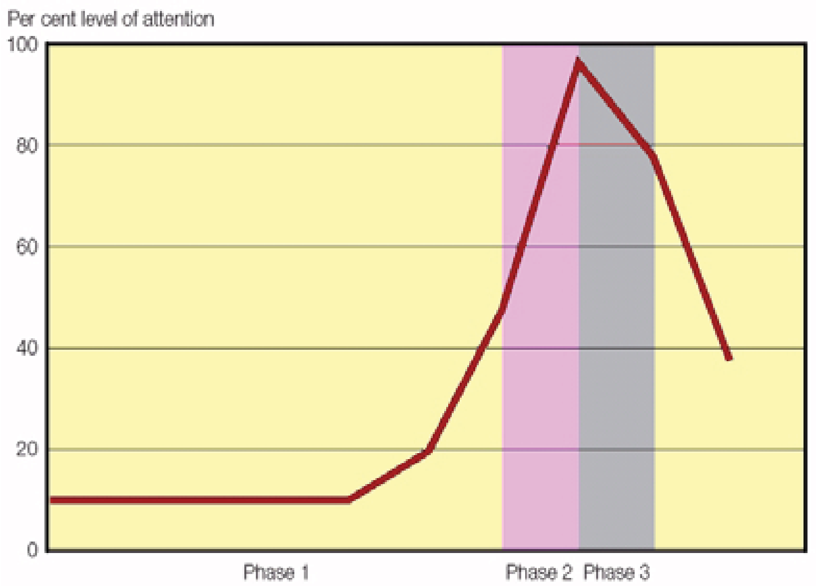

Figure 1: Phases of an issue attention cycle (adapted from Social Learning Group 2001).

EXERCISE

In preparing for this assignment, you were asked to:

- review the number of stories in your newspaper related to environment, health and development in the week prior to your training; and
- find sources of public opinion polling data in your country and review them for the current year.

  Based on your "homework:"
- what issues are of most concern to citizens in your country right now?
- how is your political leadership responding and;
- how might you align findings from your assessment with these concerns?

A case study of the climate change issue attention cycle

The case of attention to climatic change is illustrated in Figure 2.This graph charts levels of public interest in climate change as indicated by coverage of the issue in the elite newspapers of several countries. While the graph only shows the media coverage, additional research carried out by the Social Learning Group suggests that the levels of attention accorded to climate change in the elite media correlated strongly with levels of attention shown to it at the same period in time by other actors such as parliaments, industry groups and the scientific community. The media data can thus be taken as a rough reflection of overall changes in levels of attention to global environmental risks among actors.

Of particular interest in this graph is the one- or two-year period of rapidly increasing attention, then a year or two with the issue in high profile, and finally a slow decline of public attention back to lower levels. Over sufficiently long periods, recurrent cycles of public attention are possible (possibly indicating that lower attention levels have more to do with the emergence of new priorities. or media and public fatigue, rather than a resolution to the problem).

Much as in the cases of acid rain and stratospheric ozone depletion, climate change was an expert issue long before it became a public one. There was relatively little attention to climate change in the press of any arena prior to 1988, despite decades of sustained scientific work. In this case, "issue linkage" appears to have been a critical factor in getting climate change onto the agenda of the public and policy-makers. The rise of stratospheric ozone depletion to the political agenda forced a certain amount of political attention in at least some national and international arenas to the issue of global climate change. Also important was the role of political leadership.

In the late 1980s, high-ranking politicians in many of the politically powerful arenas started to speak about the need to take action regarding a global warming threat. Their attention was secured by proactive, strategic and personal efforts on the part of scientists and concerned citizens working in NGOs. This put political momentum behind scientific developments in several arenas, and the issue appears to have caught on in several of the other arenas. By 1989-1990 there was a relatively high level of attention to the issue of global climate change in the media of almost all countries. Climate change remained on the public agenda even when media attention to stratospheric ozone depletion began to decline. In the period after the data collected for Figure 2, evidence suggests that attention dropped sharply in most arenas towards the mid-1990s before rising again in the run-up to the Kyoto Conference 1997.This might signal that once an issue receives a high level of both public interest and political support, it will remain on the bureaucratic agenda even though public interest may shift to other concerns. For the impact strategy, it is important to be aware of where the issue that is to be assessed lies with respect to the attention cycle. If the issue is in the first phase, in which most attention to the issue s in the scientific and technical realm, the impact strategy should consider that the audience most likely to be interested in the IEA will be in this area. It will take more concerted effort to gain the attention of the general public, private and political interests.

During the second phase in which there is a rapid rise of public and political attention to the issue, there is a "window of opportunity" in which the impact strategy can consider the possibilities of reframing the issue and attracting new actors to become involved in dealing with the issue. If the issue is in the third phase, where the issue is on both the scientific and political agendas and there is considerable interaction between these communities, the impact strategy will be able to address the broader communities of concerned actors, when scientific analysis, public interest and political agendas are closely linked. It is at this stage that an impact strategy may have its most obvious and immediate results. Keep in mind though, that an impact strategy developed at this stage will be in effective. The strategy must be developed early; it will just have its greatest impact at this stage.

There is a certain inevitability that issues will recede from the attention of the general public. An impact strategy may help to:

- mitigate the falling off of public attention by focusing on more direct engagement of target decision-makers; and
- shorten the issue attention cycle by moving a relevant issue back into the public eye more frequently.

There will always be unexpected catastrophic events that can play a major role in tectonic shifts in public policy. In these circumstances, public interest and policy response may peak simultaneously, with pressure placed on knowledge seeking efforts for rapid response. One has only to consider, for example, the effect of the 2004 tsunami in Asia on policies to implement early warning systems. These events can have two outcomes for your own impact strategy.

- You can seize the opportunity to relate your assessment findings with the catastrophic event. For example, in 1997, one could have tied SoE report findings on land management to the massive land-clearing fires and resulting haze blankets across Asia that led to $US1.4 billion in short-term health costs and fire damage (IISD 2002).
- Your work will be moved off the political and bureaucratic radar screen for the immediate future. You will need to complete your mandated requirements for the assessment, but continue to foster the relationships built through the process, and be ready for the time to advance the findings.

