



Sudan Sustainable Natural Resources Management Project (SSNRMP)

Communications Inception Report: Gap and Needs Assessment of SSNRMP

SSNRMP Project Summary:

Project Objective: To increase the adoption of sustainable land and water management practices in targeted landscapes.

The project objective will be achieved through **four main components**

1. Adoption of improved soil and water management practices
2. Creation of sustainable alternative livelihood activities related to natural resource management
3. Forested ecosystem rehabilitation and rangeland management
4. Strengthened capacity to implement SLWM and bio diversity conservation

Key results indicators:

1. Land area where sustainable land and water management practices are adopted as a result of the project (104,000ha)
2. Direct project beneficiaries (50,000 within 7,000 households) with 35% female beneficiaries being reached
3. Areas brought under enhanced biodiversity protection.

Key Beneficiaries:

Pastoralists, villagers, women

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Background:

This gaps assessment report has been developed in order to highlight the communications gaps and needs in the Sudan Sustainable Natural Resources Project, \$7.7mil World Bank funded project.

Effective Communications requires an effective strategy that is implemented organization wide, with commitment and management support. Communications provides a face for the organization/project and can have direct impact on donors, beneficiaries, institutions, education and much more.

A gap analysis has been performed in order to characterize and identify the current gap between performance, and desired performance and visibility reach in major aspects of SNNRMP. The gap analysis began with a thorough analysis of SNNRMP project unit staff in Khartoum state, in addition to staff at field level, and concluding with analysis of all major stakeholders involved in the project. The organizational systems and processes of all parties involved have been assessed, in addition to the workload, staff capacity, and staff retention, taking into consideration extenuating factors such as environment, access, government restrictions and more. The method of analysis for this stage included interviews with staff and stakeholders, focused document review and observations.

This report has been prepared as one of three deliverables of a communications consultancy carried out in order to assess both the individual and institutional capacities of the Sudan Sustainable Natural Resources Management Project (SNNRMP) and all actors directly involved with the project, including but not limited to Project implementation units, both field and state, implementing partners, and relevant stakeholders. The objective of this consultancy is to identify the existing communications gaps and assess the capacity level of staff within the communications field, to then develop a communications strategic plan that will directly improve performance and ensure effective and widespread availability of information on SNNRMP.

State Project Implementation Unit (SPIU), as well as the numerous stakeholder constitutes all confirmed the need for more training on communications and how it can be used to increase the impact of SNNRMP, as well as other projects within their organizations. In addition, development in IT skills and use of reporting and monitoring and evaluation tools was another area of concern, with all expressing the need for increased technical training in these areas.

Summary of Key Findings:

Findings indicate that SSNRMP employees at Khartoum level overall possess strong content knowledge and technical expertise in order to fully implement the project. The introduction of many different stakeholders is another strength providing various technical expertises from numerous fields to ensure successful and fruitful implementation of this 4-year project. Although the project has clear defined indicators and a dedicate team, SSNRMP is significantly underperforming in management supervision, reporting structure and communications products and platforms as a whole. One of the key reasons for this is due to lower than expected capacity of field staff who are unable to produce the work to level of technical expertise required. Additionally, lack of communications between implementing teams, stakeholders, and project unit team in Khartoum is a significant factor that is affecting the performance of this project. Program leaders are aware of these problems and gaps, however need to push efforts in direct action to improve reporting structure and supervisory structure, which in turn will provide more data that can be used for communications and various other means project wide. Staff responsibility is a key factor in improvement, roles need to be clearly redefined and followed up on on a regular basis. The program needs to take a more proactive approach to the project to ensure improvement, rather than current reactive approach that responds to each individual problem at a time and does not improve the bigger structure.

Kassala office appears to be the most active, with leaflets, pamphlets, posters, calendars etc, however most communications products are only in Arabic, already cutting out a large proportion of audiences including donors, companies, private sector and more. In general across the program the most significant means of communications methods implemented thus far is the use of awareness raising campaigns or project launch campaigns. Media contacts are currently from stakeholders whom have their own government contacts, no efforts have been made to meet local media or develop relations between Project Team and media. Currently all design and printing of brochures, pamphlets, posters etc are being done through external companies, with the design basic and poor quality. Costs for this could be reduced significantly with proper communications and design training for staff within project unit to later develop and design, only then needing the costs of printing as facilities not available in office.

