



**COMMUNICATION TRAINING
FOR ASIAN BIODIVERSITY
CO-ORDINATORS:
*A NEEDS ASSESSMENT***

Report of a qualitative research among coordinators of national biodiversity strategies and action plans

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background: problem definition by IUCN CEC

The report of the IUCN workshop on the National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans – Lessons from South Asia¹, stated that communication and awareness were not explicitly addressed, and many of the problems expressed could find their roots in a lack of understanding of managing communication. The same weakness has been found by the IUCN Commission and Education and Communication when working with Biodiversity Action Plan coordinators in South America and government & NGOs on communication training in Central Europe.

It was on this basis that CEC became the leader of a proposal to develop communication capacity in Asia, Eastern Africa and Southern Africa for National strategy and action plans for biodiversity. As small funds of Fr 75,000 were allocated to start activities in 2000, a first phase of this project can begin in one region only.

The problem has to be defined more sharply, but it is on a basic assumption that communication expertise can be enhanced amongst the leaders of biodiversity strategies and plans that this pilot project will commence.

Some of the underlying thinking for this project is explained below, these assumptions have to be tested.

National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans are being undertaken in countries, frequently on GEF projects that are too short for real participation in their development. The result can be a country's NBSAP may be a beautiful document illustrated with wildlife, that is a strategy, but lacks an action plan and budget and especially ownership to implement it. In other words it is developed by a reasonably small consultation process, limiting the process to put biodiversity on the political agenda of actors in society. Secondly it fails to help those people understand what their role is and that they have to undertake certain actions. The strategy may even lead to confrontation, especially if planned within the conservation community.

Biodiversity specialists usually prepare the Biodiversity Action Plans, rather than managers. This creates a problem in that the action plans are frequently strategies and do not include managerial aspects like clear tasks, time frame, budgets and responsibilities. Therefore there is still more planning to be done to make them operational. This requires internal communication within the Ministry to establish internal priorities, ownership, relationships with those who will play a role in implementing it, budget and work plans. This we call managing internal communication.

¹ IUCN South Asia NBSAP workshop, Draft Report, 13 – 15 February 2000, Rajendrapur, Bangladesh

BAPs depend on how other sectors, nationally and provincially react to them. That reaction in turn depends on the engagement of those sectors in preparing the plan. If the engagement was inadequate, then the likely reaction to the plan is hostility. Because of the way the task was assigned, BAPs can be prepared by people who do not fully understand how policy is implemented and how the biodiversity policy relates to other policies that affect biodiversity. So the action plan lacks an appreciation of the role of other government ministries and how to engage them to take this on as their own business.

Another problem is, knowing who to communicate with first and when. BAP leaders often think stakeholders are everybody rather than focus on the really important people. For example, in making wrong decisions about the stakeholders at the national level they will rush to talk to farmers instead of to the Ministry of Agriculture and national farmers' groups. And then when they do approach these groups they do not really understand how to manage these communication processes to gain meaningful results, to manage relations, provide feedback and so forth.

If any of the above is a part of the reality of the biodiversity conservation process, then they have to be dealt with to move towards implementation.

Another aspect is to know to whom it is important to communicate biodiversity issues. "Biodiversity" needs to be broken down into issues that are linked to where people can take practical action. Many countries seek to promote the Strategy and Action Plan, who needs to know it exists and why?

Good management of the BAP implementation depends on communication, both internal, within the government department, as well as with other government departments, and externally to particular sectors of the public who have some potential, ability, or power to change what is happening in favour of the plan.

The communication issue is how to manage aspects such as:

- 1. plan the role of communication in relation to different priority issues and its relation to the use of other instruments (legal, financial)*
- 2. put the (priorities) of the plan on the agenda of one's own Ministry, mobilise action, funds and people*
- 3. put the relevant (priorities) of the plan on the agenda of the various sectors and groups who need to take action – this may have national and provincial levels*
- 4. maintain influence with other sectors to change policies that impede biodiversity conservation*
- 5. motivate the stakeholders to plan their own role in implementing the action plan*
- 6. assist (build skills) stakeholder groups to undertake the educational work with their target groups*
- 7. provide appropriate information that people need to do the work – based on demand for information*

8. *manage an “umbrella” campaign on some key biodiversity issue to gain the attention of various target groups in society who need to change practice in relation to that issue and that supports the work of the stakeholder group/s*
9. *network the groups involved in BAP implementation and help them to learn from each other*
10. *maintain good relations with other sectors, mass media, interest groups, stakeholders*
11. *give feedback on progress to appropriate people to maintain the authorising environment for the work*

In summary the issue is how to effectively manage, the marketing, facilitation of stakeholder processes, education (knowledge, skills), knowledge, public relations, and networks. Governments undertake various aspects of all these facets of communication, but usually not in a coherent and strategically managed way².