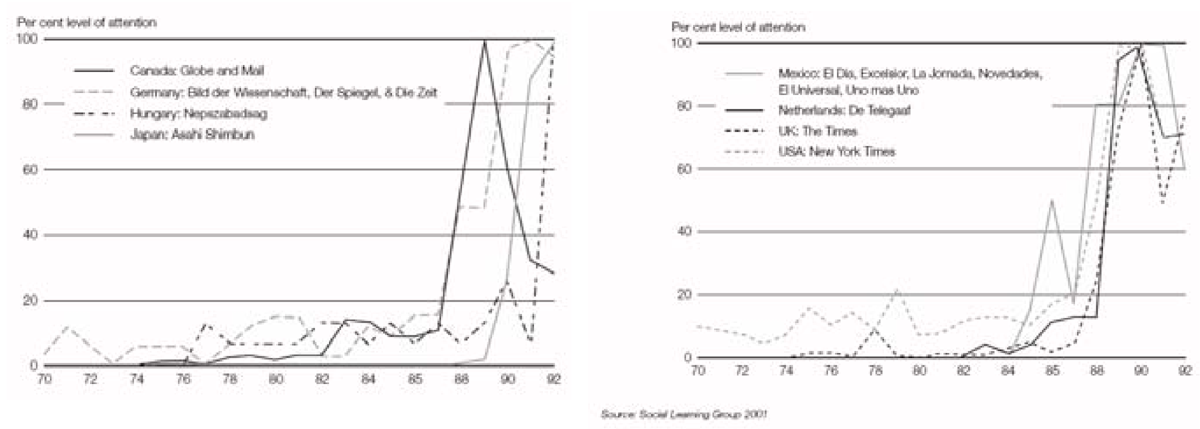

Figure 2: Country comparison of newspaper attention to climate change

3. Model for an impact strategy

3.1 Attributes of impact strategies and traditional communications activities

An impact strategy incorporates communications activities combined with a good understanding of government relations as practiced by advocacy groups and professional lobbyists. With communications

An impact strategy builds on communications activities in several key respects.

	Impact Strategy	Traditional Communications activities
Purpose	Goal is to effect change, and to identify your potential role as a change agent.	Goal is to ensure people understand the findings and recommendations.
Audience	Small group of key actors and those who have access to those actors.	Broader audiences
Timing	Developed at the beginning of the assessment process, monitored and adjusted throughout the process.	Part of the impact strategy; usually implemented towards the end of the strategy when findings and recommendations are known.

strategies, it is necessary to identify key recipients of the assessment, prepare key messages and products that will help them grasp the essentials of the research, and identify appropriate channels to deliver those messages and products, including the media, participation in events (e.g., conferences, workshops), and electronic delivery via e-mail and web.

EXERCISE

- Share a story from your own experience about how assessments have been communicated in the past to decision-makers and to the public.
- Discuss in particular the roles of different players: who was responsible for delivering the final report, what were their tasks, who were their target audiences, who handled the release to the general public and what vehicles or channels did they use to get the information out?
- Were you satisfied with the responses to the assessment?

3.2 Steps in building an impact strategy

There are five main steps to creating an impact strategy, as illustrated in Figure 3.1. These steps are elaborated below.

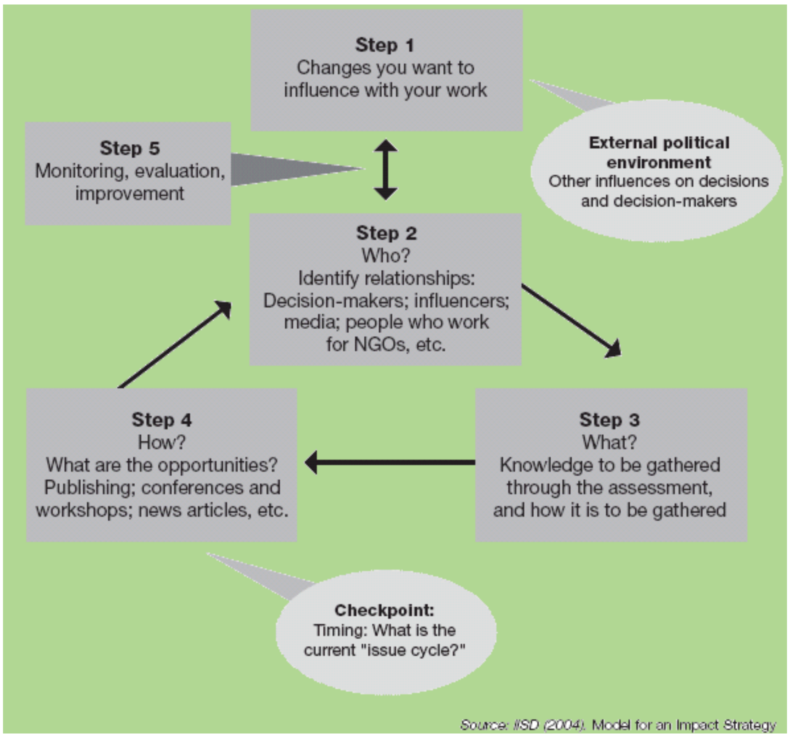

Figure 3: Model for an impact strategy

Step 1: Creating a "change" statement to anchor the impact strategy

An impact strategy is anchored by its "change statement." This is an articulation of what the impact of your assessment should be. What should be changed or done differently as a direct result of the assessment?

The change statement may be fairly broad, focused primarily on getting people in positions of authority to actively use your report. For example:

Key departmental decision-makers will use the information gathered during the assessment to develop policy priorities, departmental strategic plans and budgets.

Or

State, as well as national, level planners will review the findings of the assessment, and prepare internal policy briefs on how they will address the recommendations of the assessment.

Remember that an important part of the IEA process is a scan of the issue and policy priorities. In the context of any given priority issue to be reported, major policy mechanisms that could or should be influenced can also be identified.

The Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper planning and implementation process is adjusted to increase attention to environmental degradation, protection and rehabilitation, based on the findings of the assessment.

An impact strategy is a dynamic process. The change statement may start off fairly broad or general, but as more data become available and analysis is carried out, the change statement can be revisited and refined. Based on the findings of previous assessments, or on the new data being analysed, you may wish to focus on one key priority that you want your findings to inform and address, e.g.:

The government institutes a national watershed management plan that takes into consideration the responsibilities and capacities of local villagers to protect and rehabilitate their water sources.

You can still reach out to broader audiences to inform and engage them in the report findings. Impact in this context may be an aggregate of actions that individuals may take in response to the report. But there may be little that they can do on a personal level. The impact strategy will help you work towards leveraging real policy change on a key issue.

EXERCISE

- How you would like to see your assessment used?
- Describe a situation (a government policy or practice) that could be improved as a result of your assessment.

Step 2: Relationship management

Too often, people move immediately to the information gathering stages of the assessment, with-out due consideration of Step 2. Careful thought should be given to who will be in a position to take the findings of the assessment and use them effectively. Information by itself doesn't leverage change, but relationships do, and this involves people communicating ideas, analysis and data to other people. This step involves identifying the individuals and groups you most want to reach. Consider how these decision-makers acquire information, who do they trust, what information source do they trust and how do they make decisions? How can you get to those people? If you can-not reach them directly, who are the people they do listen to, and can you reach them instead?