Staff Retention

Although staff retention does not appear to be a problem with the Sudan Project Coordination Unit directly, it is a problem with 3 of the major 5 stakeholders working and implementing on the project. This becomes increasingly difficult when taken into account with the many barriers they face including poor quality reports from field staff, whom with such low staff retention and high turnover, familiarity with the project, reporting style and structure, deliverables and much more is often lost with the staff who depart, and/or is never fully developed as the high staff turnover means orientation with the project and procedure, as

well as familiarity and training time is minimal. Contextually, many of the stakeholders suffer from low staff retention due to economical and political problems, which means responsibility cannot be directly attributed to their organization. Typically, a Sudanese Government paying salary is quite low and regularly described as not sufficient enough to fully sustain a family, in addition to the feelings of low morale and often-unprofessional working environments, people are discouraged from working somewhere long term, always applying for alternative work and as soon as better circumstances are found, they move on to the next job.

Staff Development and Support

There is a strong focus among the Khartoum Project Unit on the development and training of staff, however gaps need to be consistently and systematically identified through the creation of outputs such as staff review surveys, whereby the staff are free to express what they feel are their personal areas for development and improvement, what their strong characteristics/skills are which could be enhanced through further training, what they would like to gain further development or training in, etc. Progress assessments reports completed on a regular 6 month basis would allow supervisory unit to track the success of these trainings and how staff development has increased, as well as providing justification for increased costs of staff training within the project budget. These and similar outputs will allow the project to design and cater specific trainings to fill the current gaps within the project, strengthening the overall success of the intervention. Program policy and procedure orientation and training sessions are also needed for all staff at least once a year regardless of their status with the project, and orientation training for new staff is a must and generally to be more extensive and introductory. These sessions will ensure correct guidelines are being followed and procedures observed throughout all project implementation and representation of the project. SNNRMP managers and supervisors are hardworking and highly dedicated staff, yet management and supervisory skills require improvement in order to initiate staff development and support. Stronger administration would allow for gaps and needs to be identified at an early stage and then the necessary training can be provided instantly, reducing the negative affect/impact to the project deriving from low staff capacity.

Systems and Structure

Currently, there is a significant lack of standardization, mainstreaming and coordination throughout the SNNRMP and the Sudan Project Unit in Khartoum. Processes are erratic with no fixed deadlines or times, lack of standardized templates or guidelines to follow, multiple discrepancies between the various field offices. The use of basic IT software to ease the process of work and improve outputs is not within the current practice, again down to low IT sufficiency skills with staff and low staff capacity problems. Documentation related to field visits, relevant meetings, events, sector coordination meetings, as well as employee records of time are not currently kept, not on a systematic

basis or a requirement within their specified job roles. Availability of hardware and software to improve the quality of work and assist staff in doing their jobs more accurately and efficiently is poor, however most recently process of procuring items such as HD cameras has been completed. The need for a comprehensive communications plan and strategy is extremely evident, with focus on improving and facilitating the flow of internal lines of communication, before focusing on external communications. Currently there is lack of evidence of a well documented and implemented standardized practice and/or code of conduct for staff lack of standardized structure for collaboration and coordination between the main Project Unit and the relevant Stakeholders. Management guidelines and a formalised structure and process for planning, collaboration of work, reporting and analysis between project coordination unit and stakeholders is required in order to mainstream deliverable and reporting structure for the project as a whole.

Communications, Knowledge Management and Sharing

Current methods employed of communications and knowledge sharing are limited to presence of upcoming events, campaign launches, external trainings and similar platforms. The SSNRMP would significantly benefit from greater use of comparative data obtained from the monitoring and evaluation team, which cant then be used to build on communications and knowledge sharing products that are exclusive of internal documents such as progress reports, quarterly reports and so on. In order to fully develop a strong communications strategy and increase known presence within the livelihoods sector within Sudan, the project needs to be managed more closely, with a well maintained documentation approach on performance of the project, deliverables, challenges etc which will improve the quality of usability of reports for both internal and external purposes, as well as showing consistency in reports being handed out by Project Unit Team and those being distributed by stakeholders. A responsible entity must be assigned to take responsibility for monitoring and evaluating performance management and improvement so as to maintain the standard. A consistent, regular and systematic information sharing system on main focus's of the project, results obtained, challenges etc would not only be useful communications outputs for orientation to the project, but can also be used to attract other donors, in kind contributions or coordination from organizations working in similar sectors and catchment areas.

Methodology:

Data Collection – Interviews, document analysis, observation

Interviews

To gather qualitative data on SSNRMP and key stakeholders and program practices, interviews were conducted with program staff, field staff and key

stakeholders. Over the course of two weeks, all programs project related staffs in Khartoum level were interviewed, as well as phone interviews held with field implementation staff. Additionally, interviews were held with those at the highest level of responsibility with all five major stakeholders. A list of all those interviewed can be found attached to this document in the appendices. The interviews were conducted using open ended questions in an unstructured interview style to allow for as much elaboration as possible and further insight into current practices and knowledge of relevant key staff. This method allows for more description, thereby providing further insight and indications of gaps and needs for improvement.