IUCN CEC has asked HECT Consultancy to carry out a needs assessment among the Asian NBSAP Coordinators in order to prepare effectively for a regional training workshop on the issue described above. The needs assessment should *determine the learning needs and incentives so a communication training programme can be developed and marketed, to provide benefit to the participants and interest them in preparing projects for increased support at the national level.*³

1.2 The Issue

HECT reformulates the issue as stake as follows. IUCN CEC and the Asian Biodiversity Programme recognize the need for capacity building in communication to support the NBSAP in the region. The Coordinators of NBSAP have recognised that there are weaknesses in this area of work. Yet there is a lack of real appreciation of what is involved in managing communication to develop and to implement a National Biodiversity Strategy and Action plan (NBSAP). IUCN CEC intends to help building capacity among these coordinators to fill in this gap. A training workshop is seen as the first step

IUCN CEC intends to realize this workshop for a limited number of NBSAP managers from the region, building on previous CEC experience in South America and Central Europe. Aim of the course is to ‘open the eyes’ of these managers to the basis of managing communication and excite the participants to the desire to develop projects to take this communication support forward at the national level.

² IUCN Commission on Education and Communication, Project Concept Asian Region Biodiversity Programme, Swiss supported Biodiversity Programme: 75795-070

³ TOR Project no 75795-070, 20 October 2000. The research for the training needs assessment was also used by CEC to assess what in general the international level could contribute to support the national level in implementing article 13 of the Convention on Biological Diversity. The outcomes of this research were presented at the meeting of the CBD-UNESCO Consultative Working Group of Experts on Biological Diversity Education and Public Awareness, 19 – 21 November, Bergen, Norway. These findings are integrated in this report.

In addition IUCN CEC is involved in an expert consultation with the Biodiversity Convention Secretariat and UNESCO to develop the concept of an education initiative for the Convention. The second meeting of this expert group took place in Bergen Norway November 19-22, 2000. This working group is to report to COP 6. The results of the Asian Training Initiative can be used by IUCN CEC to provide elements for this report especially with regard to the demand side of support for communicating biodiversity and the demand side for education support.

What needs to be explored is what the realities of the NBSAP coordinators are, what they support they need, which demands for learning in communication can be addressed by training workshop, what the outline of the workshop should be and how such a workshop should be structured to be a building brick for further capacity building in the region.

1.3 Aim of this project

HECT formulates the objectives of this project as follows:

- To determine the reality in which (Asian) NBSAP coordinators operate in general and what their perceptions are of the progress they are making and the obstacles they face.
- To determine the learning needs and incentives in order to provide input for the development and marketing of a communication training programme which provides benefit to the participants and interests them in preparing projects aimed at increasing support at the national level.

1.4 Approach

Desk research was conducted to obtain clarity about the state of affairs of the Biodiversity Convention Secretariat and UNESCO expert group. Furthermore, the results of research conducted by IUCN ERO in EU Accession countries and of research by IUCN SUR in South American countries were studied. A list of relevant literature is enclosed in this report.

Furthermore, sixteen in-depth telephone interviews were held with key persons involved in national BD plans. The list of respondents and the questionnaire can be found in the appendixes.

The results were analysed and compared with conclusions drawn from involvement of HECT Consultancy in developing BD strategies in Central Europe and West Asia.

This report describes the main findings of the research and provides recommendations for the preparation and marketing of the training workshop.