This step is designed to identify those who are in positions to make the decision or effect the changes including those who can influence the decision-makers directly. These include: intermediaries, civil society, academic community and other research institutes, and media. Central to determining who to reach is the concept of relationship management: maintaining the connections and influence over time

Step 3: Knowledge management

Once you have articulated who will help with achieving the decision you seek, you need to analyse both what they need to know, and what you need to know that will help them take or influence the decision. This is the knowledge management process of the assessment. The remainder of the Resource Book will provide you with the tools you need to gather, analyse and process your information.

You will need to consider how to build trust in your final product, including the data, the analysis and the recommendations. Participation by the key decision-makers in the actual process of the assessment ensures saliency and relevancy to the finding. This could include not only leading scientists who ensure the assessment reflects the latest scientific results, but also others such as indigenous people whose traditional ecological knowledge can broaden the assessment's perspective or corporations that may have access to more in-depth and privileged information. Generally, the constructive collaboration of a wider set of actors may increase not only the credibility of the IEA but its legitimacy in the eyes of a broader set of social stakeholders.

Step 4: Opportunity management

This step involves moving that knowledge into the hands of those you want to influence. There are many tools available to do this: the products to be released, the conferences and workshops to hold, and the amplifiers, including electronic mailing lists and websites, which get replicated throughout much wider audiences than may have been targeted.

An important part of this process is the development of "key messages," a series of short, simple, plain language statements that capture the essence of the work.

The IPCC case study talks about one of the "key messages" from its work:

The world is likely to see "a rate of increase of global mean temperature during the next century...that is greater than that seen over the past 10,000 years."

This straightforward message was by most accounts, very influential in catalyzing the decision making process, which eventually led to the signing of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change in 1992 (Agrawala 1997).

Also, keep in mind what you have learned about "issue cycles, " recognizing that timing is important as you seek to position your findings in light of other competing or comparable public and political interests.

The development of scenarios based on the findings presents another type of opportunity to engage key target decision-makers. Scenarios help decision-makers deal with uncertainties, and provide options for action. As opportunities often arise unexpectedly, responding to them requires creativity and a degree of improvization. However, one can prepare for cases like that by having products, properly prepared staff and protocols in place.

Step 5: Monitoring, evaluation and improvement

We know that in most work involving information processes and products, causality is difficult to demonstrate. But it is possible to look at incremental changes in attitudes, actions, and behaviours that are a direct outcome of one's work (Earle and others 2001). Monitoring, evaluation and learning mechanisms should be in place to identify and map these incremental changes that will lead towards the decisions or changes sought, and to adjust the strategy if necessary.

Naturally, you are going to want to know whether your strategy is working. But, sometimes the signals that you are having real influence seem small and insignificant. These quiet signals will be the incremental changes in attitudes, actions and behaviours that are a direct outcome of your work. Is a key actor returning your phone calls? Are you being invited to committee meetings that were closed to you in the past? Are key actors coming to your meetings? What is happening in the media? Are you getting more stories about your work than you did before? Is there an increased demand for assessment reports?

Monitoring and assessment mechanisms must be in place to identify and map these incremental changes that will lead towards the decisions or changes you are seeking. This can be a time intensive process, so it is a good idea to identify some key indicators, and set up simple ways to monitor your strategy against those indicators.

For example, a contacts database of key actors could be set up with a journalist's function that will allow a record of interactions with them. This can be as simple as just indicating the date and type of contact.

- Dates you sent information about the process, invitations to presentations.
- Dates they requested information or dates they accepted invitations.

Keep a record of all media inquiries or request the appropriate government departments whether they do media tracking (reviewing stories in the press about government initiatives; or more broadly, tracking issues of concern to the government). If they do, request notices of stories in the press about the assessment, or about issues relevant to the assessment. For example, a media log for the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment might have looked like this.

Important behaviour changes of your "target actors" (those you are seeking to influence) could be reflected in a progression from passively receiving information from the assessment, all the way through to acting on recommendations and demanding more work. The following would be a good checklist:

- Receiving information–IEA process leaders sending information to target actors.–IEA process leaders using media to communicate to target actors.–IEA process leaders requesting, and securing, meetings with target actors.
- Seeking and processing information–Targets seeking information from others to "triangulate" or verify information they are receiving through the IEA process.–Media reporting messages from target actors that are consistent with IEA process messages.
- Acting–Issuing of new policy briefs, white papers, frameworks, regulations, other responses.
- Demanding–More work from IEA process leaders (e.g., follow-up investigations, more in depth assessments).These and other indicators are discussed in more detail in Module 8 on monitoring and evaluation. There, you will see how monitoring the impact strategy will fit into the overall monitoring process.

EXERCISE 4

- What are some indications that the assessment findings and recommendations are influencing your key actors?
- What are some ways to keep track of your performance on the strategy?

3.3 Case studies of assessments that had impact

In order to design and implement an impact strategy for an assessment process, it would be useful to provide examples that had a well-defined impact strategy, and to analyse the results of the strategy in terms of success and failure. Unfortunately, impact strategies in the area of global environmental assessment at national level are hard to find. Here a detail case study on Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA) is presented for you to understand the impact strategy and learn form it.

Case study: Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA)

From the outset, the MA instituted an "engagement and outreach strategy." Responsibility for this strategy was formally assigned to the MA Secretariat. From the beginning of its work, MA leaders understood the need to ensure that key actors would be engaged and informed, that broader audiences would be reached, and that this process would have to be carried on as an integral part of the whole scientific assessment.

Step 1: WHY. Impact statement: What did the MA want to see as the outcome of its work?

The MA was carried out to assess the consequences of ongoing ecosystem change for human well-being, and to establish the scientific basis for actions needed to enhance the conservation and sustainable use of ecosystems and their contributions to human well-being.

Step 2: WHO are the key actors, and how to build relationships with them

Before starting the scientific work, MA proponents proceeded to:

- confirm the need for the assessment by consulting the three main international conventions that directly deal with ecosystems (Convention on Biological Diversity, Convention to Combat Desertification and Ramsar Convention on Wetlands);
- position the assessment within the formal decision making processes of these conventions, and obtain formal expression from the UN on the need to conduct the assessment; and
- identify a broad range of users.

Step 3: WHAT knowledge is to be gathered

In addition to consultations with key actors, the MA conducted an assessment of the information needs of a broad range of users. This assessment became the basis for the outline of the MA reports as designed by the scientific panel, and remained a reference point throughout the process.

Step 4:HOW to reach key actors and broader audiences

The strategy defined two distinct areas of action.

