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BOBLME contract: PSA-RAPRD 125/7/2012

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1. Background

The Bay of Bengal Large Marine Ecosystem (BOBLME) Project and the Mangroves for the Future (MFF) initiatives recognize the importance of science communication and collaborated to offer a workshop programme on Communicating Science Effectively to participants from their respective countries. The Programme comprises two 4 day workshops: the first on scientific paper writing (21-24 August 2012) and the second on scientific presentation (1-4 October, 2012). These workshops are designed exclusively for BOBLME and MFF focal country researchers seeking to improve their delivery of scientific and technical information/advice, and to be better equipped with the skills needed to communicate their work clearly and confidently to a wide range of audiences.

The first workshop, on scientific writing, was held in Phuket Thailand from 21 to 24 August 2012 at the Novotel Phuket Vintage Park Hotel, Patong. It was attended by 16 delegates from 10 countries: Bangladesh, Indonesia, Malaysia, Maldives, Myanmar, Pakistan, Seychelles, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Vietnam (see Appendix 6 Participants and Contact details).

2. Introduction

The workshop was opened by Dr Chris O’Brien, Regional Coordinator, BOBLME, and Dr Ranjith Mahindapala, Program Manager, Mangroves for the Future. The workshop was designed and conducted by Dr Peter Rothlisberg (Australia) with the assistance of two in-region Mentors: Dr Sevvandi Jayakody (Sri Lanka) and Dr E. Vivekananadan (India); Dr Mahindapala also performed the role of Mentor.

Objective

The objective of the workshop was to provide training to enhance effective communication of the results and progress of BOBLME and MFF projects to stakeholders and the broader scientific community through final reports and refereed publications respectively.
**Approach**

The course was designed to be an interactive –‘learn-by-doing’ – workshop. Each day of the 4-day workshop was divided into short lectures (25%) and practical exercises (75%) with the ultimate aim to produce a DRAFT scientific manuscript by the end of the workshop (Appendix 1. Course Outline (Agenda)). Participants were paired with a peer – a ‘Buddy’ – to provide feedback on various stages of the development of their manuscript.

Further, participants were assigned to a Mentor for feedback and advice throughout and beyond the workshop (See Appendix 2. Working Teams). The Student : Mentor ratio was 5 or 6:1 to allow a high degree of interaction.

It is also intended that the in-region Mentors will maintain contact with the participants after this workshop and provide advice and feedback leading up to the Scientific Presentation Workshop in October.
The Workshop was very ably assisted by Ms Orawan Klinhual from the BOBLME Secretariat.

3. Course feedback

After completion of workshop, the participants were asked to fill in a Feedback Form to gauge satisfaction with and suitability of workshop elements, along with suggestions for changes to future workshops (Appendix 3. Feedback Form).

A summary of the numerical feedback received (See Appendix 4. Numerical Analysis) and written comments (Appendix 5. Comments) is provided. All but one participant (15/16) returned the form.

Overall the feedback was very positive. Most participants ‘Strongly agreed’ or ‘Agreed’ to most components (Appendix 4. Numerical Analysis). Six respondents ‘Disagreed’ with time allocation (see further comments later in report). In spite of any reservations, all respondents would recommend the course to a colleague.

Fourteen of the 15 respondents ranked the workshop elements 1 to 7, with 1 being the most valuable element (Appendix 4. Numerical Analysis). One respondent (9) duplicated two rankings and was removed from the analysis. For the remaining 14, Concept planning was overwhelmingly deemed the most valuable element – eight out of 15 placed it top; three placed it second; and three placed it third. Storyboard, Outline & Journal Selection, along with Introduction & Discussion and Title & Abstract, were the next most highly ranked elements and eight participants wanted more of these three elements. Figures & Tables and Authorship & Acknowledgement were deemed least valuable, six respondents suggested a reduction in these elements.

