

MFF Communications Strategy & Action Plan 2009

Introduction

MFF is a unique multi-partner led initiative to promote investment in coastal ecosystems. It represents partnerships across a wide range of stakeholders, being able to not only collaborate but to work effectively from the grass root level through to government level. It has the following two objectives:

1. To strengthen the environmental sustainability of coastal development; and
2. To promote the investment of funds and efforts in coastal ecosystem management.

To achieve these objectives MFF, undertakes actions grouped under three cross-cutting themes: knowledge, empowerment, and governance. The actions also address four key areas; regional cooperation, national government support, private sector engagement, and community action.

The MFF work programme is being implemented at four different levels: a regional level, by the MFF Regional Steering Committee (RSC); at the national level through National Coordinating Bodies (NCBs); and at a project level, through NGOs and community-based organizations and the private sector. Communications support integration, knowledge sharing, and synergies between these different levels.

The communication flow between the regional level and project level is crucial for the realization of the key MFF programme objectives. The communication strategy is revised on a yearly basis to accommodate each year's specific events and activities, and to respond to unforeseen events, as well as lessons learned and feedback from stakeholders.

The strength of MFF lies in this partnership and its governance structure/model. Communication is an integral part and an important tool to support partnership development. The MFF communications strategy is therefore designed to support efficient programme delivery, maintain good working relations with stakeholders, and serve as knowledge base to forage new partnerships.

This communications strategy and work plan will guide the MFF Secretariat, in how to communicate with its stakeholders- both internally and externally. It is a regional communications strategy for the MFF initiative as a whole, and does not serve to guide individual project communication needs. The latter will be designed directly into project proposals. Separate Guidelines for project level communications exists to guide project managers to plan communications activities and budgets.

MFF has entered its implementation phase, so it is important to focus on learning and how this is captured, as well as how national level information and learning experiences are shared at the regional level. It is therefore vital that national communication strategies developed by each country is coherent with the overall MFF communications objectives. National MFF communication strategies should be developed in consultation with MFF Regional Communications.

Communications objectives

There are five communications objectives in direct support of MFF programme objectives:

1. Build regional communication capacity to effectively deliver the MFF objectives;
2. Adopt a pro-active communication approach in communicating MFF activities, successes and lessons learned to both internal stakeholders and external audiences in a timely, accurate and professional manner;
3. Facilitate the acquisition of funds and co-financing opportunities; and
4. Seek new opportunities for information sharing and other forms of cooperation.

Branding and Visual Identity

To promote MFF's values and its goals, it is important that all MFF products are branded effectively. To strengthen the MFF brand, the Secretariat has produced branded hats and t-shirts, and will continue to produce other promotional materials. To support this effort, MFF staff and partners should use a common language to describe what MFF is and what MFF does. Successful branding can reinforce our internal culture and link our diverse projects and capacities.

MFF seeks to ensure the quality of the content, consistency and design of MFF reports, posters and other materials produced, including presentations. The communication team is available to provide visual identity and branding support through provision of templates, and advice. Logo use and co-branding guidelines are for all MFF staff, members, partners, and consultants.

The MFF core/founding partners have a track record of wealth of experiences and credible work and as catalysts of change at a global but also at a local level. MFF should also capitalize on its partner's extensive network and credibility, which can pave the way for partnering with other key institution.

Target audiences

MFF has a diverse range of internal and external audiences at global, regional, national and local levels. These have been identified and grouped into priority audiences (see Table 1). Different communication tools will be used to effectively reach each specific audience group.

Table 1 Identified priority audiences

INTERNAL	EXTERNAL
MFF Secretariat and consultants	Academic and Research Institutions
RSC members	Coastal Managers
NCBs	General public
Current Donors	Government and agencies
Country-based Project Focal Points	Local Communities NGOs, INGOS
Country-based communications Focal Points	Media (National, regional, and International)
Small Grant Facility (SGF) managers	Potential Donors
Large Project Managers	Private and Commercial Sector

Key messages

- MFF promotes investment in coastal ecosystems.
- MFF is proactive to ensure long-term sustainable coastal management.
- MFF is partnership-based, people focused, and policy relevant.

Information Categories

MFF will delivery information to target audiences in key information categories. These can be divided into four main categories:

1. *Programme management information*
(Agreements, guidelines, and protocols)
2. *Training and capacity building materials*
(Toolkits, training workshops, and educational films to build capacity and raise awareness)
3. *Technical data on coastal zone management*
(Statistical information and spatial data)
4. *Topical information*
(Information on MFF projects, news, events, and press activities, as well as other advocacy and outreach material)

Communications Mix

The communication channels and products in the listed mix below will be determined by the most effective way to reach specific audiences with the particular type of information (see Communications Matrix). An indicative list of tools is shown below:

Media

Press releases
Press conferences
Radio
Television
Films

On-line

E-newsletter
Information Bulletin
Portal (interactive features)
Website(s) (including resource documents, audio, pod casts, and video clips)

Print

Brochures
Fact sheets
Information bulletin
Posters
Reports (programme documentation, internal and technical reports)

Training and Capacity

Toolkits
Films
Presentations
Seminars
Training workshops

Communication Flows

At a regional level the MFF Secretariat is responsible for coordinating and synthesizing information and delivering it to its respective audiences, including countries, the general public, potential new partners and donors. Project focal points are responsible for coordinating and facilitating communication flows from the secretariat to their respective NCBs, and to capture and collect project results and lessons learned to be packaged and disseminated. The MFF Secretariat, together with selected communications focal points, will screen information for quality and consistency, and package it for sharing across the programme and to other regional and global audiences.