- Engagement
  – provide target users with adequate access to the process of the information generated; and
  – enable broader audiences to access the products of the assessment, and benefit from networks and capacities growing out of the assessment process.
- Communication– raise understanding and awareness of the MA and how to use it; and– convey key messages from the findings to targeted audiences and the public. Engagement - Ultimately, the engagement strategy was an effort to ensure that adequate access to the process and products existed, so the MA could be widely shared, and would continue to yield fruits beyond its conclusion in 2005.This,in turn, would result in input from users into the process, enhancing its legitimacy, and improving the capacity of users to interpret and act on the findings of the assessment. Several channels were used to enable engagement (Figure 4):
- MA Board meetings engaged users in the process;
- the user needs assessment mentioned above;
- the MA constantly produced ad hoc briefings, trying to seize as many opportunities as possible to address large numbers of users and present them with information about the assessment;
- open calls were issued to the public, governments and institutions to nominate scientists to participate in the

assessment as authors or reviewers, and to submit proposals to undertake sub-global assessments affiliated with the MA;

- a website and newsletter were established, and a data sharing system developed;
- the internal, formal procedures of some target users were utilized to feed the MA and subject it to discussion.
- multi-stakeholder meetings were organized in various countries to present the MA and invite discussion on its relevance in each national context;
- a procedure to invite academies of sciences and scientific organizations was established, whereby these entities supported the MA in the identification of scientists and the dissemination of information; and
- the process of sub-global assessments was in itself another mechanism to connect the MA to local, national and regional processes.

Communication (outreach) - The MA communication effort focused on raising awareness about the MA and supporting the demand for:

- the assessment reports and associated information;
- integrated assessments at the sub-global scale; and
- training to conduct such assessments.

Making the MA visible to the media. One concern of the communications team was to achieve a certain level of press attention when the information was finally released. Three approaches were used.

1. Organizing seminars for the media while the assessment was being conducted to explain what it was, why it was being done and what to expect from it.
2. Establishing a loose working group with the media officers of partner organizations.
3. On the day of the official release, press briefings and seminars were organized in 13cities around the world. This ensured that appropriate angles and languages were used to draw national media attention.

Keeping the visibility of the MA before the users. The assessment was a four-year endeavour. Even after being approached and consulted at the inception of the assessment, targeted users needed to be kept updated and reminded of upcoming work. These activities were also meant to build momentum and expectations, and consisted of multiple briefings and smaller meetings in international and national arenas.

Facilitating access to MA products. A constant concern of the MA was to ensure that as many people as possible could access the information. Again, there were three approaches.

1. Targeted publications. In addition to the full technical assessment reports, the MA produced six synthesis reports aimed at different users. The information contained in the main assessment volumes was summarized and repackaged in short, carefully designed volumes dealing specifically with biodiversity, desertification, wetlands, health and business and industry, plus a general synthesis directed at a more general audience.
2. Translations. Translating the information into various languages proved to be one of the main weaknesses of the MA process. While thoroughly aware of the need to do so, resources were insufficient to undertake this task adequately.
3. Electronic communications. Establishing electronic communication mechanisms was important, including a website, a system to share data and an intranet system for internal communications.

Partnering. The engagement and outreach team of the MA saw its communication activities as an instrument not just to reach out and convey an image of the MA but also as a mechanism to enhance the ownership of the MA, and improve the ability of third parties to understand and make better use of it. Hence, the MA sought to rely on as many partners as possible for outreach, and to encourage as many third parties as possible to undertake outreach for the MA on their own. This resulted in several instances where volunteers approached the MA to undertake activities, which was highly beneficial in dealing with media enquiries. Partnering required the following two elements.

1. A minimum level of coordination in terms of setting key dates and sharing basic strategies.
2. Generating materials to support outreach by third parties. These materials were shared through the intranet, but

also through an “outreach kit” distributed on CD. This kit contained a collection of elements developed by the MA, including:

- guidance on how to explain the MA to the uninitiated;
- guidance on how to develop a communications strategy (see Addendum 2);
- graphic elements (posters, maps, logos, photographs, videos);and
- PowerPoint slides.

Early products. The MA did not wait until the end to start releasing some outputs. In particular, releasing the conceptual framework and early findings on sub-global assessments (SGA) allowed for better outreach during the process.

Step 5: Monitoring, evaluation and improvement

The MA engagement and outreach team was continuously haunted by the question of how to define success. How would they know they had been successful in supporting the goals of the assessment? Following are some of the items that were discussed.

- Government buy-in. For example, would resolutions from international bureaucracies be an indicator of the effective use of the information, or a tactic to protect the process? Government involvement, however, was very effective in attracting leading scientists.
- An international arrangement to deal with the problem. Was the MA inserted in a clear political context in which the information would catalyze such action?
- A proliferation of sub-global assessments. Would the dissemination of the practice of integrated assessments around the world be an indicator of real success?
- Media attention. Besides being short-term, one has to be careful what the results of this attention are. By and large, when the information was released, the media focused on the negative side of the message, as in the front page article of Le Monde, below

In an effort to communicate more effectively, the MA strove to develop some powerful metaphors to explain its concepts and findings.

Perhaps the most important was that of “nature as capital” and ecosystem services. ”While clearly effective, these metaphors were taken up to draw some controversial conclusions, as the cover of The Economist shows.

In the end, the team concluded that success for the assessment needed to be measured by demand for information and expertise from a broad range of places and interests. Further use of the information (for example to start or influence a political process) is a result of the work, and clearly shows it is having some effect.

4. Creating Communication Outputs

4.1 Choosing what to Produce

Disseminating the variety of messages to target groups with innovative communication formats and channels, and at all times, considering budget and capacity constraints is the of prime importancet in developing impact strategy.

DISCUSSION QUESTION:

Mapping existing communication outputs (About 15 minutes.): In small groups discuss your experiences working with different communication formats and distribution channels, both traditional (e.g., printed) and non-traditional (e.g., electronic/multimedia, interactive).The questions for the discussion might be, “What are your observations and experiences about using different formats?” and “What results, if any, were achieved?”. Base your discussion around products and examples that you brought to the workshop, along with your collective experience dealing with communication channel.

A. Target group(s) - persons and groups to reach with message.

In order to begin choosing what communication outputs to produce, it is necessary to identify and profile the target group(s). These target groups will be identified as part of your impact strategy (see Step Two for Creating an Impact Strategy,), and should include those persons in a position to influence the types of changes needed, based on results of the IEA.

It is important to keep in mind that target groups are not only defined by their profession or areas of focus, but also by differences in language and culture. This can particularly be an important consideration in countries with several languages. Because of possible delays and extra printing costs due to multiple language requirements, this needs to be considered when planning and budgeting.

Within the target audience list ,there may be a number of specific groups, such as politicians, academics, women, business, journalists, youth, the general public and others. When segmenting the list of target audiences, it is also useful to distinguish between end users, who make decisions based on the information (e.g., adopt a law or not, buy or not buy) and "broadcasters" who recycle information to targeted messages and thus multiply its impact (e.g., the mass media, the educational system, many NGOs).