2. REALITIES NBSAP COORDINATORS FACE

2.1 Who is implementing BD strategy?

The regional IUCN BD coordinator provided a list of NBSAP coordinators. The respondents were asked to explain their position and their role in developing and implementing NBSAP. From the interviews it becomes clear that different organisations and different types of officials are involved in BD. NBSAP coordinators are in fact a variety of people. Four categories can be distinguished:

- The official focal point for the NBSAP, named by the government (mostly in the Ministry of Environment), who formally deals with focal points for biodiversity in other departments.
- The government representatives (often from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, sometimes the International Specialists from the Ministry of Environment) involved in the international network: these officials participate in the international meetings (COP, SBSTTA etc.).
- ‘Delegated BD coordinators’: these officials are made responsible by the official focal point for the actual developing and implementing NBSAP on the national level.
- Consultants and private organisations hired by BD coordinators to (contribute to) develop and implement NBSAP.

The research also indicates that there is often a high turn over of officials involved in NBSAP. A substantial number of respondents have only recently been given the task to implement NBSAP. It should be noted that the variety of actors not only means a difference in information levels, but also leads to a variation in involvement and ownership of the NBSAP.

2.2 Target groups for NBSAP coordinators

The respondents were asked which target groups and stake holders are most important. The following target groups are mentioned:

- Government officials of other departments and ministries.
- Officials of regional and local governments.
- Politicians.
- The general public.
- Students, formal education.
- Local communities.
- Regional institutes and national parks.
- NGOs.

2.3 Which obstacles do BD coordinators encounter?

The NBSAP coordinators encounter several obstacles developing and implementing NBSAP. Part of these obstacles are caused by the fact that BD is a relatively new field. The following quotes illustrate the situation:

“We are just starting. We still have to work on basic information; data inventory is just initiated.”

“Biodiversity is a new subject. There are no BD experts available, everybody who is working on it is in fact a specialist in other fields like forestry.”

“Biodiversity is new, many relevant decision makers have to be approached because they do not know about it.”

The following obstacles for NBSAP coordinators can be distinguished:

- Limited resources (human and financial).
- Lack of knowledge about biodiversity priorities.
- Lack of integration in other policies.
- Conflicting interests.
- Lack of knowledge of ‘marketing’ of biodiversity.

In the following paragraphs these obstacles will be explored.

2.4 Limited resources (human & financial)

The in-depth interviews point out that limited resources constrain initiatives to implement NBSAP. In many cases the plans have been developed using the GEF fund. Additional resources to finance implementation often still need to be obtained.

At the same time, NBSAP coordinators face an enormous challenge: for successful implementation the cooperation of many other organisations and actors is needed. It takes a lot of effort to get the necessary cooperation and to develop national and local structures for implementing NBSAP. The following quotes illustrates how limited resources hinder implementation:

“We try to involve local NGOs. Without their cooperation we cannot be successful at the local level. We organised a training session, but what happens afterwards? A structural effort is needed.”

“We have received a grant to develop a NBSAP. Now we need more people who can market BD. But capacity is limited and our staff is not formally trained.”

“Because BD involves everybody, implementation is complicated and costly. Most people do not even know what it is, so a lot of work has to be done. But we have to accomplish all this with a lack of capacity and of capabilities.”

2.5 Lack of knowledge of BD priorities

Respondents point out that they lack knowledge and information needed to identify priorities and to develop the right (communication) activities. Firstly, in many cases it is difficult to select areas, ecosystems and species, which are most important for conservation and protection activities:

“We do not even know which species we have, so how can we know what to protect?”

“We need information about BD hotspots. Our databases do not provide us with sufficient information.”

“All nature in our country is important. We have not identified any priorities.”

Secondly, information of activities of other departments is needed to be able to identify potential conflicting interests. In most cases, this information is not available and hard to get. The following quotes illustrate this obstacle:

“We do not know which plans are developed by relevant departments like agriculture. Without this information, it is difficult to select the right priorities.”

“Officials of other departments are not willing to provide us with information; they do not understand the need for and the benefits of BD. Information is scattered and there is a lot of overlap of activities resulting in an inefficient use of resources.”