Participants were also asked for written feedback. A common comment was the overall need for more time for the workshop (see Appendix 5 for a transcription of comments). Some comments weren’t specific but Participant 4 suggested extending the workshop to 7 to 10 days; Participant 12 suggested 6; while on the other hand Participant 8 felt it should be shortened to 3 days. There is always a balance about how long a workshop should be; how long participants will maintain the energy and enthusiasm; and how much work should be done before and/or after the workshop.

Beyond time allocation, some participants were concerned or confused about pre-workshop preparation – what to expect, what to bring, what would be the product/outcome. Given that these concerns seem to be localised to a few individuals it probably has to do with the transmission of instructions provided to chosen participants.

However, in discussing this issue with the organizers and Mentors it was felt more explicit instructions to participants and more lead time would allow more preparation before the workshop. Equally we emphasised that a polished draft manuscript was not necessarily the expected workshop output. We expect a draft suitable for discussing with co-authors and supervisors when back at home base. The workshop draft would include all the organizational principles and elements.
learned at the workshop and a clear path towards publication, including time allocations for work to be done. To this end the Mentors have kindly agreed to stay in touch with participants and continue to provide advice on draft manuscripts as they are developed.

4. Course evaluation

Participants to this workshop were extremely hard working and willing to engage in the mode of operation – namely learning by doing and learning by sharing feedback amongst: the Facilitator; their Mentor; their Buddy; and the wider group of Participants.

The participants to this workshop brought a very wide spectrum of experience and expectations. Surprisingly, some were not in the research streams of their home institutions. In spite of that, they gained an appreciation for the structure of any document and a way of thinking that was useful to them when writing and evaluating project proposals, final reports, press releases and articles destined for the popular press.

Lastly, the command of the English language was also variable. While English has become the ‘universal’ language of science and would have to be the language of papers submitted to the international literature; the workshop’s approach was found useful for authors submitting papers and articles in local and national publications in their native language.

The organisers and facilitators agreed that if the focus of future workshops was to remain on writing scientific publications, then more explicit instructions would have to be given to selectors. Further, more detailed instructions to, and vetting of, chosen participants, e.g. preliminary data analysis that must be undertaken, before the workshop began. This would ensure maximum benefit to participants. The need for a wider suite of capability enhancement, beyond scientific writing, will also have to be discussed amongst the BOBLME Regional Coordinator and national coordinators.

At the completion of the workshop, participants were presented with a signed Certificate of Completion.
Appendix I  Course outline (Agenda)

Day 1 (21 August 2012)

09:00 Set up workstations and coffee/tea

Welcome and Introduction (PR)

Concept planning and the original contribution (PR)

Individual work on Concept Plan & 2-minute drill – review by Buddy and Mentor

Lunch

2-minute drill presentations

Science of Scientific Writing (PR)

Story Board and Outlines (PR)

Individual work on Story Board and Outlines

Day 2 (22 August 2012)

Selection of Target Journal and Paper Type (PR)

Select journal

Evaluate against Critical Questions (PR)

Review Concept, Storyboard and Outlines, Journal – 5 Critical questions – Buddy & Mentor

Lunch

The Introduction (PR)

Figures – their design to enhance the narrative (PR)

Continue fleshing out Outline and start building the Manuscript with Target Journal in mind
Day 3 (23 August 2012)

Review of Outline, Introduction, Figures and Target Journal – Buddy and Mentor

Discussion and Conclusions (PR)

Start drafting Discussion and Conclusions

Lunch

Tutorial: From written papers to oral presentations (PR)

Individual work on the Manuscript

Review of Introduction and Conclusions – Buddy and Mentor

Individual work on the Manuscript

Day 4 (24 August 2012)

The Title and Abstract – the most read part of any paper (PR)

Individual work on the Title and Abstract

Review Title and Abstract – Mentor

Lunch

Authorship/Acknowledgement (PR)

Individual work on Authorship/Acknowledgements and a list of outstanding work

What to do with my paper now (PR)

