

# The Bay of Bengal Large Marine Ecosystem (BOBLME) PROJECT



Communications strategy



## Introduction

The countries that border the Bay of Bengal, Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Maldives, Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Thailand are among the most populous countries in the world. Over 400 million people live in the Bay of Bengal area and their numbers are increasing rapidly. The majority of these people are poor and rely heavily on the marine resources which are being affected by overfishing, removal or degradation of important marine habitats, and pollution.

Over the next five years, these countries will work together through the Bay of Bengal Large Marine Ecosystem (BOBLME) Project and lay the foundations for a coordinated programme of action designed to improve the lives of the coastal populations through improved regional management of the Bay of Bengal environment and its fisheries.

This document details a communications strategy for the BOBLME Project. An outline of communications activities and a relationship strategy for 2010 is included.



## Communication objectives

- Building a BOBLME Project profile and encouraging a sense of ownership for the Project among stakeholders in the eight participating countries.
- Becoming a major source of information and advice on the Project subjects.
- Effective communication of the results and progress of the project to stakeholders.
- Communicating Project results and lessons learnt to coastal communities.

## Strategy

- Develop and use the BOBLME Project website as a dynamic tool for communicating with stakeholders.
- Use meetings, workshops, and project milestones to drive media coverage.
- Establish media liaison bodies in each country, and produce materials in local language.
- Work with FAO country offices to maximize media liaison opportunities.
- Enhance capacity in effective communication between managers and advisers

Stakeholder audience	
Senor Policy makers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ministers and government officers</li> <li>Members of the Project Steering Committee</li> </ul>
Scientific and technical stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Research Institutes (National and international)</li> </ul>
International Donors and stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>GEF, Sweden, Norway, FAO, NOAA</li> </ul>
Regional coastal marine Industries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>fishing, environment, tourism, mining</li> </ul>
Regional coastal bodies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regional government representatives, and representative associations</li> </ul>
Coastal communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community representatives and groups</li> </ul>
Media (as a conduit to other audiences)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Radio, TV</li> </ul>
Collaborating organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>UNDP, UNEP, SEAFDEC, MFF, IOTC</li> </ul>
Other organizations (and potential collaborators)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regional bodies and NGO operating in the Bay of Bengal area</li> </ul>

## Messages

The BOBLME Project will do the following:

1. Bring the countries surrounding the Bay of Bengal together to work to recover the health of the Bay of Bengal, rejuvenate its living resources, and improve the livelihoods of the coastal populations.
2. Improve coastal management capabilities through targeted capacity building and strengthening of policy, legal and institutional capabilities in each country.
3. Take steps to involve coastal communities in management decision making
4. Improve the lives of coastal communities through better management of the environment and the fisheries resources as there will be less dependence on fisheries for income; and for those people that do fish for a living, the health and sustainability of the fisheries resources will be improved.

In addition:

5. How long can 'business as usual' be sustained ?

6. A healthy environment and resource status will assist mitigate the adverse effects of extreme climatic events

## Activities

### Website

The BOBLME website is the key communications tool of the Project. A highly informative and dynamic website will provide an essential link between the Project countries and the wider community.

### Policy and technical advice

Well written advice to Government and regional bodies and organizations developed from Project activities and outputs.

### Newsletter

A high quality, annual/semi-annual publication that presents the work of the BOBLME Project in a readable and attractive way. Stakeholders will be proud to see their work and their country's contributions showcased in the newsletter. Over time, the newsletter will reflect the Project's progress.

## Media liaison

Submitting newsworthy articles to targeted publications and outlets at the national, regional and international levels. Converting information about the BOBLME Project into material that journalists and other dissemination media can use.

## Technical workshops to improve the communication so technical advice

The BOBLME Project will hold regional and national workshops to improve the communication of the Projects technical results to resource and environment managers and stakeholders in general.