The study conducted by IUCN ERO in EU Accession countries identified limited resources as major obstacle as well:

Most countries of Central & Eastern Europe are facing huge changes (e.g. economic and administrative reforms) in order to cope with the ongoing Accession process, which, in most cases, adds to the normal workload and budget of the daily work. Additional funding is available from the EU in a number of instruments (mainly Life III, ISPA and SAPARD) but the procedures and the requirements to accede to these are so demanding and time consuming that they are often only partly used. It has been observed by the candidate countries that too few human resources have been allocated to Natura 2000 within the Ministry of Environment, which limits co-operation with other Ministries, such as agriculture. (Natura 2000: Time to Integrate, IUCN ERO, 2000)

2.6 Lack of integration in other policies

As said before, cooperation of other departments in implementing BD is essential for success. The experience of the respondents shows that it is very difficult to realise the necessary integration. BD is only one of many issues fighting for a position on the agenda of politicians, policy makers and stakeholders. Especially in third world countries where urgent and serious problems are a daily reality, for instance the political conflicts in Indonesia, the emerging market economy in Vietnam and the economic recession in Thailand.

“The president has signed the CBD and has informed officials of other departments, but they have no interest in BD; they have their own priorities.”

“So far not much is happening. A small group of specialists is talking to each other. There is no interest in other departments.”

“We do not succeed in involving other sectors. We have insufficient connections.”

2.7 Conflicting interests

A factor which contributes to the lack of integration in other policies is the conflict of interests between BD policies and policies of other departments and regional and local governments. Furthermore, the respondents point out that often there is a conflict of interests between BD activities at the local level and local communities. These conflicts of interests hinder the development of a collective effort in the field of BD. The following quotes illustrate this obstacle:

“Local people depend on nature for food and survival. These people are often very poor. Without alternatives to provide livelihood BD efforts will fail.”

“Agriculture has as mandate to feed the people, this priority always comes first.”

“Local governments do not seem to be interested in BD. Other issues have more political value for them.”

2.8 Lack of knowledge of marketing and communication

It becomes clear that the NBSAP coordinators face a complicated and extensive task. The majority finds it very difficult to inform relevant departments, governments, organisations, stakeholders, local communities and the general public about BD. And informing is in many cases not sufficient: convincing to participate in a joint effort is often necessary. The following quotes illustrate the problems NBSAP coordinators encounter trying to market BD:

“I find it very difficult to deal with other parties who have no interest in BD. How can I motivate them and find common objectives?”

*“Without cooperation of the people living in parks, we can not make any progress.
But how can we motivate them.?”*

3. WHAT IS NEEDED MOST FOR NSBAP COORDINATORS?

3.1 Introduction

The research indicates that the following aspects are most needed for NBSAP coordinators:

- Identifying biodiversity priorities.
- Developing national networks.
- Developing solutions for conflicting interests.
- Acquiring support for biodiversity from decision makers and stakeholders from other departments/regional governments
- Developing strategies, methods and media to ‘market’ and communicate biodiversity to different target groups, including the general public.

In the following paragraph these aspects are elaborated and illustrated with quotes from the interviews.

3.2 Identifying BD priorities

Especially because resources are limited, priorities need to be identified. Areas, ecosystems and species, which need attention most should be selected. Furthermore, target groups and stakeholders have to be selected: it is impossible to inform, convince and influence all relevant actors at the same time. Activities need to be focussed in order to achieve success. Decision-making skills are needed to decide most urgent BD targets.

3.3 Developing national networks

In order to implement NBSAPs, involvement of NGOs and other governments is needed. Many activities need to take place at the local level. Informing and educating local communities requires a network of organisations and persons willing to contribute to BD activities.

“Local NGOs have to do the work. They know the situation; they know the local communities, understand their culture and speak their language. Training the trainers is therefore essential.”

“We are such a small group with limited resources, we need to be more effective establishing relationships with key actors who are willing to help us.”

3.4 Solving conflicting interests BD – local communities

A condition for success on the local level is that local communities are offered alternative livelihoods. Without these alternatives, communication is doomed to fail and it is unlikely it will lead to changes of current behaviour and of current use of resources.

“The people are very poor and need food. They shoot monkeys because they are hungry. Unless we offer alternatives like agriculture and animal husbandry, communication is not effective.”

“Without cooperation of people who live in and around parks, no progress can be made.”

“We are ‘handicapped’ to enforce laws, so the only way to achieve success is to get the local people to cooperate. And local people are only willing to change current practices when this has no disadvantages or when this has benefits.”