• managing the editorial process, review and revisions

• follow up work

Individual work on the Manuscript

Review of draft Manuscript – Mentor

Revision of Manuscript

Workshop appraisal and feedback
### Appendix II  Working teams

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Buddy</th>
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<tr>
<td>Mr Md Harunor Rashid</td>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>Ms Iliya Sumana</td>
<td>Sevvandi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Iliya Sumana</td>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>Mr Md Harunor Rashid</td>
<td>Vivek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Ibrahim Mohamed</td>
<td>Maldives</td>
<td>Mr Yoousfu Rilwan</td>
<td>Sevvandi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Yoousfu Rilwan</td>
<td>Maldives</td>
<td>Mr Ibrahim Mohamed</td>
<td>Vivek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Jasrul Nizam Bin Jahaya</td>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>Dr Sazlina Md Salleh</td>
<td>Ranjiith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr Sazlina Md Salleh</td>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>Mr Jasrul Nizam Bin Jahaya</td>
<td>Vivek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs Meuthia Aula Jabbar</td>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>Dr Dusman Wajid Sunarto</td>
<td>Ranjiith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr Dusman Wajid Sunarto</td>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>Mrs Meuthia Aula Jabbar</td>
<td>Sevvandi</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ms Khin Thida Tin</td>
<td>Myanmar</td>
<td>Ms Wilna Francoise Accouche</td>
<td>Ranjiith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Hasula Wickremasinghe</td>
<td>Sri Lanka</td>
<td>Dr H.M.P. Kithsiri</td>
<td>Sevvandi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr H.M.P. Kithsiri</td>
<td>Sri Lanka</td>
<td>Ms Hasula Wickremasinghe</td>
<td>Vivek</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr Udomsin Auksonphaob</td>
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<td>Mr Praderm Uttayarmmanee</td>
<td>Ranjiith</td>
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<td>Mr Udomsin Auksonphaob</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr Khokhar Arif Ali</td>
<td>MFF Pakistan</td>
<td>Mr Nguyen Viet Xuan</td>
<td>Vivek</td>
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<td>Mr Nguyen Viet Xuan</td>
<td>MFF Viet Nam</td>
<td>Mr Khokhar Arif Ali</td>
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<td>Ms Khin Thida Tin</td>
<td>Sevvandi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr Ranjith Mahindapala</td>
<td>MFF Prog Mgr &amp; Mentor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr Elayaperumal Vivekanananad</td>
<td>Mentor</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr Sevvandi Jayakody</td>
<td>Mentor</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr Peter C Rothlisberg</td>
<td>Facilitator</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr Chris O’Brien</td>
<td>RC BOBLME</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ms Orawan Klinhual</td>
<td>BOBLME</td>
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### Feedback form

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<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
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<td>The writing workshop was well organized.</td>
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<td>The writing workshop met my expectations / needs.</td>
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<td>The writing workshop has assisted me in my writing skills and in the preparation of papers and articles.</td>
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<td>Instructions and examples were clear and understandable.</td>
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<td>The format of the workshop was relevant and well organized.</td>
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<td>The time allocation for the workshop components was appropriate.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Would you recommend this workshop to your colleague?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td></td>
<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td>Which aspect of the workshop did you find most valuable (please rate in order, with 1 being the most valuable)</td>
<td>Concept Planning and the original contribution</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Story board, Outline and Target journal</td>
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<td>Figures – their design to enhance the narrative</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Introduction and conclusions</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Flesh on the bones</td>
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<td>The abstract and title</td>
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<td>Authorship / acknowledgement</td>
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<td>Which session would you have liked to have had more time for?</td>
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<td>Which session would you have liked to have had less time for?</td>
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<td>Additional comments or suggestions about this workshop.</td>
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Name: (Optional)..................................................................................
Appendix IV  Tabulation of workshop evaluation results

