LIFE Natura 2000 Programme for Wales

Communication and Advocacy Strategy

December 2012

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The contents are as specified by LIFE Programme online Toolkit, Communication Factsheet on Communication Strategies.

Introduction

The engagement of relevant stakeholders is key to the success of the LIFE N2K Programme. Full and genuine engagement enables stakeholders to become involved in the work of the project, express their views, comment and consult on the outputs of the project, help steer and influence the results and work together to devise effective solutions. Their ultimate approval and sense of ownership of the Action Plans (A.6) and N2K Programme (A.7) is essential if the outputs are to be delivered successfully. A strong programme of involvement activities also allows the project to influence the views and behaviour of the stakeholders through information, discussion, leadership from peers, etc.

The Communication & Advocacy Strategy will provide an overarching framework and rationale to guide the implementation of all project actions which relate to engagement and two-way communication with stakeholders. It will also provide details of each required action and how they will be implemented.

A key part of the strategy will be the Stakeholder Analysis (DCT-12-303082) which will identify all relevant stakeholders in the public, private and voluntary sectors, and individuals that can represent them, as well as categorising each stakeholder according to type of organisation and level/type of involvement required.

Relationship between Public Awareness & Dissemination Strategy and Communication & Advocacy Strategy

The Public Awareness & Dissemination Strategy covers one-way communication i.e. messages that are given out by the project in a form which will inform audiences about the work and results of the project but which are not inherently interactive, e.g. newsletters, press releases, layman's report, etc. The Communication & Advocacy Strategy covers two-way communication and engagement as described above. The stakeholder audience will be very similar for both strategies; however, the Public Awareness & Dissemination Strategy will reach beyond the stakeholders to reach a significantly wider audience.

Goals of the Strategy

1. To enable stakeholders to become involved in the work of the project, express their views, comment and consult on the outputs of the project, help steer and influence the results and work together to devise effective solutions and common approaches.

2. To enable the project to, where necessary, influence the views and behaviour of the stakeholders with regard to site management through information, discussion, leadership from peers, etc.

3. To generate a programme that is acceptable to and supported by the majority of stakeholders, thereby ensuring ongoing commitment to and early implementation of the programme.

4. To enable and encourage stakeholders to contribute information and expertise to help build the most comprehensive and accurate evidence base for the programme.

5. Where necessary, to influence decision-makers and policy-makers and grant-holders to make changes to policy, regulations, legislation, and grant priorities, to support the restoration and management of N2K sites.

Key messages and information to be communicated

Messages

- Your organisation can play a key role in devising and setting a prioritized programme of action for N2K sites across Wales in the 2014-20 period.

- We want your organisation to be supportive of and feel ownership of the Programme and Action Plans.

- We want your organisation to be ready and willing to implement the proposals in the Action Plans and Programme as soon as possible.

- You can contribute information, evidence, views and opinions which will help shape the Action Plans and Programme.

Information

- Information regarding exactly what contribution is required from the stakeholder at any given point in the process (what, when, why, where, how).

- Full current available technical information that relates to any given Action.

- Introductory or updating information about the LIFE N2K project and its aims, objectives and activities, benefits, successes, forthcoming events, progress, etc, and the LIFE financial instrument (as provided by activities described in the Public Awareness & Dissemination Strategy).

Target audience for engagement activities/Stakeholder Analysis

Due to time constraints, NRW was unable to fully engage key stakeholders during the preparation phase of the proposal. However, NRW did discuss the project fully with the Welsh Government at a senior level to ensure government support. Subsequent to preparing and submitting the application we have shared the outline proposal and objectives with members of the Wales Biodiversity Partnership Outcome 21 Group (NRW, Welsh Government, Environment Agency Wales, Forestry Commission Wales, RSPB, National Trust, Local Authorities and National Parks), which indicated the support of key stakeholders.

A full analysis of stakeholders has been carried out and the resulting list of stakeholders is available as document DCT-12-303082. It is based on an analysis which the Special Sites Programme undertook in 2008, but it has been updated and expanded for this purpose.

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Categorising of stakeholder organisations

Stakeholders have been categorised in a variety of ways as shown in the tables below.