3.5 Acquiring support for BD

Many NBSAP coordinators point out that they lack experience and information on how to communicate and negotiate with stakeholders and decision makers. Mostly they do not have these subjects as a back ground, often they are trained in the area of biology, forestry and nature conservation. They find it hard to get support and need capabilities and methods to achieve this.

“We need to influence people who disagree, but we have no experience in this field.”

“ We think in terms of education, we do not know how to involve others.”

3.6 Developing strategies to market and communicate BD

BD is not an easy subject to explain, according to most respondents. They experience difficulty informing and involving others because they do not know how to show in a clear way the essence of BD, the importance of it and the (potential) benefits for others. There is a need for skills, strategies and methods to get attention and to put BD on agendas of other sectors.

“We do not know how you can show people who live in the parks why BD is important.”

“We invest mostly in technical training, but we do not know much about communication.”

“We need to know how to sell BD!”

4. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TRAINING

4.1 Training is building block for capacity building and cooperation

The needs assessment shows that NBSAP coordinators face a complex task they find difficult to accomplish. They encounter problems that can only be solved by fundamental changes in (decision making in) governmental institutions, businesses and in local practices. The capabilities required to initiate these changes are lacking, sometimes resulting in a somewhat desperate feeling of NBSAP coordinators:

“We need help!!”

“So far the money spent on education and public awareness does not lead to results due to lack of knowledge, capabilities and experience in this field.”

The research strongly indicates that a one-time training will not be sufficient to change current practises in the field of public awareness raising, education and communication.

In this light HECT Consultancy recommends to develop a training which forms a building block for a continuous process of capacity building and cooperation between NBSAP coordinators both on the international level (South East Asia) and the national level. The impact of the training can be enlarged by making it the start of follow up activities aimed at capacity building, the development of joint efforts to change current practises and involving others to work on BD strategies.

4.2 Target group

A diverse group of professionals is involved in implementing NBSAP:

- ‘Official’ NBSAP coordinators or focal points
- Representatives at COP, SBSTA meetings
- ‘Delegated BD coordinators’
- Consultants / private organisations, NGOs contracted by coordinators

The research also indicates that there is often a high turn over of officials involved in NBSAP. A substantial number of respondents have only recently been given the task to implement NBSAP.

HECT Consultancy recommends to focus the training on the broad spectrum of professionals involved in implementing NBSAP on the national level. It is expected that this will be more effective than restraining the course for one specific target group, for instance the focal points. NBSAP coordinators already operate too much in isolation in the

current situation. When a (part of) national ‘NBSAP team’ participates in the training, the participants can support each other afterwards, bringing new learned techniques and approaches in practice together. A joint effort will strengthen the capabilities of national NBSAP teams more than an effort of one individual who has to convince and teach colleagues and partner organisations new tactics and methods. For instance three or four participants from each country could be invited, representing both government and NGOs, preferably NGOs which have already proven to be willing to invest time and energy in BD activities and which are part of national network of NGOs.

4.3 Aim of the training

HECT Consultancy proposes in the light of the previous paragraphs and chapters to develop a training workshop with the following aims:

- Firstly, aim of the training is to provide information, knowledge and skills in areas indicated by NBSAP coordinators as most urgent (see paragraph 4.4).
- Secondly, aim of the training is to develop a common understanding between NBSAP coordinators on the national level. The professionals who have to work together in order to develop and implement communication plans need to share ideas about which steps should be taken and which methods and tactics should be used.
- Thirdly, aim of the training is to stimulate international exchange of experiences and knowledge about communicating BD and to stimulate bilateral and multilateral co-operation in this field.
- A fourth aim of the training is to explore the ways of follow-up on the national level which guarantee the most success and formulate recommendations for IUCN CEC and potential donors for next steps in capacity building in the region.
- A last aim of the workshop is to involve IUCN staffs from the region as participants in the workshop to ensure support for communication in the regional biodiversity approaches and build capacity in the various offices in the region.

4.4 Subjects

In chapter three it was discussed in which areas support is needed most. HECT Consultancy proposes to focus the training on the following communication related subjects which are identified as most urgent by NBSAP coordinators.

How to develop a communication plan?

The training will give the participants guidelines how to develop an effective communication strategy step by step. Each step will be illustrated with practical examples from the participating countries.