Exchange of information

The aim is to replace the current document exchange (a password protected section of the MFF website) with a portal. The IUCN hosted portal will mainly be used a project management tool, but will also facilitate information exchange between project managers and communication focal points. This will facilitate capturing and packaging project success stories for wider dissemination (targeted audiences).

Resources

Coordinating and delivering communications objectives requires networking, planning ahead, monitoring and evaluation, sufficient budget, and human resources. Adequate human resources are required, as well as good communications and transparency between focal points. The Secretariat is currently screening applications for a part-time webmaster to maintain and further develop the MFF website. Based on the positive experience of having a communications intern for the later half of 2008, MFF Communications would benefit from having interns back to back. Additional resources will also be required for screening information for quality and consistency, and package it for sharing across the region.

To implement the MFF communications objectives, the secretariat will draw on existing and identified staff resources, as well as identify new resources. The aim is to build a network of communication focal points across the region. At a national level these need to be involved and have a good understanding with on the ground activities in their respective country, as well as a close working relationship with the NCB. The aim is to recruit focal points in each country on a part-time basis. The communications focal points need to be fluent both in the national language and English to reduce the language barriers between local and regional level. See table below for identified communications focal points.

Table 2 MFF Communications network

Institution/Partner	Regional Communications Focal Points	Email	Country	National Communications Focal Points
MFF Secretariat	Minna Epps Regional Communications Officer	minna@iucnt.org	India	(to be identified)
IUCN	Michael Dougherty Regional Communications Coordinator	Michael@iucnt.org	Indonesia	(to be identified)
UNDP	Cherie Hart UNDP RCB Communications Adviser	Cherie.hart@undp.org	Maldives	(to be identified)
FAO	(to be identified)		Seychelles	(to be identified)
UNEP	Satwant Kaur Regional information Officer	kaur@un.org	Sri Lanka	(to be identified)
CARE	(to be identified)		Thailand	(to be identified)
Wetlands International	Alex Kaat Communications Manager I	Alex.Kaat@wetlands.org	Other dialogue countries	(to be identified)

Table 3 National Communications Focal Points

Focal Country	Name	Organisation	Email
India	Emma Burgess	IUCN India	emma@iucnt.org
Indonesia	Elaine Slamet	UNDP Indonesia	Elaine.slamet@undp.org
Maldives	Adam Sharif	UNDP Maldives	adam.shareef@undp.org
Seychelles	Lyndy Bastienne		Lyndy.BASTIENNE@iucn.org
Sri Lanka	Naalin Parera	IUCN Sri Lanka	naa@iucnsl.org
Thailand	Siriporn Sriaram	MFF/IUCN Thailand	siriporn@mangrovesforthefuture.org

Table 4 Communications Matrix

Audience Group	Information Category	Communication Tool
Internal Communications		
Secretariat RSC NCB members Country-based project focal points Country-based communications focal points SGF and Large project Managers Donors	Programme Management Information Training and Capacity Technical Information Topical Information	MFF Portal Emails Telephone and video conferences Personal meetings MFF Website Training Printed materials
External Communications		
Government and agencies Academic and Research Institutions Coastal Managers	Technical Information Topical Information	On-line* Print* Toolkits
Coastal Communities, Local Community NGOs, and INGOS	Technical Information Training and Capacity	On-line* Print* Training and Capacity Selected project specific communications
Media (Local, national, regional and international) Potential Donors Private and Commercial Sector General Public	Topical Information	On-line* Print* Audio/Radio Video/TV Press events
* see communications mix		

Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) for MFF communications will assess if objectives are being met, and to measure the effectiveness of the communications system. MFF communications activities will have verifiable indicators, and specific evaluation methods. The monitoring system is summarized below. Results will be evaluated and presented at each subsequent RSC meeting, at which time recommendations for adapting the communications strategy to meet MFF's needs can be presented.