## Community outreach

The BOBLME Project will pay special attention to the communication of the project results to communities, for example, in the form of best practices and lessons learnt. Translation of materials in local languages will be an important aspect of this work



## Tools

### Electronic media

The project website will describe the BOBLME Project, provide up-to-date information about the project's progress and act as a repository for the technical products that are produced by the Project.

An electronic newsletter delivered by email is a practical and efficient vehicle for reinforcing the presence of the BOBLME Project keeping all stakeholders informed of its progress.

### Media releases

The simplest route to the Press. Ideal for targeting the media in each of the eight countries, as well as the online media.

## PR material

Good quality PR material, including brochures, posters, T-shirts, caps and full colour displays will help to raise the profile of the BOBLME Project within the Bay of Bengal areas and support media liaison activities.

## Personnel

### Communications officer

A fulltime Communications officer will be responsible for implementing the Communications Strategy.

### Media liaison officer in each country

Under the guidance of the Communications officer and the National Coordinator in each country, a media liaison outlet will convey the Projects messages in an appropriate language, and actively seek communication opportunities.

### Media design consultant

A media design specialist, engaged on an 'as and when required' basis, would contribute to the production of material by providing services for the design and layout of communications materials such as brochures, the newsletter etc.

### Regional Coordination Unit

The RCU will be responsible for the content of all the communications material produced by the Project.

### Media consultant

The RCU may obtain advice on the Projects Communication Strategy and its effectiveness from time to time.



## Relationship Strategy

The Project stakeholders includes Governments and the wide range of international and regional, subregional bodies both governmental and non-governmental that operate in the Bay of Bengal, many of which have mandates that are complementary to the objectives of the BOBLME Project. The BOBLME Project will depend significantly on linking with these bodies to make implementation more efficient and effective, and maximise outcomes.

In addition to providing all stakeholders with a regular newsletter, the RCU plans to engage with the below stakeholders on a range of levels. The following table outlines the proposed nature and extent of relationships in 2010.

Client	Working Relationship
National Coordinators and Project Steering Committee Members	Ongoing working relationship
Ministers, Joint Secretaries, Director Generals etc	Newsletter, personal communications with the FAO-R and meetings with the Regional Coordinator as opportunities present.
GEF, SIDA, NORAD, FAO, NOAA, World Bank	The FAO-donor liaison officers will manage the day to day interactions. Donors are invited to the PSC meeting
FAO	Regular technical consultations with FAO staff and collaborative activities that would derive mutual benefits
ASEAN, BIMSTEC, SAARC, SACEP	BOBLME would provide targeted advisory information as appropriate, and collaborate on a technical level (e.g. with working groups)
APFIC	Provision of advice Collaboration with Regional Initiatives
SEAFDEC	Provision of advice Collaboration with Regional initiatives
UNEP	Regular contact and collaboration when beneficial with Regional Seas bodies: COBSEA, SASP
BOBP-IGO	Regular contact. Likely Technical Collaboration in the areas of stock assessments for hilsa and Indian mackerel and development of NPOA-sharks.
MFF, IOSEA	Regular contact. CTA participation in MFF Steering Committee. Likely technical Collaboration
IOTC	Participation of the IOTC Data Manager at BOBLME Fisheries Statistics WG. BOBLME to assist the development of NPOA-sharks.
UNEP – Global plan of Action; AECEN; GETF	Participation of GPA, AECEN and GETF at the BOBLME WS on Pollution. Likely technical collaboration
NOAA, IOGOOS, SEAGOOS, IOC	Participation of these bodies at BOBLME WS on Oceanography and climate change. Likely technical collaboration BOBLME participation in IOGOOS/IOC Meeting – June
IUCN, ICSF, WorldFish	Likely technical collaboration
IW Learn	Communications, capacity building
LMEs	Newsletter, regular contact through email lists.
ADB, Colombo Plan, ESCAP, ICRI, IOMAC, IWMI, NACA, WWF.	Newsletter 1. BOBLME Participation in Coral Reef/ICRI Meeting – Jun 2. BOBLME Participation in Seagrass Meeting – Nov.

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