The NBSAP coordinators need to learn how to identify communication priorities: which issues should they focus on? Which target groups are most important for BD plans? Which stakeholders are crucial for solving the issue?

Furthermore, it is essential that NBSAP coordinators are able to describe the problems that communication needs to solve accurately. In most situations, communication can only contribute to solving of issues; often other additional measures are needed as well (legislation, development of alternatives for current practices, financial support). If it is not feasible that communication alone will work, the participants need to identify the policy makers and stake holders whose support is needed to develop other instruments.

Besides learning how to identify the desired and feasible role of communication, the participants will learn how to develop a communication strategy step by step. After deciding which of the stakeholders should be targeted, they will learn how to define communication targets, ranging from involvement in problem solving, to attention, knowledge, awareness, motivation, behaviour and skills.

Another issue is to pay sufficient attention to different communication methods and means available to reach the target groups: face to face conversations, meetings, telephone calls, brochures, posters, advertisements, books, films etc.

The organisation of communication is essential for success, especially because of limited financial and human resources. Implementing a communication plan will require support of other government officials and of NGOs. The training should provide the participants guidelines how the activities can be coordinated and how the necessary support can be obtained.

How to inform different target groups about BD?

Because BD is a relatively new field, NBDSAP coordinators need to inform target groups about the essentials. Target groups need answers to questions like: What is BD? Why is BD important? Which activities are needed in this field? What is the relationship with other policies like nature conservation? What are the benefits of BD?

Preferably each target group needs to be approached with tailor made methods and means. HECT Consultancy proposes to teach the participants how communication can be tailored to the knowledge, interests, position and 'culture' of most important target groups. The following target groups can be distinguished:

- Politicians
- Government officials
- Staff of National Parks
- NGOs
- Local communities
- General Public

How to negotiate with decision makers and stakeholders?

To develop and implement national biodiversity action plans informing target groups is not enough. They need to be convinced of the relevancy, the importance and the benefits of BD. They need to be willing to invest time and energy in NBSAP activities, to connect their plans with NBSAPs and vice versa. 'Deals' have to be made, mutual agreement about necessary actions has to be reached.

In this light HECT Consultancy proposes to train the participants in negotiation skills. They should learn how to search for common interests and how to develop for win-win solutions. Different tactics will be explored and it will be clarified which tactics are effective in specific situations.

How to develop a plan aimed at raising public awareness?

Raising public awareness is a long-term process which differs in many respects from communication aimed at getting support from stakeholders. Besides tailored activities on local level, in many cases a national campaign is needed using mass media. Mass media are suitable to reach a large number of people aiming to make BD a known term and to inform them about the basics of BD.

In this light HECT Consultancy proposes to explore with the participants which methods can be used in their specific situation to raise public awareness. The essentials of developing mass media campaigns will be highlighted. Furthermore, attention will be given to strategies aimed at informing journalists and generating free publicity.

4.5 Methods & training materials

Diagnosing the current situation

The research points out that NBSAP coordinators need practical support in the current situation. The training should not be of a highly theoretical nature, but should focus on real problems encountered in the daily practice of NBSAP coordinators. Therefore, participants will diagnose the current situation in their country from a communication perspective. Participants from the same country will be supported to jointly analyse their situation. Aim is to come to a mutual agreement on which communication problems need to be addressed first in the participating countries. This approach leads to practical, hands on involvement of participants and will hopefully result in follow up activities in participating countries.

Developing a plan for the own situation

On the basis of the diagnosis of the own situation, participants will develop a communication plan and communication activities for practical case they are currently working. By doing so, the participants have to apply the lessons learned and have to tailor these lessons

to the context they are operating in. The trainer gets insight in the extent to which lessons are understood and in the white spots and gaps that have to be addressed.

Developing checklists for practical use

During the training the participants will develop checklists, which can be applied in concrete situations. The participants' checklists will be adjusted and completed by adding tips from existing information and checklists. This approach uses a 'co-production' approach: checklists which are formulated, understood and valued by the participants as a result of a 'learning discourse' by the consultant and simultaneous group thinking. The 'not-invented-here-syndrome' is by this avoided and cultural and contextual differences are taken into account.