BOBLME-MMF Scientific Writing Workshop (21-24 August 2012) -- Evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant number</th>
<th>Concept planning</th>
<th>Storyboard Outline &amp; Journal</th>
<th>Figures</th>
<th>Introduction &amp; Discussion</th>
<th>Flesh on bones</th>
<th>Title &amp; Abstract</th>
<th>Authorship &amp; Ack’ment</th>
<th>Satisfaction level</th>
<th>Recommend</th>
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</tr>
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</table>

| Mean score | 1.7 | 3.0 | 5.0 | 3.0 | 5.4 | 3.2 | 6.7 | 48 | 36 | 6 | 15 |

| Rank | 1 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 2 | 5 |
|------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|------------|----|----|----|
| Wanted | More | 4 | 3 | 4 | 1 |
|       | Less | 2 | 1 | 2 | 4 |
Appendix V  Feedback comments

Participant 1. I like a little bit setting audience like U-shape.

Participant 2. For next training (scientific writing session) maybe better for not beginning with 2-minute drill but begin with explanation about information on variety of scientific paper. It will give the participant strong encouragement which kind of paper will be chosen to write.

Participant 3. Time for workshop should be at least 6 days.

Participant 4. Actually the workshop is very helpful for me and I would like to give the thanks to my mentors who helped me seriously all times within the 4 days but the allocation on time of the workshop is too short. It will be a minimum 7-10 days. Reference part of the paper can be discussed for the next workshop which will help to fulfill success of the workshop. Everything done well. Thanks for giving a great job to introduce us to much scientific people. Thanks to all.

Participant 6. It may be better if we could bring a draft outline/manuscript based on general guidelines so that it is easier to work with (re-arrange) and focus on the actual product. Time management would be better rather than starting from scratch.

Participant 7. Wanted more sessions with mentor to discuss paper article.

Participant 8. Overall, the workshop was successfully organized in order to give lots of valuable information in a writing a scientific paper. Only the duration of workshop, is too long and should be shorten to only three days.

Participant 9. I learned neither [sic?] the process/concept of scientific writing nor [sic?] submission high quality in the final manuscript.

This workshop also strengthens the relationship between BOBLME and Myanmar. We hope this relationship will be increased in near future for example BOBLME provides scholarship for lecture/workshops and government staff of Myanmar.

Participant 10. More time should be given prior to workshop so preparation could be better e.g. gathering materials for the workshop.

Participant 11. The potential participants need to be well informed before joining the workshop that they are to bring an almost compete research paper and adequate data, otherwise it will not be possible for them to apply the lessons learned here. By no means it is possible to complete writing a manuscript (without appropriate data) within 4 days. Nevertheless the concept and outline of this workshop are altogether fascinating. Each scientist should grab the opportunity to join this workshop. More days should be there to organize each session in a better way.
**Participant 12.** Time allocation for the workshop should be prolonged 2 days more. A printer should be used at the training room during the workshop. Sharing rooms with others is not a good idea I think, it made me uncomfortable. Another idea is that organizers should book cheaper rooms for participants, so participants can have their own rooms.

**Participant 13.** I would recommend that the workshop organizers increase the days and reduce the classroom durations or hours.

**Participant 14.** As most are from countries with English as a second language, a little about sentence structure, paragraph structure and some practice on writing skill will be quite useful.
## Appendix VI  Participants and contact details

