

Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF). An outline of a Communication Strategy.

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Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF)

An outline of a Communication Strategy

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1.0 Introduction

The need for communicating Arctic conservation issues more efficiently has been frequently observed as one of the most important endeavours that CAFF should undertake in order to increase the awareness of the program and its challenges. To heighten CAFF's awareness and profile, a communication strategy should be adopted that will convey CAFF's conservation messages, identify target audiences, and provide tools to reach those audiences.

This need is recognised in the CAFF Strategic Plan, which is intended to focus and guide the CAFF Program over a five year period (2000-2004). The Strategic Plan lists effective communication as a guiding principle, noting that:

“Conservation policies should be based on sound science, but their acceptance and implementation depends on the informed support of the general public and decision-makers. These audiences must be made aware of and understand the goals of conservation and the need for specific conservation measures, taking into account the needs of people. CAFF will ensure that effective communication is a key element of all its programs and activities.”

In recognition of this, Iceland in collaboration with UNEP/GRID-Arendal and the CAFF Secretariat undertook to *“Develop, by April 1998, an outline for a communication strategy for CAFF (CAFF Annual Work Plan 1997-98; Item 7.1.ii).* The first draft outline was developed in March 1998, and since then the draft has been through reviews.

2.0 The CAFF Challenge

CAFF is a science-based program that, in broad terms, focuses on ecosystems, habitats, together with species conservation, utilisation and management. In doing so it makes use of traditional ecological knowledge.

Currently, CAFF's conservation activities center on five themes:

?? Monitor changes to Arctic species and habitats, in order to help understand Arctic nature better.

- ?? *Conserve unique species and habitats of the Arctic.*
- ?? *Protect and link a subset of the most valuable ecosystems and areas in a network of protected areas.*
- ?? *Practise sound stewardship of nature outside protected areas, given their limited extend.*
- ?? *Communicate and integrate conservation thoughts and objectives into the various sectors of society.*

These themes are realised through various initiatives, led by one or more Arctic countries. In addition to the program proper, CAFF is constantly improving its way of conducting business in order to make the best use of available resources.

3.0 The Objectives

The objectives of a CAFF communication strategy are:

- ?? To communicate CAFF's policies, strategies and other messages in such a manner as to satisfy continued support for the CAFF program.
- ?? To distribute information on key conservation issues
- ?? To ensure that all interested parties, particularly Arctic residents, are fully aware of the CAFF program, its priorities and activities.

4.0 The Products

The outputs of CAFF's scientific and administrative activities could be viewed as five broad basic product groups:

- ?? **Strategies and Action Plans**, detailing directions and actions, both on the national and circumpolar level, which have been agreed to by all the Arctic countries.
- ?? **Scientific or Technical Reports**, tabulating and assessing the conservation issues at hand, providing recommendations for different policy levels.
- ?? **Administrative Documents**, such as operational guidelines, meeting reports, discussion papers, etc.

- ?? **Data-bases**, making primary scientific and other data collected through CAFF activities available to interested parties, e.g. through centralised data centres or linkages to the relevant organisations (clearing-house mechanism).
- ?? **Awareness Raising material**, synthesizing materials for wide circulation, for raising the profile of CAFF and its objectives, such as overview reports.

5.0 Format and Dissemination

The format of CAFF's products and messages will depend on the audience for whom the product or message is intended. From the basic products (section 4.0) various synthesized material can be derived which is meant to communicate the main messages in a succinct manner. It can be, e.g. executive summaries, posters, leaflets, news bulletins, newspaper or magazine articles, booklets, text books, oral presentations, video or TV programs, multi-media programs, etc. There are four basic media in which synthesized material could be communicated, i.e. paper, electronic format (Internet, CD-ROM), orally, and visually (photos, Video, TV), separately, or in combination as multi-media. Whatever methods and media CAFF decides to focus on, it is imperative to develop a distinct "style", e.g. consolidate into one single reporting series for CAFF (1998:1, 1998:2, etc.).

Due to limited resources, CAFF will not be able to use all these packaging methods or media simultaneously, but will have to choose the most efficient methods to serve the purpose. To date CAFF has used several methods of communication, e.g. productions of brochures, Home Page, production of various reports, etc. Some guidance is needed for the development of a short-term communication strategy before a long-term strategy is fully developed.