The interviews provided a greater understanding of what was most significant for staff in terms of barriers for improvement, as well what each individual identified as key issues, lessons learned, challenges. The theme of low staff capacity seemed to be a barrier throughout the project implementation unit, as well as a concurrent problem for most stakeholders. This approach relied heavily on listening to interviewee's responses to key questions whilst in a conversational environment, providing a sense of comfort and encouraging trust and honesty in responses, encouraging a deeper understanding of staff perspective on the project and project team.

The underlying questions asked addressed both the individuals' understanding of communications as a whole, as well as how communications has or should be used within SSSRMP. Questions addressed individual's personal assessment on challenges, weaknesses of staff/project, barriers, project projection and difficulties faced by the project.

Observation

This method includes observing staff within their day-to-day routines and context of their role. These observations took place during office working hours and preparation for conferences abroad. This method involves watching and recording interactions within the office, office environment, daily work activities and minimal engagement in order to ensure no alteration of environment resulting in observer/interview biased behaviour. The observations are immediately recorded directly after the observation has occurred. Contrasting to interviews, observation allows one to visualise and witness things staff may be unaware of or unwilling to present under circumstances where knowledge of observation is given beforehand. Observations can then later be discussed and lead to more thorough discussions and understanding than is provided by the method of interviews alone. Observing staff and interactions has the added advantage of differentiating between what staff say they do, against what is actually being witnessed.

Document Analysis

Analysing existing communications documents and outputs helps to assess and understand the current level the project has achieved and operation of the

program, often highlighting the program goals and indicators, showing current alignment against initial project structure. Reviewing previous documentation, if available, identifies gaps in terms of quality and audience, as well as provides information for developing other communications tools and visibility. Existing documents analysed including quarterly reports, monthly reports, emails, visibility produced (brochures, pamphlets, calendars, T-shirts, hats, cups, folders etc).

Monitoring and Evaluation:

Strengths:

- Strong conceptual understanding of communications and how it can be used to further enhance a project and achieve greater success.
- Strong technical understanding and awareness of need for initial assessment of target beneficiaries in order to cater communication methods to the desired audiences, thereby achieving in maximum effectiveness of outputs/products. Raised questions such as what would work best for which specific states, which states would be more receptive to print visibility, which would be more receptive to radio etc? Categorization also differentiated by type of beneficiary in addition to state and location, i.e. pastoralists, children, women, farmers etc.
- Field visits conducted often in order to check on progress of project and activities
- Quarterly reports and project related documentation including pamphlets are handed out at as many relevant meetings.
- Translation services are provided through M & E Assistant at Khartoum level.
- Belghise, M & E Assistant shows strong interest in communications, in particular the use of social media to raise awareness for SSNRMP. Currently using personal Facebook and Twitter account of social media to raise awareness of the project, uploading field implementation pictures, figures etc.
- Belghise has experience in using image software to collate images together. Strong initiative, taken in upon herself to download programs and create visibility products which she then uses on her social media accounts → recommendation for further specific communication and design training. Currently using photoscope program.

Weaknesses:

- Staffs are supposed to be submitting weekly reports however this is currently not being conducted, nor is there supervision of this.
- M & E quarterly forecasting system is a strong system however lack of technical capacity of field staff means that it is not being completed correctly, many relevant details are not captured at field level and therefore not communicated to State level. Field staff are not fully trained or equipped in understanding the indicator structure in order to fully complete the forecast to the level of depth required by Khartoum staff in order to project for the next quarter.

- IT proficiency of field staff is extremely low, with basics such as email; excel spreadsheets, proving to be a problem. Estimated capacity by M & E manager at Khartoum state is 40%.
- Translation skills of field staff is weak
- Staff monitoring not conducted during basic field visits
- Accountability is a major issues – with so many different staff becoming involved in projects from all aspects of stakeholders, field staff etc, difficult for M & E to assess accountability for incomplete projects or indicators not met.
- Despite strong M & E system and results indicators, data, achievements, M&E not trained in the extraction of relevant material for the development of communications products and visibility.
- Communication with stakeholders and especially implementing teams is weak – no reports are requested of them on a regular basis and no updates are received until gathering data for the quarterly report.

Challenges:

- Field staffs are seconded staff provided by the Government of Sudan and therefore their lack of capacity and low IT proficiency levels are a result of lack of input or decision making from project team before hiring.
- Major decisions must be run by head of steering committee, in this case Ministry of Environment, for approval and go ahead. Often delayed response delays implementation.