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Participant Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Contact Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **BANGLADESH** | **Mr Md Harunor Rashid**               | Senior Scientific Officer         | Shrimp Research Station                         | Mail: harunor_rashid21@yahoo.com  
Mob: 008 801 711 003 368                                                        |
|             | **Ms Iliya Sumana**                    | Lecturer                          | Senior Assistant Secretary                      | Mail: iliya.sumana@gmail.com  
Tel: 88 02 716 0551  
Mob: 02 017 114 524 24  
Fax: 88 02 911 8682                                                             |
| **INDONESIA**    | **Mrs Meuthia Aula Jabbar**            | Lecturer                          | Jakarta Fisheries University                    | Mail: meuthia_aula@yahoo.com, meuthia.aula@gmail.com  
Tel: +62 217 805 030  
Mob: +62 817 788 635  
Fax: +62 217 805 030                                                        |
|             | **Dr Dusman Wajid Sunarto**             | Head of the Laboratory of Marine Science | Faculty of Fisheries and Marine Sciences - Padjadjaran University | Mail: sunartounpad@yahoo.com  
Tel: +62 228 770 1518  
Mob: +62 812 236 6952  
Fax: +62 228 770 1518                                                               |
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>Dr Sazlina Md Salleh</td>
<td>Center for Policy Research and International Studies</td>
<td>University Sains Malaysia</td>
<td><a href="mailto:sazlina@usm.my">sazlina@usm.my</a></td>
<td>601 633 729 12</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>Mr Jasrul Nizam Bin Jahaya</td>
<td>Environmental Control Officer</td>
<td>Water and Marine Division, Department of Environment Malaysia, Putrajaya, Malaysia</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jasrul@doe.gov.my">jasrul@doe.gov.my</a></td>
<td>603 887 123 72</td>
<td>601 239 086 84</td>
<td>603 888 840 70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maldives</td>
<td>Mr Ibrahim Mohamed</td>
<td>Deputy Director General</td>
<td>Environmental Protection Agency</td>
<td><a href="mailto:ibrahim.mohamed@epa.gov.mv">ibrahim.mohamed@epa.gov.mv</a></td>
<td>+960 333 5949</td>
<td>+960 747 1873</td>
<td>+960 333 5953</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maldives</td>
<td>Mr Yoousfu Rilwan</td>
<td>Marine Research Center</td>
<td>H.White Waves, Male</td>
<td><a href="mailto:yrilwan@mrc.gov.mv">yrilwan@mrc.gov.mv</a></td>
<td>+960 333 5949</td>
<td>+960 747 1873</td>
<td>+960 332 2509</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Myanmar</td>
<td>Ms Daw Khin Thida Tin</td>
<td>Head of Branch</td>
<td>Planning and Statistics Department, Ministry of Environmental Conservation and Forestry, Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar</td>
<td><a href="mailto:pujutin@gmail.com">pujutin@gmail.com</a>; <a href="mailto:env.myan@mptmail.net.mm">env.myan@mptmail.net.mm</a></td>
<td>95 67 405 383</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| SRI LANKA | Dr H.M.P. Kithsiri  
Head, Research and Development  
NARA, Sri Lanka  
Mail: palikithsiri@rediffmail.com; palikithsiri@nara.ac.lk  
Tel: 011 290 9081  
Mob: 071 844 2728  
Fax: 011 252 1005 |
| SRI LANKA | Ms Hasula Wickremasinghe  
Programme Assistant  
Biodiversity Secretariat, Ministry of Environment  
Sri Lanka  
Mail: hasulaw@yahoo.com  
Tel: +94 115 741 692  
Mob: +94 718 293 685  
Fax: +94 114 443 943 |
| THAILAND | Mr Udomsin Auksonphaob  
Fisheries biologist  
Chumphon Marine Fisheries Research and Development Center  
408 Moo.8 Paknam, Muaeng, Chumphon 86000  
Thailand  
Mail: audomsin@yahoo.com  
Tel: +66 77 522 006  
Mob: +66 80 535 3937 |
| THAILAND | Mr Praderm Uttayarnmanee  
Marine and Coastal Resources Research Center  
Central Gulf of Thailand, Chumphon province  
Thailand  
Mail: auppree@gmail.com  
Tel: +66 77 505 141  
Fax: +66 77 505 143 |
| MFF SEYCHELLES | Ms Wilna Accouche  
Science Programme Officer  
Seychelles Island Foundation  
La Ciotat Building, Mont Fleuri  
PO Box 853 Victoria, Mahe, Republic of Seychelles  
Mail: wilna@sif.sc  
Tel: +248 432 1735  
Fax: +248 432 4884 |
| MFF PAKISTAN | Mr Khokhar Arif Ali  
Divisional Forest Department  
Sindh Forest Department  
H.No:2008f3, Khokhar Street, Mohalia  
Karmabagh, Larkana, Sindh, Pakistan  
Mail: khokhar_arifali@yahoo.com  
Tel: 02 345 030 22  
Mob: 033 692 814 23  
Fax: 02 345 030 22 |
| MFF VIET NAM | Mr Nguyen Viet Xuan  
Researcher  
Research Centre for Forest Ecology and Environment (RCFEE) of Vietnam Academy of Forest Sciences  
Doi 1 Yen So, Hoai Duc, Hanoi, Viet Nam  
Mail: Xuan.nv@rcfee.org.vn  
Tel: +84 466 751 581  
Fax: +84 438 389 434  
Mob: +84 932 380 007 |
| FACILITATOR And MENTORS | Dr Peter C Rothlisberg  
Research Fellow  
CSIRO Marine & Atmospheric Research  
PO Box 2583  
Brisbane, Australia 4001  
Mail: peter.rothlisberg@csiro.au  
Tel: (+61 7) 3833 5960 |
| FACILITATOR And MENTORS | Dr Elayaperumal Vivekanandan  
Research Centre of CMFRI Chennai  
India  
Mail: evivekanandan@hotmail.com  
Tel: 09 444 238 648  
Mob: 91 944 423 8648 |
Dr Sevvandi Jayakody
Senior Lecturer
Department of Aquaculture & Fisheries
Wayamba University of Sri Lanka
Makandura, Gonawila, Sri Lanka
Mail: sevvandi_jayakody@yahoo.com
Tel: 0094 (0)31 229 9874
Mob: 0094 (0)77 794 7907
Fax: 0094 (0)31 229 9870