Table 5 MFF Communications Monitoring System

Objective	Verifiable Indicators	Means of verification
1. Build regional communication capacity to effectively deliver the MFF objectives;	Established communications network Programmatic contribution from the communication network	- Expansion of communication network - Increased communications flow - Submissions /contributions log
2. Adopt a pro-active communication approach in communicating MFF activities, successes and lessons learned in a timely, accurate and professional manner;	Frequency of Press releases Media coverage Increase awareness and interest in MFF	Press release log Monitor press (printed and audio) Number of subscriptions of MFF e-newsletter On-line questionnaires Website statistics
3. Facilitate the acquisition of funds and co-financing opportunities	Frequency and regularity of communication with donors Developed target fundraising products	Level of engagement and interest in MFF Continued support from donors New donors
4. Seek new opportunities for information sharing and other forms of cooperation;	Development of information sharing tools Partnership development	Tools developed Number of new partnerships formed

MFF Communications plan and schedule

ACTIVITY/EVENT	QUARTER 1	QUARTER 2	QUARTER 3	QUARTER 4	COMMENTS/DETAILS
Media	Develop a media strategy	Implementation M & E	Implementation M & E	M & E report	To foster more media contacts, establish network, as well as continuous media tracking
Regional Steering Committee meetings (3)	19-22 Jan, West Bengal, India		July Seychelles	Dec, 2009	To prepare documents, up date RSC members on communication activities Meeting report finalization and dissemination
Monitoring, Learning and Evaluation	Complete M&E Framework			Apply M&E	Focus on MFF stakeholders, develop survey questionnaires Web statistics
Fundraising	Develop targeted communications products for identified donors				Attract funding commitments for MFF Phase 2: 2010-12 through target communications products
MFF Annual Report 2008	Finalise and distribute				Report to be finalized at RSC-4 and distributed from February to donors and partners
Ranong Proceedings	Editing work	Production and printing	Dissemination		Synthesis of Ranong Symposium outcomes and contributed scientific papers
MFF Website development	Recruitment of a Webmaster	Re-design of website and content development	Content development	Content development	Continuous management plus introduction of an MIS portal
MIS (Management Information System)	finalization for project management			Review and Update	To be used primarily for project management
E-newsletter x 6	FEB	APR JUNE	AUG	OCT DEC	Collect stories and news to keep MFF partners/ NCBs and other stakeholders up-to-date with MFF activities, and opportunity for information sharing between various stakeholders
Information bulletin X 4 Topical 4p	Review, lay out, printing and dissemination				To be developed continuously throughout the year with our partners
MFF Fact sheets	Develop in consultation with the countries, lay out, printing and dissemination				One for each PoW, Climate change and Communications and knowledge management, and MFF country. Other factsheets will also be developed to support fundraising and help promote MFF more widely
Earth Report Film	story development and identification of	Production	Aired on BBC World News (July or Sept)		Under development Early 2009 For television broadcast from September. Mainly targeting decision-makers, but has a potential audience of 1 billion in 125 countries

	locations				
National Training course Wetlands and Corals			August Viet Nam		
Second Regional Training Course in collaboration with partners			Project Cycle Management and Climate change training course- India (Sept)?		Package course materials Facilitation Advertise and report
COMMUNICATIONS SUPPORT TO REGIONAL/INTERNATIONAL EVENTS*					
"Beyond Kyoto" - Addressing the Challenges of Climate Change, Aarhus University	5-7 March Aarhus Denmark				Introduce IUCN Europe and approaching potential new donor(s) (EC and Danida)
10th International Coastal Symposium		13-19 April, Lisbon Portugal			Participate and promote MFF CC & DRR training materials, etc.)
International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI) General Meeting		scheduled for 20 th – 24 th April 2009 in Phuket, Thailand			Communications support to attend and share MFF early experience and seek increased collaboration and information exchange with key Marine and coastal stakeholders
MFF UNDP Tsunami +5		New York April			Explore potential new funding through UNDP and Clinton Global Initiative
World Oceans Conference (WOC)		11-15 May, Manando, Sulawesi			Promote MFF Indonesia and showcase climate change pilot projects, Tomini Bay and related coastal projects in cooperation with NCB Indonesia, and UNDP and UNEP. Jointly hold a 1-day pre-conference Workshop on Coastal Climate Change Adaptation Strategies and Actions with URI/CRC
International Marine Conservation Congress (IUCN, WCPA, etc.)		19-24 May Washington DC			To expand the MFF marine and coastal network and seek synergies for future collaboration including funding/co-financing opportunities
The East Asian Seas Congress 2009 (PEMSEA)				November, 2009 Manila	to develop stronger cooperation with CTI, PEMSEA and other regional partnerships
COP-15 : UN Climate Change Conference	,			30 Nov-11 Dec Copenhagen	Profile MFF in the Climate Change arena and target potential new donors willing to fund climate change activities

Budget

An estimated budget of USD 257 025 for MFF Secretariat communications is listed below. This does not include MFF projects. Each project proposal should have a clearly defined communication plan with an allocated budget. Further, this estimated budget does not include staff time. Please note that there are separate budget lines for events.

Activity/Product	Estimated cost in USD
Programme materials and products	34 000
Events	40 000
Earth Report documentary films	73 000
Software and MFF portal	11 000
Monitoring & Evaluation	10 000
Total estimated cost in USD	168 000