Project Coordination:

Strengths:

- Aware of each stakeholders organizational structure and have firm contacts within each organization
- Work plan for 2015 submitted and accepted by all parties federal and national and strategy committee meeting took place at the beginning of the year.
- Trainings are conducted to improve staff capacity where need be
- Sufficient preparation is undertaken when local, regional and international conferences/trainings are being held.
- Strong awareness, technical capacity and knowledge of the project and key stakeholders.
- Strong conceptual understanding of current gaps and how to improve them, and the need for communications products and plan in order to amplify the reach and presence of the project within Sudan.
- Field visits often conducted, in particular coordination with relevant stakeholders when launching events, start up campaigns.
- Hiring of community facilitator position that is highly significant position when dealing with communications, in particularly for assessing the type of communications tools that will be most suited to beneficiaries of a particular area/project.

- Communications visibility developed in the form of folder holders, posters, t-shirts, cups, coasters, hats etc. Field visibility is extremely strong, particularly for Kassala office.
- Strong interlinked financial system that can be accessed by finance staff in the field.
- Capacity development of government staff also conducted. When completing training for the project/staff, local universities, government staff etc are invited to capacity training sessions to build up the technical ability of all those who come into direct or indirect contact with the project.
- Community facilitator's position was a recognized gap and the selection of these staff members was approved by the SPIU, as opposed to the government selecting and having final decision on seconded staff.
- Field staff project coordinators report directly to State level project coordinator should there be any emergency issues or problems by phone. Open line of communication encourage from state project coordinator, with regular check in with field team.
- Clarification on reports is investigated further if need be and amended.

Weaknesses:

- No monthly progress reports are submitted on a regular basis, with little or no obvious reporting structure to project coordinator → management of this should be done by project coordinator in Khartoum states as lack of consistent reporting negatively impacts on reach and scope of the project
- No current system for month coordination meetings between all staff, or at least the level of project coordinators in each state. Meetings should be conducted on a monthly basis, with challenges and successes defined, meeting minutes taken, and pending tasks to be followed up on the next monthly meetings
- Coordination with stakeholders is weak, with many stakeholders not receiving any updates from PIU and PIU not receiving updates from implementing partners within the stakeholders. Stakeholders should also be reporting on a monthly basis to Project Coordinator of PIU in Khartoum State.
- Supposed to be a staff meeting every two months including all staff at field level and Khartoum level, stakeholders and relevant bodies however is not currently being practiced.
- Responsibility chain between PIU and stakeholders not clear. Roles need clear defining and staff and project management needs significant improvement.
- Internal communications ongoing between project unit and stakeholders responsible for implementation is evidently weak through the conduction of interviews. Unless there is a task at hand or campaign opening etc, no monitoring or progress reporting is on going or being requested/required.
- Pictures used for reports currently taken with mobile phones and are low quality and low-resolution images, however still being used for quarterly

reports, posters, folder holders, cups etc. (expected to improve with the recent procurement of 4 HD Canon EOS cameras, one for each field office and one for Khartoum).

- No shared drives or servers system – Currently no shared drives in place for staff at Khartoum or field level. Documents are put on external USB's and passed along between computer-to-computer, or transferred via email.
- No electronic filing system present. Due to lack of shared drives, there is not one consistent electronic filing and/or archiving system for all documents. Lack of sole person responsible for electronic filing and backing up of systems.

Challenges:

- Project Coordinators in the field are often usually busy holding down two jobs or conducting other work at the same time. Usually government staff whom hold two positions, project coordinator position and an active government job, which cannot be amended by the team. Due to both jobs, their schedules are often busy and they are not always monitoring the project and staffs as the role entails e.g. field FNC coordinator is project state coordinator.
- Capacity of field staff is very weak, particularly in reporting. Lack the initiative and technical understanding to report on the necessary information or develop further on technical and required information, however once again seconded field staff and the project team do not have say in whom is hired as seconded staff.

Stakeholders Analysis:

Table 1.1 Stakeholders Summary

		Communications Basic Assessment				
		Staff Capacity - Level & availability of technical staff	Staff Retention	Communications Facilities & Ability	Coordination with partners/SPIU	Reporting Structure
Stakeholders	Range and Pasture Administration (RPA)	Low – Not enough technical training throughout administration	Low- No one is encouraged to stay in government jobs	No facilities or staff available to develop communications outputs	Poor communication and coordination between partners	Poor reporting structure – no one held responsible
	Higher Council of Environment and Natural Resources (HCENR)	Conduct regular technical training for staff	High – Trainings encourage staff to stay on	Facilities and technical staff available for communications products & development	Coordination with other stakeholders & SPIU is low, no regular updates.	Strong – Regular monthly reports, field visit reports etc
	Wildlife Conservation General Administration (WCGA)	Technical staff available and regularly trained – lack of technical staff in communications	High – Capacity building key in org	Strong links with media use radio, TV, newspapers as forms of communications – visibility development needs improvement	Strong coordination and knowledge – organization of combined field visits	Strong – Regular monthly reports, field visit reports, follow up meetings
	Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Physical Development (MoEFPD)	Staff capacity is problem however trainings provided	N/A – not aware	No communications ability or facilities available – coordinate events for significant days	States coordination is weak and needs significant improvement	Poor reporting structure – supervisory responsibilities low
	Forestry National Corporation (FNC)	Average to Low – lack of responsibility and technical information	N/A – information restricted and not provided.	Poor – interest in comms outputs not expressed, strong contacts with local media – gov media	Poor – No follow up or awareness of project progress	Poor – doesn't seem to be active reporting structure