Dr Ranjith Mahindapala
Programme Manager
Mangroves for the Future (MFF)
IUCN, International Union for Conservation of Nature
Asia Regional Office
63, Sukhumvit Soi 39 Prompong Bangkok 10110, THAILAND
Mail: Ranjith.MAHINDAPALA@iucn.org
Tel: +66 02 662 4029
Mob: +66 81 802 5350
Fax: +66 02 662 438

Dr Chris O’Brien
Regional Coordinator
Bay of Bengal Large Marine Ecosystem Project (BOBLME)
C/- Andaman Sea Fisheries Research Development Center
77 Moo 7, Sakdidej Rd. Makham Bay, Muang, Phuket 83000 Thailand
Mail: chris.obrien@boblme.org
Tel: +66 76 391 861
Mob: +66 84 439 5210
Fax: +66 76 391 864

Ms Orawan Klinhual
Finance Assistant
Bay of Bengal Large Marine Ecosystem Project (BOBLME)
C/- Andaman Sea Fisheries Research Development Center
77 Moo 7, Sakdidej Rd. Makham Bay, Muang, Phuket 83000 Thailand
Mail: orawan.klinhual@boblme.org
Tel: +66 76 391 861
Mob: +66 87 417 6790
Fax: +66 76 391 864
Appendix VII  Participant’s handout

Scientific paper writing workshop

Peter Rottnerberg
21-24 August 2012 Phuket, Thailand

Agenda

- Concept – Scope – Focus
- Story board & Outline
- Target journal
- Figures & Tables
- Introduction
- Discussion & Conclusion
- Title & Abstract
- Authorship & Acknowledgements
- Submission & Revision

Focus

- Literature
- Methods
- Data
- Results
- Relevance

Define the Story

Need
Approach
Supporting evidence
Evaluation
Conclusion

Define the Story

2-minute drill – narrative
Too long?
Too much?
Unfocussed?
Did they get it?
Who’s confused?
Content tighter & clearer – to you & listener
Early exposure – vulnerable & confronting
Example

The structure of prose

Interpretation of information is easier if placed where the reader expects to find it
Subject verb separation
Locate the action with verbs
The stress position – new information
The topic position – old information/context
Provide context before introducing new ideas/findings
Emphasis follows structure – meets reader’s expectations – enhances comprehension