Level of involvement with LIFE N2K Programme

	Description	Type of communication activity
1	CORE PARTNER High level of involvement at all stages of the programme; their information, views and approval is essential to success. Will help set priorities and direction. They work closely with N2K sites and have a good understanding of strategic conservation issues in Wales. Willing and able to invest time to engage with project.	• All relevant workshops and project events • Individual meetings • Online discussion group • Awareness activities, e.g. newsletter
2	SIGNIFICANT INVOLVEMENT They have a strong interest in N2K sites. General support for the programme is essential but they are unlikely to be involved in all technical detail and debate; instead focussing on certain areas of interest.	• Some workshops, where relevant issues are being discussed. • Inception and final events • Questionnaires, etc • Awareness activities
3	SOME INVOLVEMENT Involvement may be only for a specific part of the project, e.g. when addressing a specific issue or site. They have a general interest in N2K sites but are less central to the process. Unlikely to be willing or able to invest much time in the project.	• Some workshops, where relevant issues are being discussed. • Individual meetings/other communication • Questionnaires, etc • Awareness activities
4	KEEP INFORMED Need to be aware of the project and its progress but not likely to provide significant input.	• Awareness activities

Sector

Sector
Conservation NGO
Environmental agency – UK
Environmental agency – Wales
Farming/landowning interest
Fishing interest
Government – Europe
Government – UK
Government – Wales
Grant giver
Industry and commerce
Local authority
Other
Other public body
Politicians
Protected landscapes public body

User group
Utility

Type of stakeholder

This category allows identification of internal and external stakeholders. It also recognises networks, groups, forums and partnerships as stakeholders and enables them to be identified to ensure that the project maximises the use of them, keeps them informed and brings them into relevant discussions as required.

Type
NRW Group/Region
Network, Group, Forum or Partnership
Individual
Organisation
Organisation – department
Representative organisation

Purpose of communication

Purpose of communication	Notes
Obtain information and advice	Can include those that are involved in the project (e.g. a core partner), as well as those that have no other involvement (e.g. academics).
Consult/gain approval	
General support	
Networking	E.g. similar projects elsewhere in UK or Europe. Share information and experience for mutual benefit.
Influence	E.g. politicians, policy makers, grant givers. Not otherwise involved in the project.
Keep aware	

Other

Others details included in the Stakeholder Analysis:
- Whether the stakeholder is also an N2K owner or occupier
- Whether the stakeholder will also be delivering actions
- Number of actions recorded in Actions Database against the stakeholder
- Degree of involvement with the project to date
- Contact names and details

Not all data will be completed for all stakeholders initially but will be added and amended as more knowledge of stakeholders is obtained, and the relationship between the stakeholder and the project develops.

Representatives

Stakeholders are generally organisations, departments, networks etc., rather than individuals. However, each body will be represented by one or two individuals. These representatives are crucial as they are the main point of contact. The project will rely on them to disseminate messages within their body and source information and views from it.

The project will seek to identify a single lead contact for each stakeholder body, but also send more general messages to other secondary representatives/consultees if required.

Communicating and engagement will be carried out at different levels within stakeholder organisations, e.g. early inception events will be aimed at influential representatives/senior staff, to raise awareness of the project, encourage the commitment of staff time, and agree with them a strategy for their participation. Whereas subsequent involvement will be with technical, operational or policy managers/officers.

Channels for communication

It is intended to use the following channels for communication and information dissemination:

- High level initial seminar/inception meeting
- Technical workshops
- Final seminar
- IT training workshops and meetings
- Ad hoc meetings with individual stakeholder organisation
- Attendance by team members at pre-existing NRW internal group meetings, seminars etc
- Attendance by team members at pre-existing external networks, forums etc.
- Communication via senior level strategic partner liaison meetings
- Online forum/working group
- Ad hoc mail, phone or other correspondence/conversations
- Questionnaires, calls for information or opinions
- Public Awareness & Dissemination Strategy activities

Within workshops and seminars the following techniques and methods will be used:

- Presentations
- Small group discussions
- Plenary discussion/debates
- Activities to facilitate input from all
- Individual conversation
- Public Awareness & Dissemination Strategy activities

The time and communication skills of the Project Team will be the primary resource, as there is no budget for purchasing the services of specialist facilitators. The Project Team will work with those in NRW with expertise in facilitation and working with stakeholders to obtain advice and support. Facilitation skills have been identified as a training need for the team.

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Policy and Standards

<u>Welsh Language</u>

All text in presentations will appear in English and Welsh. All circular emails, questionnaires etc. will be produced bilingually, unless they are intended for a small NRW internal audience only.

Project workshops and seminars will be held generally in English; there is no budget for simultaneous translation. However, every effort will be made to include an introduction/welcome in Welsh. Also where participants are working in break-out sessions or groups, the option to have Welsh-speaking groups will be offered. Participants may make written contributions to workshops in Welsh or English.