Forest National Corporation

Communication between Forest National Corporation and the State Project Implementing unit is weak and needs improvement. Full information regarding the project is not reaching higher levels, with the administration not fully aware of projects that fall under them as active stakeholders. FNC as a system submits monthly reports on all projects directly or indirectly involved in, has strong media links with some of the most widely reads newspapers and TV Channels in Sudan. Capacity building trainings are often conducted to improve technical capability of staff, in particular for projects where gaps and needs in training of staff have already been identified by their field supervisory teams.

Ministry of Environment Natural Resources and Physical Development

One of the notable problems raised from the interview was the issue with communication internally within MoNRPD but also as a bigger concern, the lack of communication with the SPIU on relevant projects. Knowledge concerning the project was limited, particularly any data or details on more recent events or updates coming from the project. MoENRPD does not have the technical capacity within their staff to develop their own visibility or communications products, however strongly recognize the importance of communications to send across messaging that includes achievements as well as technical information to inform the general public of Sudan exactly what is happening and what is being done to target some of the countries problems.

The ministry holds large-scale events for World Environment Day, World Water day and several other significant and related celebrated days. During these events they have all constitutes they work with, projects and partners participate in the events, providing an opportunity an platform for them to advertise their projects as well as emphasise the Ministries involvement in the project. Have strong media contacts, including radio, newspaper, TV and use them to widely distribute any information and communications.

Range and Pasture Administration

The Range and Pasture Administration work in over 17 states across Sudan; they have widespread reach across many focus targeted areas and remote areas in Sudan. They have recently been granted a MOU to open up an office in many of these locations, meaning the monitoring and implementation will significantly improve as the lack of field base offices was providing to be a massive gap for them. A direct office means they will have regularly accessibility to project implementation and can monitor the staff and projects thoroughly. The link across the many offices for the Range and Pasture Administration is strong in particular areas, and weak in others, needing improvement with their internal communications structure. Lack of communication between many different implementing offices and different offices involved with various technical aspects of the project is proving to be one of their biggest obstacles, with people not communication with one another valuable lessons learned are not passed on

and time is wasted with new teams travelling out and experiencing the same problems and same delays, all of which could be avoided through simple communication and consistent field reports.

Amount of staff presence in the field is extremely high, with offices for local areas (mahaliya) often acting as responsible actor for whole area, however there is a significant gap with the technical capacity of staff, thereby undermining the reliability and accuracy of information passed on. Staff retention is a consistent problem throughout all offices, field and headquarters, with an estimate of 2/3 staff quitting. RPA is using valuable resources and budget to train staff in technical capacity to undertake the work, yet after a few months the staff move on, and the offices lose those trained with the correct technical capacity. Government jobs are not encouraging staff to stay due to significantly low pay and high work demand.

There are major gaps within the current management of offices. The communication internally and externally is extremely low, with departments being poorly managed, reducing the amount of inter-departmental work that could be conducted and could enhance all projects and implementation. Head of field offices tend to lack background and experience within the sector and do not meet the requirements for the job. Offices are often reported as being fake, staff are never available when needed, operational issues are a day to day struggle with issues constantly being faced for car rental, equipment purchase etc.

Communications is recognized to be a large gap, even in instances where employees are lacking informing the beneficiaries of the project/implementation. Climate change is currently impacting everyone across Sudan, however the information that is gathered through projects is not reinterpreted to the community themselves. Interventions are not properly explained to them as no one is trained in the sector of communications to understand how to properly convey this messages to various different types of audiences. The beneficiaries do not know what is happening or why specific implementations are occurring in nearby areas but not theirs. Those who will be most affected by climate change are not given precautionary warnings beforehand. Communication with the beneficiaries themselves is extremely low.

The current reporting structure is annual meeting, with monthly written reports that are supposed to be submitted by all however are currently not being enforced. The only solution currently being used for data gathering is to call those in the field and ask directly over the phone, which often takes time for them to gather information and can sometimes be unreliable as they falsified information in order to cover up for their lack of work or prolonged absence from the office.