Sperberg & Swan, 1996
Report of the communications workshop on scientific paper writing

Structure of a scientific paper (IMRAD)

Title & Keywords
Authors
Abstract
Main text (IMRAD)
  Introduction
  Materials & Methods
  Results
  Discussion (Conclusions)
Acknowledgements
References
Supplementary material

Roadmap – Story Board

Outline

Set out sections – journal guide
Fill in sub headers
Dump content into sub headers:
  ▪ 2 to 5 dot points → paragraphs
  ▪ Consistency across sections
Drop in mini-references and other prompts
3 to 6 pages – keep building

Target journal

1. Type of paper: journal article; a review paper; a letter; short communication
2. Geographic and scientific scope/impact
3. Who is your readership?
4. Who are you citing – peers & competitors?
5. Where are they publishing?
6. Make a short list of journals
7. Check their impact rating
8. Style guide/template from the journal’s homepage

Impact factors

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<th>JOURNAL</th>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>IMPACT FACTOR</th>
<th>5 YEAR IMP</th>
<th>CITATIONS</th>
<th>AVERAGE %</th>
<th>5 YEAR %</th>
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Citation Map

ISI Web of Knowledge™
Critical Questions

1. Is the paper a self-contained narrative? (a story with the appropriate level of complexity)
2. Is the original contribution clear?
3. Does the paper build on previous key work?
4. Have the current trends in this field been identified and contrasted?
5. Is the target journal and paper type a good choice?

Figures, tables and captions

Figure & Tables enhance narrative
Reduce the number of figures and tables – move extra to appendices or data repositories
Table or figure – not both
Colour does not always enhance clarity, cost?
Text, captions, axes and legends must be clear & consistent
A word on publication vs. presentation

Figures – Publication vs. Presentation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Publication</th>
<th>Presentation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Audience – narrow</td>
<td>Audience – broad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read</td>
<td>Listen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paragraphs</td>
<td>Words or phrases (dot points)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Time – lots (hours)</td>
<td>Time – little (seconds – minutes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distance – a mile’s length</td>
<td>Distance – short to visit</td>
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<tr>
<td>Detail</td>
<td>Breadth</td>
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<tr>
<td>Methods</td>
<td>Need</td>
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<tr>
<td>Results</td>
<td>Findings</td>
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<td>Tables &amp; Figures</td>
<td>Illustrations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References</td>
<td>Importance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion &amp; Conclusion</td>
<td>Take home message</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[Figure 1 shows...]</td>
<td>[I realise you can’t read this...]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Less is More

Introduction/Background

Grabbing statement – First sentence, paragraph – importance / need / scope
State of play – previous work, current work (paradigms, algorithms), gaps, incorrect or inadequate interpretations or conclusions
Scope – geographic, taxonomic, disciplinary, methodology, empirical, modelling
Contribution of this paper – “This paper proposes a new relationship….”
No surprise ending – save it for your novel...
## Structure of a Discussion

Not just a reiteration of Results
Strong concise statement of main findings
How is this advancing knowledge in your discipline?
How does your study compare with other studies?
How can you synthesize these findings?
- e.g. a conceptual model, relationship amongst facts
  - Strong concluding paragraph
What is the significance of your study? – limitations, implications, applications
  - Be careful

### Title

- A label, not a sentence
- Rarely too short, often too long
- Use specific, familiar, short words
- Avoid abbreviations & acronyms
- Too clever?
- Avoid series (e.g. I, II, III, IV)

### Keywords

**Titles & Keywords are indexed by computer**

**Title & Keywords are different – don’t duplicate**

- Prawn + shrimp
- Cyanobacteria + blue-green algae
- Nutrients + N, P, Si
- Stable isotopes + δN, δC
- Pigment + Chlorophyll a, HPLC