Emails and letters received will receive a reply in the language in which they are written. The team will seek to provide a Welsh speaker to respond to those who wish to communicate through the medium of Welsh by phone or in person.

<u>Acknowledgements</u>

The support of LIFE must be acknowledged in all seminars, workshops etc.

Any written material produced for the purposes of stakeholder engagement shall acknowledge support from LIFE and where appropriate carry the following logos:

See Public Awareness and Dissemination Strategy for more details

For audio-visual material, the credits at the beginning or at the end shall include an explicit and readable mention of the LIFE support (e.g. "With the contribution of the LIFE financial instrument of the European Community").

The project's importance in terms of establishing the N2K network must also be described.

<u>Other LIFE requirements</u>
- It is recommended that workshops, seminars and conferences should have a clear output (summary reports, journal articles, etc.) and offer significant networking benefits.
- The beneficiary and partners are obliged to inform the Commission of, and invite it without payment of registration fees or other fees, to all seminars and public conferences organised in the framework of the project at least three weeks in advance of the event.

<u>Access to Information/Sensitive Information</u>

The project shall seek to adopt an approach of transparency and openness, and wherever possible project material will be made freely available to stakeholders and the public.

However, we will restrict access to any sensitive or personal information. The project will work in accordance with all relevant 'access to information' legislation, and NRW policy and procedure.

Full details can be found in the project's Access to Information Plan (in preparation).

Partnerships

The LIFE N2K project team will work closely with NRW communications specialists as required.

Communications will be regularly on the agenda of the Project Steering Group (project board) and Project Management Group, allowing group members to contribute to the strategy and steer progress and outputs.

Measures for Evaluation and Revision of the Strategy

A draft version of Communication & Advocacy Strategy will be submitted to NRW colleagues with expertise in communication, stakeholder engagement and partnership working. It will also be submitted to the Project Management Group for further feedback. Finally it will be submitted to the Steering Group (project board) for formal approval.

Progress on implementation will be reported to subsequent PMG and PSG meetings, and group members will evaluate the quality of the output and progress against stated timetables. Any problems or issues will be raised in the meetings and methods of resolution determined.

All written material produced will be assessed to determine whether the Key Messages were included and other standards laid out in the Strategy were conformed to. Feedback from stakeholders will be collected after workshops etc to evaluate the success of the event and areas to be improved.

Frequent monitoring and review is particularly important during the stages of the transition to Natural Resources Wales and the possible shifting of responsibility for relevant organisational functions.

This Strategy document, especially the 'Activities to be undertaken' is designed to be a working document which will be expanded, reviewed and updated by the Project Manager throughout the project, as activities develop and lessons are learned.

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Summary of activities to be undertaken

Details plans for these activities are outlined in Annex A: Implementation Plans.

	Name	Action	No of events	Trips & T&S costs	Venue/ refresh- ment costs	Duration	No partici pants	Timetable
A	Communication & Advocacy Strategy & Stakeholder Analysis	A.10	n/a		£0	n/a	n/a	30 Nov 12
B	Inception event	A.10	2		£954	Whole day	30	31 Jan 13
C	Technical workshops re issues & risks	A.2	4	9 trips £1,122	£1,909	Whole day	30	31 Jan 13
D	Technical workshops to appraise current management mechanisms	A.3	4	17 trips £1,142	£1,909	Not specified	30	1 Dec 12- 31 Mar 13
E	Technical workshops to identify new management mechanisms	A.4	4	21 trips £1,487	£1,909	Not specified	30	1 Apr 13 - 30 Sept 13
F	Action Plan meetings	A.5	8	36 trips £2,699	£812	Not specified	10	1 Feb 13 – 30 Sept 14
G	Demonstration of IT tool to internal & external partners	A.11	2 events 6 visits	6 trips £944	£203	Not specified	10	By 31 Dec 13
H	Attendance at meetings of existing networks, groups, forums & partnerships, and individual meetings with stakeholders	A.10	14 meetings	14 trips	£0	Not specified	n/s	No date specified.
I	Programme meetings	A.7	2	7 trips £472	£203	Not specified	10	1 July – 31 Dec 14
J	Stock-take seminar to review work	A.10	1	£98	£477	Whole day	30	31 Apr 14
K	Project closure meeting	A.10	1	£98	£477	Whole day	30	30 Oct 14
L	Networking activities	F.2	3 visits	£2,124	£0	Various	n/a	Ongoing
M	Online Discussion Forum	(A.10)	n/a		£0	n/a		30 Jan 13