Staff capacity among the staff in terms of reporting writing, IT skills, understanding indicators is extremely low, they do not have a background or education in this type of work and budget for training is low. Lack of equipment for communications is a problem, however equipment for project based data collection is present e.g. GPS. Results are always tied to actions, a need for results for a report, event etc otherwise there is little or no interest in gathering

or developing products to communicate the work being done for any other reason.

Higher Council of Environment and Natural Resources

Higher Council of Environment and Natural Resources has a very strong reporting structure, with regular monthly reports, weekly staff meetings, field visit reports, progress reports quarterly. Have recently hired a consultant to help upgrade their reporting structure and improve staff capacity. Currently merging into using the templates designed, slight difficulty for staff with orientation and more details data disaggregation. Supervisory line extremely strong, reports are read and feedback submitted, this is then taken by field staff to report against feedback and follow up is conducted regularly. This strong structure means that staff are often encouraged to complete their work and if not possible, to provide justifications for lack of data/work. Being regularly supervised has meant that they have improved their staffing structure, as well as the reliability and accuracy of the information provided as it is regularly checked upon during random field visits. There is a clear line of responsibility within the organization and clear line of internal communication, with all information being signed off on by the head.

Staffs are all from various different technical backgrounds, everything to provide a wholesome approach to projects. Staff orientation training is conducted in the first week of work for new staff where they go over the systems and procedures, reporting templates, code of conduct and guidelines for the work. Workshops are regularly held to improve staff capacity in addition to act as prompt for staff who have already taken the courses/workshops. Offices are well equipped with staff capacity to produce and distribute communications products. Have various visibility outputs including pamphlets, brochures, calendars, short reports, fact sheets, videos and more. Equipment is procured on a project basis, with communications staff using own personal equipment to produce visibilities. These products are printed externally, they do not have the facilities on site, and are then taken and distributed widely amongst the International NGO community, Government, UN, Banks, media and other potential recipients. Have strong media contacts they work with regularly in print media, TV, Radio.

Archiving system and reporting system is strong, with data aggregated into one file, with obvious distinctions for each state. All reports are against indicators with reports including percentage achieved, when below the percentage automatically requires explanation. This in turn makes staff assume responsibility for the work, as they will have to provide explanation for incomplete work. Training is still required for staff to fully adopt new system inputted by previous consultant, not everyone is 100% familiar at this time, however the trainings are being organized and efforts consistently being made. Strong organization structure, however communication with the SPIU is weak and requires improvement, particularly when these capabilities and facilities exist with one of the key stake holders and are not being utilized correctly by the SSNRMP and SPIU.

Wildlife Conservation General Administration

The Wildlife Conservation General Administration has a strong hierarchical structure with responsibility leading through each supervisory unit, all the way up to top management. Reporting structure is extremely strong, with each level of field staff reporting to their supervisors, who then report up to management, who then report back to senior management, with decisions being made at all levels. Field staff report to state staff, state staff report to government with each level adding to reports and cross checking information and data. Updates are received from a field on a weekly basis, when projects are close to completion a project closing session is held, similar to than of a grant closing session, and results are cross checked against indicators and initial objectives of project. Managers will then request meeting with all project staff to review final report as a group and address any discrepancies, lessons learned, highlight challenges and make recommendations for future projects.

All staff across the whole organization is given orientation meetings on all projects, regardless of their direct work or involvement in the project. This is done in order to raise awareness and knowledge sharing amongst the organisation and all outgoing projects that the Administration of Wildlife Conservation is involved. People can take lessons learned, experiences, contacts etc from each other. Managers and high level officials make regular field and supervisory visits to the project sites to ensure projects are being maintained and implemented, and results coincide with all those reported. Coordination with fellow organizations in the area occurs regularly in order to ensure plural joint efforts, works and consistent messaging from all sides.

Working in 3 states, with all states having a sole manager responsible for executing tasks and government entities within the states also holding responsibility for overlooking the project, including operational tasks and procurement. Monthly reports are sent from all states and all consolidated together afterwards into one report. Training is carried out consistently for staff and capacity development is a key focus for all sectors. Staff capacity gaps or needs are attended to as soon as possible with either in country training for staff, or international training courses. Equipment gaps are recorded by each state and procured as funds allow, requests for equipment, software and hardware are send to head of projects, with all procurement recorded and asset management being managed by head of projects and senior staff.

Advocacy work is being conducted in terms of making efforts to change laws in these states to help facilitate this work and raise the importance of knowledge awareness in the area. Currently preparing presentation for the project involved with SSNRMP to track current progress in order to ensure all relevant staff and key stakeholders are aware on ongoing progress and deliverables already reached. Head of AWC sees the project as extremely importantly and paving the way and opening the doors for the recognition of importance of similar projects and initiatives for similar projects across Sudan. AWC is actively trying to spread the word of the project and campaign, and ensure that people are aware of success across Sudan and efforts being made by organizations.