Once the target group(s) has been identified, you can take a closer look at how to tailor the key messages to reach those audiences. Remember that one size does not fit all; the messages must connect to characteristics of the target group, such as previous knowledge, attitude, level of education, lifestyle, culture, interests, and their involvement in the problem and solution. The main message should stay the same, even though it will be shaped to fit different target groups. Also consider your reach and credibility. Are you able to reach your target group(s)? Will they find your message credible, relevant and legitimate? If the answer to either of these questions is "no," you should reconsider your message or your audience.

EXERCISE:

Who is reading what? This exercise is meant to reflect on how various groups access information, who are their peers, to whom do they listen, and what you as a producer of the information can offer to your target groups. All participants will break in groups of no more then six people for a short role-play. Each group will receive a pre-defined user group role (e.g., business people, youth and government). Within each group, break into two sub-groups: those preparing the assessment and proposing various types of products, and those representing a particular target group (e.g., business, youth, government etc,). Spend 15 minutes in each group separately discussing the type of products that can be offered or that would be used. Then reconvene in plenary, where each group can summarize their need sand their preferred products. The table below will help you to structure your thoughts.

Table 1: Planning to deliver information to target groups

Target group or focus group	What are the needs of the target group	What is the message	Formats
Government representatives of environment-related sectors (e.g., transport, agriculture)	To understand the impacts, and linkages with other issues	Global warming and environmental issue, the	Extended brochure of its causes10 pages; indicator based analyses
....	....	....	....

B. Content

Content and conclusions from the assessment will be transformed into shorter and more specific messages. These short messages must be supported by the main body of knowledge generated by the IEA, like the main report where all the knowledge is brought together, and which has to provide the credibility to all "supplementary" products. This approach can be applied to reports on many scales, from local to global. It is important to maintain the connections between both the processes and messages, as well as the products of these assessments (e.g., formats, content and timing). Questions to keep in mind may include whether these messages form a coherent story and whether there are any conflicts or ambiguities? If so, resolve these first by re-examining your starting point.

Scientific uncertainty is also a significant point. Uncertainty is a core component of science, but that is rarely well understood by the public or decision-makers. Communicating uncertainty needs special consideration. It must not be confusing, but it cannot be hidden either. The relevance of uncertainty with regard to the range of possible future outcomes has been brought to light particularly through the international climate change negotiations.

To formulate a set of messages best suited for a target group, consider the characteristics of the audience. For example, how much background information will they have? What are their priorities? Do they view the environment as a necessity or a luxury? What motivates this group to act?

Box ??: Target groups and content

Decision makers: Content should be short, specific, fact based and consist of the latest information
Media: Content should be short, and consist of findings relevant for media use, messages that can easily be linked to other issues in the news. You will have a better chance of media coverage if you provide supporting visuals such as graphs or photographs.
Students: Content should be well explained, and your language should be simple.
Scientists: Content should be fact-based, and rely on the latest data. Your language can be scientific, and include technical terms.

C. Budget

Available resources, both financial and human, will influence your work and force you to prioritize. Before choosing communication formats, the budget needs to be revisited. Some communication formats, like web-based publications, are typically less expensive to produce than printed products. Depending on the budget, you may have to prioritize your messages and findings.

Consider the cost of the required products, and see what other products can be realistically pro-duce given available resources. Be innovative, and consider options like sponsorship of specific products or form alliances to co-publish.

Determine the time available to internal and external staff and allocate tasks appropriately. For materials, determine how much it costs to design and produce the products, and how much it will cost to distribute them. You will have to consider the cost of publishing, along with office supplies, mailing costs, telephone costs and copying. We recommend a contingency line item for unexpected costs that typically arise in developing communication outputs.

D. Formats

Generally, formats like a paper report might be requested. However, consider if additional or other alternative formats might help to broaden your reach to target group(s). Other formats can be synopses, executive summaries, periodic reports on critical issues, bulletins, newspapers, posters, calendars, atlases and vital graphics, just to name a few.

More innovative ways of communication like films might also be considered. Even though making films is a process demanding both economic and human resources, Iit has proven to be a very effective way of communicating a message, sometimes reaching much broader audiences than the more traditional means of communication. With the rapid expansion of internet services in many countries, using short video clips (e.g., interviews with affected stakeholders, senior experts, etc.) could be considered. Whatever be your choice, note the importance of consistency of your message through all the formats.

Box ??: Sample of formats and channels

Spoken options include visits, interviews, speeches, meetings, press conferences, training sessions, radio broadcasts, discussion groups and hearings.
Written options include reports, flyers, newsletters, posters and brochures.
Visual options include presentations, television, slide shows, films and videos.
Digital options include Internet, CD and DVD-ROMs, PC-demos, e-mail bulletins, discussion groups and online conferences.

E. Consider your channels

People are exposed to environmental information, as they are to other issues, through a vast range of communication channels. It is therefore important to choose channels based on the audience's favoured way of accessing information. Your communication goal should align with the desired changes recorded as part of the impact strategy (see Module 3) (e.g., to change people's attitude towards an environmentally-related problem, to communicate your key findings to a narrow circle, such as politicians and ministries). Remember that communication is not only about information, but also about meaning. Meaning is actively constructed,

not passively extracted from books or other sources provided by a sender. Keeping this in mind will assist in choosing outlets because the channels will be tailored to reach the target groups in large or narrow circles. When selecting an appropriate channel consider its effectiveness and efficiency.

Box ??: communication effectiveness and Efficiency

Communication effectiveness means that your message is:

- •Received by the target audiences
- •Interpreted by recipients as intended by senders
- •Remembered over a sufficient period of time
- •Triggered an appropriate action

Communication efficiency of a channel means that the maximum number of recipients has been reached per unit cost

Information may reach its target audience directly: people buy books in a bookstore, borrow at a library, receive a briefing note in the mail, or download a map from the Internet. In other cases, information reaches its audience through media channels. The environmental information rarely is trivial. It is very complex: those who receive briefing notes might also be exposed to news paper headlines, but they may not have a time to download a map. Information received from different sources on the same issue may be conflicting or highlight different angles of the problem, requiring active construction of meaning by the audience.

Be innovative in your tactics, and utilize community for a, theatre, music, dialogues or meetings as alternative means. Each channel has its strengths and weaknesses. Therefore, it is advisable to use a combination of channels, choosing some that offset weaknesses of others.

Consider the messenger and the timing of the message (link to issue cycles, as discussed in impact strategy part). These are both important and affect the effectiveness of the communication.

