

IEA

Training Manual

*A training manual on
integrated environmental
assessment and reporting*

Training Module 7

*Creating communication
outputs from the assessment*

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List of Acronyms

EEA	European Environment Agency
GEO	Global Environment Outlook
GIS	Geographic Information System
HTML	Hypertext Markup Language
IEA	integrated environmental assessment
IIED	International Institute for Environment and Development
IPCC	International Panel on Climate Change
PDF	portable document format
PR	public relations
TOR	Terms of Reference
RDF	resource description framework
RSS	really simple syndication
SoE	State of the Environment
TERM	transport and environment reporting mechanism
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
WMO	World Meteorological Organization
WRI	World Resources Institute

Overview

There are many techniques and products to communicate the results of an integrated environmental assessment (IEA) following the UNEP Global Environment Outlook (GEO) approach. This module guides you through the communications process, showing you how to get your message to the audiences you want to reach.

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 your 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. There are printed materials (e.g., popular reports, flyers, posters, brochures), electronic (e.g., websites, CD-ROMs) and visual (e.g., photos, graphics, maps), each with its advantages and disadvantages. The module discusses strengths and weaknesses of different channels and how to go about approaching the media.

In addition to written materials, this module provides advice on visual materials. It covers the basic principles of the cartographic process, and gives concrete suggestions about ways to express your message visually.

A big part of the production and dissemination process is related to practical and organization steps. You need to evaluate internal and external resources to best meet your needs. Not everything can be produced in-house; often it is best to use external services for needs such as cartography, web design, editing and printing.

Finally, the module provides advice on building long-term communication strategies.



Course Materials

1. Introduction and learning objectives

This module focuses on developing innovative communication outputs for the IEA, and provides practical steps for dissemination.

Upon successful completion of this module, participants should 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;
- understand, consider and systematically implement the most important steps of a dissemination plan, while choosing the most appropriate communication outputs, and ways of reaching audiences;
- organize the production process and create high-quality paper publications, electronic products and visual presentations of data; and
- understand the importance of distribution/dissemination, with special emphasis on approaching the media.

Participants will create:

- a short-term strategy for IEA output production and distribution;
- a production plan; and
- a range of communication outputs.

Reading and exercises to be completed prior to the workshop

Participants should prepare a list of communication outputs with which they have been involved and/or bring existing, innovative printed or electronic communication outputs to the workshop. Participants are asked to bring the latest state of the environment (SoE) report for their country or other relevant jurisdiction, if available, as well as related products, such as brochures, a statistical book or other printed/electronic materials that includes a simple data set and graphical elements. These materials will be required when discussing visual presentation of data.

2. Choosing what to produce

Before deciding on the products and formats, it would be wise to revisit the objectives of the impact strategy (see Module 3 for details). In doing so, you will have a clearer overview of:

- the environmental issues you want to be communicated;
- the persons and groups in a position to influence these issues;
- the knowledge that the national IEA process will generate; and
- leveraging opportunities for getting key information to influential target audiences.

The latter point on leveraging opportunities is the focus of this module, which is to think strategically, linking target groups and content with innovative communication formats and channels, and at all times, considering budget and capacity constraints.

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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 channels.

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2.1 Target group(s)

In order to begin choosing what communication outputs to produce, it is necessary to identify and profile the target group(s). Which persons and groups do you want to reach with your message? These target groups will be identified as part of your impact strategy (see Step Two for Creating an Impact Strategy in Module 3,) and should include those persons in a position to influence the types of changes needed, based on results of the IEA.

Some target groups are not “chosen” but defined in the mandate for the assessment. This means that in some countries, environmental assessments or SoE reports are bound by legislation and specifically targeted towards governments.

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.

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