Strong media contacts already established with newspaper presence at events and all trainings. Media are invited to all trainings and campaign openings for projects. Media coverage includes TV, Radio, Newspaper and social media. Staffs are also trained in how to respond to the media, when to invite them to events, which media outlets cover which sectors more widely and basic knowledge of what stories are considered 'newsworthy'. Visibility as a whole is still to be developed, however they are taking steps to improve this section as all printing services are done in the states themselves, not in Khartoum and then shipped out.

Conclusion:

Recommendations

- Develop strong reporting structure for SSNRMP and SPIU to include templates, reporting schedule, lines of responsibility and use of M&E systems. Reporting structure should be developed by Project Coordinator with Monitoring and Evaluation to agree upon base template and key indicators they wish to receive and how often.
- Develop reporting structure between SPIU and key stakeholders to improve constant flow and lines of communication between all key investors in the project
- Improve supervisory management from senior staff through staff assessment surveys and enforcement of regularly weekly updates
- Provide further training on M&E systems already set up so can be updated regularly enough to provide data that can be used for communications.
- Development of communications strategy and supporting documents, including but not limited to, social media strategy, human interest story guidelines, media and communications manual, social media basics guidelines, photography guidelines, design and layout info sheets, (to be completed by communications consultant as per ToR).
- Basic training on communications strategy and supporting documents. How and when to use them. What to produce and according to what audience. How to produce documents and/or communications materials. (training will be provided in adherence to deliverable 3 of ToR).
- Photography training in the use of recently procured 4 Canon EOS 1200D High Definition cameras (will be provided by communications consultant on as an addition to deliverable 3 as per ToR).

Communications Strategic Action Plan

The Communications Action Plan is designed to provide a clear understanding on how identified gaps and needs, provided in the above assessment of SSNRMP and relevant key stakeholders, can be converted into programmatic and operational actions that will significantly improve the communications ability of all those directly related to the project, consequently raising further awareness of the project and the importance of adopting sustainable natural resources management projects.

The plan has been designed as part of a communications consultancy aimed to identify the communications gaps within the SSNRMP and develop a comprehensive plan to address these issues. Based on gaps collected throughout the assessment stage of the analysis of current communications capabilities of SSNRMP and stakeholders, the following plan has been derived. Information and data was collected through semi-structured interviews, observation and document analysis of pre existing communications documents, reporting document and/or any other relevant documents. Information sources included the State and Field Project Implementation Units, as well as main relevant stakeholders.

Proposed training sessions listed below in the plan took into consideration many of the largely effecting factors mentioned by both the SPIU and stakeholders. The following has been considered when suggesting the relevant training:

- Low IT capacity of field staff, as well as stakeholder's staff.
- Nominated staff to undertake training must be those directly involved in project activities (in relation to attendance of stakeholders)
- Due to low staff retention, training presentations will be clear, precise; however most importantly easily digestible in order for SPIU staff to be able to provide the training should staff retention issues arise.
- The training package can be updated regularly in accordance with newly emerging social media trends
- Topics are relevant to all staff and stakeholders at all levels. According to gaps assessed, stakeholders also have a lack of communications staff and outputs and therefore presentation is relevant and key to all staff, not just those directly related to SSNRMP.

Activities Work Plan:

Activity	Description	Target Audience	Indicator	Main Objective	Time	Long Term Outcome
Work Plan	Develop a work plan taking into consideration objectives and messaging of the SSNRMP.	SPIU – Project Coordinator	Meetings with SPIU and Stakeholders		10 days from Start – Upon completion of interviews with SPIU and relevant stakeholders	To use the work plan, in conjunction with the later fully completed assessment report to assess the gaps and develop communications strategy that meets SSNRMP project objectives and is realistic
Gap and Needs Assessment Report – (Inception Report)	Develop assessment report covering the gaps and needs in relation to communications, the capacity of staff and stakeholders and current communications outputs quality.		Meetings with SSNRMP team and relevant stakeholders – interviews, observations and data analysis	Assess the needs and gaps within current communications in the SSNRMP, as well as stakeholders and implementing partners	2 weeks from start 24 th April 2016 – 8 th May 2016	Use the gaps assessment to develop a comprehensive communications plan that addresses all the needs, taking into account the challenges experienced from SPIU & Stakeholders, as well as country restrictions and problems not in control of
Social Media Guidelines	Document describing how and when to use social media platforms and which different types of platforms	SSNRMP Team	Feedback from communications Training Survey	To provide basic knowledge on use of social media in communications and equipping staff with the necessary technicalities to use social media to effectively raise awareness of projects	Development within 4 weeks after submission of inception report – 8 th of May to 5 th of June	Staff to become fully familiar with latest social media trends and are completely comfortable in using these methods of technology to communicate the project or relevant activity to a broader audience e.g. developing campaign #hashtags, slogans, catchphrases etc for further communications of SSNRMP and all activities related to the initiative. Result will be an
Social Media Basics - introduction	Document listing the various forms of social media and basic information on them	SSNRMP Team	Feedback from communications Training Survey	Document to provide basic introductory information on language, actions etc related to different forms of social media i.e defining	Development within 4 weeks after submission of inception report – 8 th of	