Be aware that language and cultural differences can affect your choice of channels. Choosing only a few main channels might prevent you from reaching as broad an audience as you might wish. In countries with several official languages, this is a crucial point to keep in mind.

If you want to reach large target audiences, repetition and continuation of messages in different channels is crucial. Promotion campaigns are an efficient approach to raising awareness. You may use a range of methods over a longer period to get your message across, including media campaigns, information leaflets and posters. Remember that information produced but not disseminated will remain unknown and lose its significance.

It is very important at this stage of the project to start developing a well-structured dissemination plan for your various products. The table below provides guidelines for dissemination activities planned throughout the project. It indicates purpose, target audience, timing, media used for dissemination and follow-up with target audience and actions to be taken. Table 3: A possible outline to disseminate IEA products

Dissemination Plan						
Timing	Dissemination Activity	Purpose	Target Audience	Potential impact	Media use	Follow-up/ action taken
Date	Special planned event involving all relevant partners and media	Launch of the report. Get attention	Key Partners (ministries, NGOs, public institutions) media	Media coverage awareness within the ministries, outreach to the public	Press release press kit interviews media	Media monitoring free distribution to the ministries
Date	Free mailing of the report to all ministries (approx.20 copies per ministries)	To inform them about the content of the report, so that the report can be used in decision making processes	High-level decision-makers, governments clerks	Affect decision making	Report	Get user feedback
....	....	....	....	....	....	....

EXERCISE

Discuss existing media relations in your country, and use your experience to draft a short-term dissemination plan to approach the media

Work in groups of four. Choose someone in your group to record your results following the discussion points below; report the results in plenary. Duration of the exercise is 40 minutes.

- Discuss the needs and available resources for communication.
- What ongoing relations with mainstream media exist within your organization/department?
- Do you have staff/members who are familiar with mainstream media norms and needs? Do these staff/members have sufficient time to do consistent media outreach?
- Make a list of responsive journalists and other "insiders," and describe plans to use them to spread your message.
- Does your organization have a distribution network? Is it updated and ready to be used? Summarize your results on a flipchart for presentation in plenary later.

EXERCISE

Participants continue working in the same groups. Duration of the exercise is 30 minutes. The aim of the exercise is to find out what are the best communication channels, considering given time, resources and possibilities. The participants map out a variety of communication channels, analyze strength and weaknesses of each of them, and prioritize their dissemination channels. Participants choose someone in the group to report the results of the group discussion in plenary.

Channel/media	Strength	Weaknesses	Priorities
Television			
Press (Papers, magazines)			
Printed material (book….)			
………………………..			

4.2 How do we do it?

A. Print products

Because not all publications are alike, the time needed to produce material for them varies. Due to extensive analysis and writing process, a comprehensive report may take six months to a year (or more) to produce. In contrast, a one-colour flyer may be completed in a few weeks and a full-colour brochure may take a few months from concept to delivery. Rushing the process may compromise the quality of your product and increase production costs. To better prepare for the production process, you will benefit from asking who needs to be involved, in what way and during which phases. For example, you will need to involve writers, a graphic designer, a web designer, a database manager, maybe a cartographer and an editor. Further, clarify who is responsible for specific parts of the plan, and who coordinates the joint efforts.

Common steps in the production of a printed IEA report.

The following list summarizes common steps in the production of a printed IEA report.

Specifications: Rough specifications on format of the publication, size, font, illustrations and layout option. It is recommended that dummy reports are produced to present different options.

Contents: Production of text, as well as choosing graphics and pictures. At this stage it is important not to forget any elements like picture text, references and headings.

Translation: within country in the region persist different languages need to use the translated text for production if needed

Pre-design: Can be useful to test the design in order to be able to make revisions before developing all the contents.

Layout: Place all the contents into the design chosen.

Proofreading: This is the last chance to make revisions before the report goes to the printers.

Test print/blue line: You should always ask for a test print in order to get rid of the last mistakes, correct colours, identify missing elements, etc.

Print: Now your major concern is to make sure the printed report is ready on time, according to quality expectations and within budget.

Quality control: Quality control, revisions and editing. This should be done throughout the production process.

EXERCISE:

Budgeting needs and skills This exercise builds on the exercise on establishing the main budget lines. The exercise is not limited to planning printed formats, but can be used when planning communications in any format.

The participants break into groups of about five. The exercise lasts for 30 minutes. The production phase requires people with different skills. This is an exercise in mapping needs and skills for preparing printed or electronic reports. Participants should discuss expertise, skills and services they need for preparing their communication outputs. The leading question for the discussion is: What expertise, skills and services do you needs to succeed with your project? Make a budget and time plan based on:

1.Who will be involved in the project (inside and outside expertise)?

2.What are direct expenses (e.g., meetings, communication, printing, transport) ?

3.How much it cost?

4. What is the time frame of the different steps?

3.2 Electronic/digital products

Disseminating environmental information through electronic channels, such as websites, can bring a great degree of flexibility. It allows messages in mixed formats, such as text, data, graphics and audiovisual. Today, there is a great and fast growing variety of electronic formats that can be used for different purposes. This includes formats such as PDF, html pages, RSS (a of web feed format used to publish frequently updated digital content), blogs and other personalized web-based tools.

There are many things to consider when choosing an electronic format for communicating your message, and it is important to keep in mind that many countries in the region web access is still limited.

Easily added, removed or updated on the web provide flexibility and opportunity for publishing information as it becomes available. At the same time, readers will expect that an Internet site is regularly updated so, if resources for updates are lacking, you may lose readers. It is important to keep in mind that we read differently on the web than we do with printed publications. Printed materials have a linear structure, and the reader follows a predefined path; reading a web report allows the reader to freely navigate from section to section. This has implications for how a web report should be organized and written. The most important advice when producing for the web is to limit text lengths and sharpen the messages. Be clear on what you want to communicate, and focus on the essential parts of your message. Since people tend to read more slowly on the web, they will probably not follow your messages in a linear manner all the way to a conclusion, but will jump between pages as their interest shifts. The main messages you try to communicate should therefore not be saved to the end, but brought to the beginning of the text. Hence, you start with conclusions and move on from there.

Lower resolution Images and graphics may be used in web to avoid the download time due to slow connection. If available, you may provide access to both low and high resolution versions of the same image and let the readers decide if they want to spend the time accessing the higher resolution one. An image or graphic should always have explanatory text and the source. The possibility to make links is strength of web-based publications. This allows combining different parts of an assessment in contrast to having to follow a linear path in a printed publication. If you choose to produce a web report but an important portion of your audience has poor web access, you can chose to also distribute on a CD-ROM. The navigation of a CD-ROM should resemble that of your web page, so people will find it easy to use. Before you start production of a CD-ROM, consider if your target audience will find this to be a useful format. For example, a CD-ROM might be of greater use for schools, than for the general public.