Several communication routes and options are available:

- ?? **Active**, when the target audience is known, such as snail mail or fax, electronic route, incl. Homepage, E-mail/List servers, and news groups, and meetings.
- ?? **Passive**, when reaching out to an unknown audience, for instance using newspapers, magazines, and meetings.

It is necessary to create several distinctive mailing lists, fax lists, e-mail lists, list servers etc., *in lieu* of the audience and what they should receive, such as:

?? Snail mail/Fax.

?? All basic and synthesised paper material for a core group, incl. National Representatives (for distribution to National Delegations), Permanent Participants, Official Program Observers (i.e. Conventions, NGOs), interested Arctic institutions and libraries.

?? Some basic and synthesised paper material, dependent on topic, for interested managers, bureaucrats, expert groups, and individual scientists.

?? Synthesised paper material, for Ministers, Senior Arctic Officials (SAOs) and other main decision- makers, Indigenous groups, press groups and other selected stakeholders (dependent on topic).

?? Electronic route

?? E-mail notifications and list servers (i.e. electronic news bulletin, announcements of new product, etc.), for the core group and fringe groups, consisting of audiences that wish to be kept informed.

?? Homepage for the Public, Students, and other interested audiences.

?? Meetings

?? Oral presentations and display material, for Ministers and SAO, scientists, experts and managers, and other international fora.

6.0 The Audiences

The communication methods and media selected will depend on the audience. CAFF has varying obligations, and it is clear that there are certain key audiences or priority groups, such as Ministers and SAOs. There are a number of different audiences which CAFF needs to consider, including (in particular order):

- ?? Ministers, SAOs and other decision-makers
- ?? Arctic residents, including the Indigenous Peoples' Groups
- ?? The CAFF Working Group
- ?? The general public at large
- ?? Resource and Conservation Managers
- ?? Libraries with Arctic interest
- ?? Scientists, Experts and Students
- ?? NGO's

?? CAFF-related international fora

In the table are shown some examples of communication linkages. The National

Products	SAOs, Ministers	CAFF WG	Others	General Public
Technical Reports	Synthesised and basic documents as backup, direct mailing	Basic documents, direct mailing	Passive through libraries and web	Passive through libraries and web
Action Plans	Synthesised and basic documents as backup, direct mailing	Basic documents, direct mailing or through web with notification	Passive through libraries and web or direct targeting of individuals	Passive through libraries and web
Meeting Reports	Synthesised with backup document, direct mailing	Basic documents, direct mailing or web with notification when possible	Passive through web or by direct targeting of individuals, assessed on a case-by-case scenario	None
Discussion Papers	Synthesised material with backup documents, direct mailing	Basic documents, direct mailing or web when possible with notification	Limited, basic documents as required and only to a specific few, assessed on an individual basis	None
Data Bases	None	Basic documents, web access preferred bu other methods as required or requested	Passive, basic documents as required or requested, web access	Passive web access as requested
Strategic Plans	Basic documents, direct mailing	Basic documents, direct mailing or web access through notification	Passive through web access	None
Annual Reports	Basic documents, direct mailing	Basic documents, through web with notification	Basic documents, passive through web	None
Operational Guidelines	Basic documents, direct mailing	Basic documents, through web with notification	Basic documents, passive through web	None
News Release	Passive through media	Basic documents, through web with notification	Basic documents through web with notification	Passive through media and web
Meeting Agendas	Basic documents, direct mailing only when applicable	Basic documents, direct mailing when applicable or through web with notification	Basic documents to target individuals, when applicable through direct mailing or web with notification	None

Representatives need to focus on which are the most important routes, before a full Communication Strategy is implemented.

7.0 Additional Considerations

It should be recognized that to carry out a full communication strategy will require additional resources. Hence cost estimates should be provided for different scenarios.

Languages is one aspect which needs to be considered, when distributing material to the general public or indigenous people in the Arctic countries.

8.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

?? The needs for a CAFF communication strategy has been identified.

?? A CAFF communication strategy could also be elaborated to other Arctic Council programs, and serve as a model on the overall goals of the Arctic Council.

?? CAFF should develop a short-term and long-term communication policy.

?? The communication needs of each project should be assessed at its outset, including relevant audiences and cost implications.

?? Recommendations included with work items should include policy response options, both basic reports and synthesized material.

?? Develop style guidelines.

?? As an example of a long-term policy is the establishment of links to assess primary scientific data.

?? As an example of a short-term policy is a complete review of the CAFF web site, its content, structure, audience, etc.