				how to use particular symbols including # (hashtag) @ (at/tag symbol) retweet, instagram post, etc	May to 5 th of June	increase in the presence and awareness of SSNRMP in social media within Sudan, INGO's, Local & International Media, Stakeholders and Government institutions.
Communications Strategy (1st Draft)	Developed strategy with aligned objectives of SSNRMP ensuring feasibility and taking into account challenges outside the control of SPIU. Include the following documents as annexes: - Press Release Template - Success Story Template - Media guidelines - Internal communications guidelines - Weekly reports template - Proposed budget derived from market research	SPIU – Project Coordinator	SPIU Feedback upon submission of first draft communications strategy report	To develop communications strategy which is easily digested and attainable according to the staff, in addition to increasing maximum output and impact from SSNRMP and all implementing parties and stakeholders.	Development within 4 weeks after submission of inception report – 8 th of May to 5 th of June	- Leave the project with a comprehensive strategy that can guide the project for a remainder of the project duration – will apply to all stages of the project, with communications outputs significantly increasing toward closure of the project in 2019 where achievements and deliverable should be met. - Provide templates bank for future staff or training needs, guidelines and communications manual - Full understanding of the need of communications and the importance it has on the success of a project – adoption of same practices by stakeholders and relevant related parties.
Communications Strategy (2nd Draft)	Taking into account relevant feedback from review of first draft edit as required		SPIU Feedback of Second draft of communications strategy document	Take feedback from initial report and incorporate feedback into edits of final draft	Depending on date of feedback is received – however to be resubmitted on or before Monday 20 th of June	
Communications Training Staff Satisfaction Survey	Short survey to be completed at the end of ½ day communications training (deliverable 3)	All those in attendance at training session – SNNRMP	Results from staff satisfaction survey	Receive feedback on how the training was received – what could be improved for the future, what was	Final week of consultancy – occurring at the end of the ½ day	Provide statistical feedback for the success of the training, as well as qualitative feedback which can be used

		team & stakeholders		understood well, which methods were best received i.e practical group work, individual work etc.	communications training package 19 th to 24 th June 2016	to edit similar trainings in the future, and can be used by SSNRMP project coordination team when developing trainings in the future.
Communications Training	<p>External:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Training on producing project documents - Training on how to use different forms of comms outputs - Training on how to extract relevant information for comms outputs from the field <p>Internal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Training on importance of internal communications - Training on reporting template and how to correctly complete - Training on importance of reporting structure 	All implementing at state and field level – SPIU, FNC, RPA, WCGA, MoEFPD, HCENR	Feedback from communications Training Survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Enhancing skills and capacity of staff related to communications and production of relevant, project focused visibility -Enhancing reporting skills and capacity of staff as found by gap assessment report to be the biggest challenge by project implementation team, as well as for stakeholders. - Strong focus on improvement of internal reporting and communications structure 	Final Week of Consultancy commencing 19 th – 24 th of June 2016	Full understanding of how to use communications to enhance a project, creating and developing own initiatives and outputs, as well as encouraging training of trainers through continued communications messaging and experience. Improved reporting structure and quality of reports, inevitably improving quality of communications products and following a regular pattern for production of visibility.

Photography training	Short practical sessions to be included within the communications training using recently procured Canon EoD cameras. Participants in groups will be given an opportunity to take pictures based on a task after presentation has been given		Type of shots taken by groups and results of group work activities including what types of visibility outputs they have aligned them with	To teach staff how to successfully use the newly cameras and to provide insight on what kind of shots to take for different types of visibility, providing insight on good pictures & bad pictures, giving the participants opportunity to explore the camera and familiarise themselves	Final week of Consultancy – included in Communications Training (duration of module 30 - 45mins) 19 th – 24 th June 2016	Full awareness of when a “picturesque moment” has presented itself and how to take advantage of that and for what kind of output. To make staff comfortable with use of HD cameras and equipping them with the skills to identify photographic moments and take high quality images.
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