Box ??: Formats for electronic documents.

PDF. PDF stands for Portable Document Format, and has become a widely-used way of publishing electronic documents. PDF is probably the best way to transfer and view documents on the web or through e-mail. However, creating a PDF file requires Acrobat Professional but the document can be read by the simple Acrobat Reader program which can be freely downloadable..

HTML. Hypertext Markup Language is the coding language used to create hypertext documents for the web. In HTML, a block of text can be surrounded with electronic “tags” that indicate how it will appear on a computer screen (e.g., bold face or italics).

RSS. Rich Site Summary and RDF (Resource Description Framework) are web technologies that make it easy to automatically share content, such as news items, among different web sites. A web site can allow other sites to publish some of its content by creating an RSS document, and registering the document with an RSS publisher. A web publisher can post a link to the RSS feed so users can read the distributed content on his/her site.

WEBLOG (BLOG). This is a publicly accessible personal journal created by an individual, and shared over the web. The activity of updating a blog is “blogging,” and someone who keeps a blog is a “blogger.” Blogs are typically updated daily using software that allows people with little or no technical background to update and maintain the blog. Postings on a blog almost always are arranged in chronological order, with the most recent additions featured most prominently

4.3 Visual presentation of data in the IEA

The visual part of communication is often under estimated. People often consider words the most important form of human communication. Supported by the invention of the computer and desktop publishing, media and advertising, the role of visual messages in the communication process has expanded since the late 1980s. It is becoming increasingly important to recognize that the two communication systems—visual and verbal—are interdependent. It is probable that the most powerful, meaningful and culturally important messages are those that combine words and pictures. Memorable visual messages with text have the greatest power to inform, educate and persuade an individual.

Visual communication can help us shape the interpretation of data, and strengthen messages delivered through the text. Images, maps and graphics can simplify complicated insights as well as displaying complex information in a very condensed way. So, by using the right images and colours, and by getting your maps and graphics properly done, your IEA's messages and readability will be strengthened. See the presentation material on improved visual communication.

The cartographic process

Managing the cartographic process often requires a specialist (cartographer), who usually will not be the manager of the IEA. However, the assessment manager/practitioner will need to work closely with the cartographer to make sure the maps you use harmonize with the core messages and results of the assessment.

Once spatial data are collected and analyzed, they are sent to a cartographic designer for further processing and refinement. This step involves transforming the data into a clear and efficient visual representation. Ideally, the figures should give an immediate message to the users, with no more than two or three items being presented. By reducing the number of categories, you simplify the information.

GIS and maps

Geographic Information System (GIS) is a geo-referenced database which allows a rapid visualization of phenomena by automatic plotting of maps using the geo-referenced data. Usually such analysis is appropriate only for "working documents" not for "publishable documents" or ones intended for the general public. A GIS is a database used for storage of a large amount of data, and is mainly used as an efficient tool for management (e.g., water or transport networks, marine resources, land cover, grazing area). GIS is a source of primary information to be synthesized and simplified for the production of thematic maps and graphics that can be published in books or on the Internet.
The process of making a map or producing graphics is related to several disciplines. Cartography relates to art, to science and to politics. By choosing certain colours, contrasts and movements, you both emphasize and ignore information. As a cartographer or a creator of graphics, you make more or less conscious selections at all stages of the process which carry some useful meanings.

B. Implement time-saving techniques for visual and graphics

To ease your work, the organization's publications manager, graphic designer or cartographer can benefit from creating tools for graphic production. Create templates and libraries that can easily be assembled and stored, so that they can be used for multiple purposes. Using elements that already exist rather than recreating new components again and again will save time and allow consistency in your visual presentation. You can create a user-friendly template using tools available in most drawing software packages. The file structure on your hard disk also must be organized in a logical and efficient way, so that it is easy to find specific files that may otherwise be buried among hundreds or thousands of others.

4.4 Reaching out with the outputs of the IEA

A. Dissemination

At this point, it is time to implement the dissemination plan. Too many good information products are left in an office for just a few to read. Why spend time and money producing well thought-through products if nobody sees or reads them? First, verify if you

already have a distribution network, and if this network is updated. Then, revisit your communication strategy, and ensure that your distribution list matches your target group(s). Add new names and organizations to your list as appropriate. Further, consider different ways of distributing your product. This will vary depending on the format you have chosen. For example, a web-based report will probably reach more broadly, while a paper report might more easily reach directly to your target group(s). Consider contacting NGO sand ministries directly, and make a plan for seminars, meetings and events where you can attend and hand out your product dedicated to the IEA. The most important thing is that you keep thinking about distribution long after you have finished your product, even though the energy for doing that is sometimes hard to find.

B. Approach the media

Journalists are always looking for the next story, which gives you the opportunity to make them interested in your story. Building strategic and long-lasting relationships with the media is crucial for successful dissemination. If you have access to a media or a public relations officer within your organization, it would be a good idea to seek their advice. Approaching the media and establishing a network of journalists is a long process, and getting help from a colleague might ease your way towards your goal of getting media coverage.

Look at possible channels for approaching the media and attracting their attention. This can include press releases in written and audio formats and press kits, press conferences, press briefings or special media events. A strategic relationship with the media might include an environmental page every week in one particular paper. Depending on the nature of your announcement, you need to find the best way to communicate with journalists. UNEP has been practising real and virtual media tours to attract the attention of international media. For several years, UNEP held eco-journalist festivals in Central Asia.

You will need to develop a story line, and assemble and package the vital findings of your research and the key messages from your assessment .Again, seek advice if you can. Common practice is to proceed with a short (about one page), clear and understandable (non-technical) press release. Communicate the press release openly by putting it on the website, sending it to main news agencies and to your journalist network. Look for a good opportunity to launch your message, such as a political event, a scientific conference or a high-profile social event, or an on going debate. You may also organize a media event dedicated solely to the IEA.

Box ??: Preparing a press kit.

When launching an IEA report, you will benefit from preparing a press kit for the participants on the event. Journalists are often too busy to search for information or to read an IEA report from cover to cover. A press kit helps journalists to use your information, improving your chances of getting media coverage. The contents will vary, but always must include background information on the organizations behind the report;, an executive summary highlighting the key findings must also be included.

C. The press release

A press release is a statement prepared for distribution to the media, to give journalists information that is useful, accurate and interesting. Press releases have a particular format. Once you are familiar with writing them, all you have to do is fill in the blanks. Journalists receive many press releases, so they have standards and expectations that you must meet to just to have your release read and, hopefully, used.