Fact sheets about communication

For each subject a fact sheet will be developed. Because the participants have no background in communication or marketing, it is important to present the information in a clear and concise way. The participants have to be able to look up information about communication strategy, planning and methods in their daily work. The training material should stimulate practical use 'back in the office'.

Combination of 'lectures', self diagnosis in sub groups, and plenary presentations

As communication skills are for a large part 'tacit knowledge', a combination of lectures written materials and exercises is not enough. HECT Consultancy proposes to use self-diagnosis in sub groups (for instance based on nationality or similarity of problems) as an instrument. Results of workshops in sub groups will be plenary presented by participants. Doing so, the trainer can assess to which extent the lessons are understood and can assess the presentation skills of the participants. This is of vital importance for success of their efforts: in order to involve stakeholders and to develop support the participants must be able to present information in a clear, gripping and convincing way.

Role plays

Especially for negotiation skills, practical experience is essential. People develop a personal negotiation approach during the years, an approach which is shaped by personality and past experiences. Without first having insight in how you tend to negotiate now, it is difficult to adjust the strategy and to choose the negotiation strategy which will be most effective in a certain situation. Role plays are an effective instrument to find out how one behaves currently in negotiations. Also, role plays offer the opportunity to try out different techniques in a relatively safe situation ('learning by doing'). This is a necessary step to encourage participants to use new techniques when 'back in the office'.

4.6 Duration & program

HECT suggests that the duration of the training workshop is maximum 5 days. 5 days will allow some in depth exploration of and exposure to new ideas and approaches in communication. It means that participants are a week away from home. For the employers of the participants this is considered to be a feasible period of time to allow them leave of absence to take part in the workshop.

HECT suggests the following program outline for the workshop:

DAY 0

Arrival, registration, icebreakers

DAY 1

Program, Methodology, Expectations

Basics of communication and stakeholder management

Checklist communication basics

Checklist stakeholder management basics

DAY 2

Communication challenges in biodiversity at the national level

Basics of Strategic Communication

Checklist communication planning

DAY 3

Role of communication in NBSAP: needs and priorities

Target group research and effective approaches

Checklist public awareness campaigns

Checklist explorative talks with other sectors

Checklist 'negotiation or convincing?'

DAY 4

Application of lessons learnt to a practical case currently worked on

Presentation of national cases

Checklist project management

Checklist donor relations

Checklist presentations

DAY 5

Necessary steps to implement lessons learnt in own situation

Recommendations for follow-up

Self-assessment and evaluation

Departure

4.7 Preparation and follow up activities: how to stimulate continuity

In fact, the in-depth interviews form the first preparatory activity of the training. By first carrying out a need assessment the NBSAP coordinators are involved in the development of the training. Using the principle 'practice what you preach' is important: in order to develop tailor made communication you have to know the situation and the beliefs and needs of target groups.

Next logical step would be to give feedback to the 16 respondents who participated in the research, for instance by mailing them the Bergen presentation and the draft program of the training asking for feedback and suggestions on time, place and programme content. This should lead to higher involvement in the training.

HECT Consultancy proposes further to send a first official invitation for the training by e-mail, preferably before Christmas. The mailing should be sent out on behalf of IUCN CEC and the Regional Biodiversity programme. Next, as a reminder, the non-respondents could be approached by phone to stimulate them to register. The reminder should preferably be a task of the Regional Biodiversity Programme.

Participants of the training will go home with concrete plans and ideas about steps to be taken. Involvement of regional IUCN staffs in the workshop can be a stimulating factor to keep the momentum going by stimulating them to set up an internet community or other means of electronic communication among the participants.

Exchange of experience and knowledge in the region will contribute to continuity. During the training it will be explored how international exchange can be stimulated and which countries are most likely to be of support for one another (bilateral or trilateral exchange).

Continuity can be further stimulated by planning a follow up meeting focussing on results-so far, on methods and skills, which are still needed and on ways to make more progress. Participants can be stimulated during the workshop to come up with suggestions for and to participate in fund raising efforts for a follow-up.

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⁴ To check similarities and dissimilarities in perceptions, obstacles and needs of NBSAP coordinators in other parts of the world, one interview is conducted with a biodiversity coordinator from Central Europe.

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