### Abstract

**Two kinds of Abstracts: informational & indicative**

- Must ‘grab’ the reader in the first sentence
- Give a complete & concise summary
- Include reason/importance, findings, implications, take home message
- Seek an independent review of your Abstract by a non-specialist – may increase your citations

### Authorship/acknowledgement

**Authorship**

- ‘Significant contribution’ to: original thinking, design, analysis, interpretation, and writing
- Inclusion & order of authorship – on the basis of ‘importance’ to research outcome
- Co-authorship – best to be pre-agreed
  - †Bridge from Acknowledgements †

**Acknowledgements**

- Supervised technical work
- Advice
- Unpublished data offered by third parties
- Reviewers (known and unknown)
- Funding source

### Flesh on the bones

**Journal instructions & Style guides**

- Leave the outline in place
- Delete unnecessary words and paragraphs: see Robert Day’s Appendix 2 – Words & expressions to avoid
- Don’t get hung up on questions or clarifications – leave questions or notes for later
- Keep track of added/deleted Figures, Tables & References
- Focused writing sessions (days) – divert your phone and turn off e-mail
Flesh on bones (2)

- Write a list of outstanding work
- Schedule blocks of time (2 to 3 h) to finish each item
- Leave routine work (e.g., figure improvements and reference formatting) for the smaller time slots
- Set a deadline and stick to it
- Use an editor to assist with the grammatical and narrative improvements

Suggested manuscript length – 25 to 30 ms pp.

<table>
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<th>Section</th>
<th>Pages/Paragraphs</th>
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<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>1 paragraph</td>
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<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>1.5 to 2 manuscript pages (double-spaced, 12pt)</td>
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<td>Methods</td>
<td>2 to 4 pages</td>
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<tr>
<td>Results &amp; Discussion</td>
<td>10 to 12 pages</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conclusions</td>
<td>1 to 2 pages</td>
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<td>Figures</td>
<td>6 to 8</td>
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<td>Tables</td>
<td>1 to 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References</td>
<td>20 to 50 items</td>
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Six deadly sins

1. Multiple submissions
2. Redundant publications
3. Plagiarism
4. Data fabrication and falsification
5. Improper use of human subjects and animals in research
6. Improper author contribution

Cover letter

**Basic information should be:**

- Editor name(s)
- Originality of submission – sole submission
- No competing interests – no prior publication or financial ties
- Suggest 3 to 6 potential reviewers (referees)
- Corresponding author

Reasons for rejection – Content

- Limited interest or covers local issues only
- Routine application of well-known methods
- A minor advance or is limited in scope – “Salami” papers: datasets too small to be meaningful
- Novelty and significance are not immediately evident or sufficiently well-justified
- Out of date
- Duplication of previously published work
- Incorrect/unacceptable conclusions

Reasons for rejection – Preparation

- Failure to meet submission requirements
- Incomplete coverage of literature
- Unacceptably poor English
Manage the review and revision process

Your manuscript is likely to get four or more reviews. Consider using internal reviews (total or partial)
Follow the internal and journal process instructions strictly
Suitability of journal – seek advice, write to journal
Suggested reviewers – select carefully & pre-warm
In replying to reviewers’ comments:
  - Follow the editors instructions
  - Constructive criticism is valuable feedback from experts!
  - Be polite, not argumentative – if they’re confused it’s your fault!
  - Provide a response sheet addressing each item of feedback

Marketing your product / self

The publication is just the beginning
Get out and talk about it
- Conferences
- Workshops
- Seminars
- Lab visits
- Press releases and interviews
Send it to others in your field
Reference it in your next publication

Final comments

Define the message
Pick the messenger
Share the quest with peers
Learn from the setbacks
Share the message & build a network
Establish your legitimacy
Finally, celebrate your achievements

Additional reading

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Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Maldives, Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Thailand are working together through the Bay of Bengal Large Marine Ecosystem (BOBLME) Project and to 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.

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) is the implementing agency for the BOBLME Project.

The Project is funded principally by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), Norway, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, the FAO, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration of the USA.

For more information, please visit www.boblme.org