Press Release Checklist

- Organization’s/department’s letterhead, name, address, phone number, e-mail, website
- PRESS RELEASE in all caps
- Contact person’s name and contact information
- IMMEDIATE RELEASE OR RELEASE DATE in all caps)
- HEADLINE or TITLE in bold/caps
- Body text: Date/City-who, what, when, where and why
- Basic Font, page numbers, end with ###

EXERCISE: Creating a press release and press kit

The participants are asked to write a press release based on an issue or report of their choice.

Recommended reading: "How to write a press release "http://www.lunareclipse.net/pressrelease.htm

Example: Press release on DPRK SOE Report

First Report on the State of the Environment in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea launched at UNEP headquarters

Identifies priority issues for international response

Nairobi, Bangkok 27 August 2004 – The first assessment of the state of the environment of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) was launched today by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and DPRK officials at UNEP headquarters in Nairobi.

The State of the Environment report was produced in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and was initiated following a visit by Executive Director Klaus Toepfer to DPR Korean capital Pyongyang in 2000.

DPR Korea officials from 20 different government and academic agencies produced the report with training and guidance from UNEP's assessment office in Bangkok and the UNDP office in Pyongyang.

The report uses a "pressure-state-response" methodology and identifies priority issues related to forests, water, air, land and biodiversity. It also acknowledges a paucity of research and data on which to base reliable environmental assessments. The report, which was completed in late 2003, was released on the occasion of the visit of a high level DPRK delegation to Nairobi.

"By bringing together the available environmental information and identifying priority issues, the report will help strengthen monitoring and assessment, policy setting, action planning and resourcing in DPR Korea," Mr. Toepfer said.

The assessment notes that while three quarters of the country is forested, almost all is on steep slopes over 20 degrees. While forested area expanded from the 1950s with national planting campaigns, over the past decade forests have declined in extent and quality due to timber production, a doubling of firewood consumption, and wild fires and insect attacks associated with drought. A growing population – now estimated at 24.4 million people, 60 percent of who live in urban areas - and conversion of hilly land to agricultural production have also taken a toll on forests. In response the government has successfully encouraged community, youth and children's groups to establish tree nurseries and to participate in campaigns such as the National Tree Planting Day each March 2.

While relatively rich in water resources, DPR Korea faces challenges in maintaining water supply and quality. Eighty percent of total surface water is currently utilized for hydropower generation. In recent years, pollution of rivers and streams has become severe, particularly the Taedong River, which flows through central Pyongyang. The report says a dozen factories and plants have been recorded discharging 30,000 cubic metres of wastewater into the river every day. Construction of the West Sea Barrage and low flows due to drought have also weakened natural purification of the river, leading to seasonal red and blue tides in the Taedong's lower reaches. The lower Amnok River, on the boundary of DPR Korea and China, is also severely affected by industrial effluent and domestic sewage.

The report notes that urgent investment is needed in domestic sewage and industrial treatment, and in water storage, purification and supply systems. The government is currently strengthening legal control on effluent from factories by applying the "polluter pays principle" and has initiated mass media campaigns to inform the public of the need for water conservation.

DPRK's reliance on coal for power generation, industrial processes and domestic heating has created serious urban air pollution problems, though comprehensive monitoring or studies on its effects on human health have not been carried out. A projected five-fold increase in coal use by 2020 underlies the urgent need for clean coal combustion and exhaust gas purification technologies, energy efficiency, and renewable energy alternatives.

Self-sufficiency in food production has been a national policy aim, however major crop yields fell by almost two thirds during the 1990s due to land degradation caused by loss of forest, droughts, floods and tidal waves, acidification due to over use of chemicals, as well as shortages of fertilizer, farm machinery and oil. Vulnerable soils require an expansion of restorative policies and practices such as flood protection works, tree planting, terracing and use of organic fertilizers.

Recognizing such issues, DPR Korea adjusted its legal and administrative framework, designating environmental protection as a priority over all productive practices and identifying it as a prerequisite for sustainable development. It has adopted national laws

on forests, fisheries, water resources and marine pollution. The country - home to several critically endangered species, including the Amur leopard, Asiatic black bear and Siberian tiger - has also signed up to international environmental agreements such as the Convention on Biological Diversity.

The report concludes that to align socio-economic progress with sustainable development, environmental laws and regulations need to be formulated or upgraded, environmental management mechanisms need to be improved and intensified, financial investment must be encouraged, science and technological research needs to be focused on the identified priorities, and environmental monitoring and statistical systems need to be set up and their data used as a basis for national planning and policy making.

“The Democratic People’s Republic of Korea has shown its willingness to engage with the global community to safeguard its environmental resources and we must respond so it can meet development goals in a sustainable manner,” Mr. Toepfer said.

Mr. Toepfer and the head of DPR Korea’s delegation to Nairobi, Dr. Ri Hung Sik, the Secretary-General of the National Coordinating Committee for Environment, signed yesterday a framework agreement to guide joint activities that will further strengthen capacity for environmental protection.

This includes a project with UNDP to improve quantitative environmental assessment and monitoring, utilizing information technology and integrating 10 national institutions with environmental responsibilities.

The assessment report also contains 16 project proposals - from awareness campaigns to major technology overhauls - to help the donor community respond to the specific environmental issues.

For more information: The DPRK State of the Environment Report can be downloaded from http://www.unep.org and/or http://www.rrcap.unep.org/

or contact: Eric Falt, Spokesperson/Director of UNEP’s Division of Communications and Public Information, on Tel: 254 20 623292, Mobile: 254 (0) 733 682656, E-mail: eric.falt@unep.org; or Tim Higham, Regional Information Officer, UNEP, Bangkok, on Tel +66 2 288 2127, Mobile +66 9 1283803, E-mail higham@un.org.

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C. Sustaining communication: Long-term approaches

While information quality is essential, active communication is another vital ingredient that needs to be addressed in sustainability. People may or may not know about environmental conditions to which they are exposed. In any case, it takes a long time to achieve changes in attitude (e.g., consumption patterns, prevention, minimizing health risks, and participation). Practice shows that if you want to achieve positive changes, a long-term approach is needed.

There are differences in the expected impact that various information and communication strategies cause over time. Intense publicity over a short period of time may have only a short-term impact. A short, intense mass media publicity campaign, for example is able to attract attention and even cause action; but unless the campaign lasts, its effect will soon fade, as attention of the audience will turn to another subject. On the other hand, research without or with little communication builds very limited impact over time. The recommended long-term communication strategy is based on continuous persuasion. It begins with relatively active publicity in the beginning, and continues with a fast, consecutive improvement of the information base.

Your work is almost done, but a last and important step in the work process remains: evaluation. The evaluation step often is forgotten after the project is completed. However, information received through systematic evaluation and feedback (i.e., through interviews with key people), will save resources in the future. In addition, the possibility of providing feedback and influencing the process will increase the sense of ownership within the community. Your evaluation experiences also could be of use to other institutions planning to carry out a similar process.