



# Mangroves for the Future

## Communications Strategy and Action Plan

June to December, 2008

Draft prepared for the RSC-3, 9-10 June, 2008  
Prepared by the MFF Secretariat

## About the communications strategy

This communications strategy has been prepared to guide the MFF Secretariat, the National Coordinating Bodies (NCB's), its partners, country offices and project leaders in how MFF will communicate with its stakeholders- both internally and externally. It is a regional strategy for the MFF initiative as a whole and does not serve to guide individual project communication needs. The latter will be designed directly into project proposals. Separate Guidelines for project level communications will be provided as part of the overall MFF project guidelines.

The communication flow between the regional level and project level is the most important part of the strategy as it supports the realization of key programme objectives of MFF. The communication strategy will be revised on a yearly basis to accommodate each year's specific events and activities, and to respond to unforeseen events.

## Context

MFF builds on a history of coastal management interventions before and after the 2004 tsunami, especially the call to continue the momentum and partnerships generated by the immediate post-tsunami response. It focuses on the countries worst-affected by the tsunami; India, Indonesia, Maldives, Seychelles, Sri Lanka, and Thailand. MFF is expected to grow to include other countries in the Indian Ocean Region that face similar issues, with an overall aim to promote an integrated ocean wide approach to coastal zone management. It is important, therefore, that the communications strategy can facilitate the exchange of information between countries, and help build knowledge at a regional level.

MFF is a unique multi-partner led initiative to promote investment in coastal ecosystem conservation for sustainable development. MFF was initiated by IUCN and UNDP, but has grown to include other UN agencies such as FAO and UNEP, as well as international development organizations such as CARE and Wetlands International. The partnership joins efforts to conserve and restore ecosystems, sustain human livelihoods and reduce vulnerability in coastal communities. MFF provides a collaborative platform among the many different agencies, sectors and countries who are addressing challenges to coastal ecosystem and livelihood issues, to work towards a common goal.

Communications are an important tool to support partnership development and the platform for collaboration. The MFF work programme is being implemented at four different levels: a regional level, by the MFF Regional Steering Committee (RSC); at the national level through National Coordinating Bodies (NCBs); and at a project level, through NGOs and community-based organizations and the private sector. Communications support integration, knowledge sharing, and synergies between these levels. The MFF communications strategy is therefore designed to support efficient programme delivery, maintain good working relations with stakeholders, and serve as knowledge base to forage new partnerships.

## MFF objectives

The MFF initiative has two objectives:

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

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

## Communications objectives

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

1. Communicate MFF activities to both internal stakeholders and external audiences in a timely, accurate and professional manner;
2. Adopt a pro-active communication approach, communicating successes and lessons learned, and seeking new opportunities for information sharing and other forms of cooperation;
3. Build organizational communication capacity to effectively deliver the MFF objectives;
4. Track and manage an MFF knowledge product portfolio across the initiative and its projects to support outcomes-based evaluation;
5. Facilitate the acquisition of funds and co-financing opportunities to advance sustainable coastal ecosystem management in the region.

## Audiences

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

Table 1 Identified priority audiences

<b>INTERNAL</b>	<b>EXTERNAL</b>
RSC members	Government and agencies
NCB's	NGOs, INGOS
MFF Secretariat and consultants	Other Donors
Current Donors	Education Institutions
Country-based Project Focal Points	Private and Commercial Sector
Country-based communications Focal Points	Media (National, regional, and International)
Small Grant Facility (SGF) managers	Coastal Managers
Large Project Managers	General public
Coastal Managers	Local Communities

## Key messages

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

## Information Categories

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

1. *Programme management information*  
Information under this category will include; agreements, guidelines and protocols, such as the small grant facility guidelines, guidelines for developing a communication strategy for a coastal project, as well as the MFF strategy and Action Plan.
2. *Training and capacity building materials*  
Toolkits such as the climate proofing tools and the easy –to-use ecosystem valuation tool box (currently under development) in combination with training workshops will by the primary training and capacity building materials. Educational films will also be used to build capacity and raise awareness.
3. *Technical data on coastal zone management*  
This category will involve statistical information, spatial data and other information for coastal management.
4. *Topical information*  
Topical information includes information on MFF projects, news, events, and press activities, as well as other advocacy and outreach materials.

## Communications Mix

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

### **Internal communications**

Internal reports  
Programme documentation  
Events and meetings

### **On-line**

E-newsletter  
Information Bulletin  
Website(s) interactive features

### **Print**

Brochures  
Posters  
Scientific reports  
Information bulletin

### **Public relations**

Major events  
Press releases  
Press conferences  
Radio  
Television  
Films

### **Training and Capacity**

Toolkits  
Films  
Presentations  
Seminars  
Project reviews  
Training workshops

## Communication Flows

At a regional level the MFF Secretariat is responsible for coordinating and synthesizing information and delivering it to its respective audiences, including countries, the general public, potential new partners and donors. The diagram below illustrates how MFF will communicate within the programme and with external stakeholders.

Project focal points will be responsible for coordinating and facilitating communication flows from the secretariat to their respective NCBs, and to capture and collect project results and lessons learned to be packaged and disseminated. The MFF Secretariat, together with the IUCN and UNDP focal points, will screen information for quality and consistency, and package for sharing across the programme and to other regional and global audiences. The aim is to replace the current document exchange (a password protected section of the MFF website) with an interactive portal.

As an additional activity identified from the Programme of Work 1.1 is a suggestion for a pilot project on coastal management information sharing. This is conceived as a pilot project involving 2-3 interested countries with established focal points to share information through interactive web-based features.

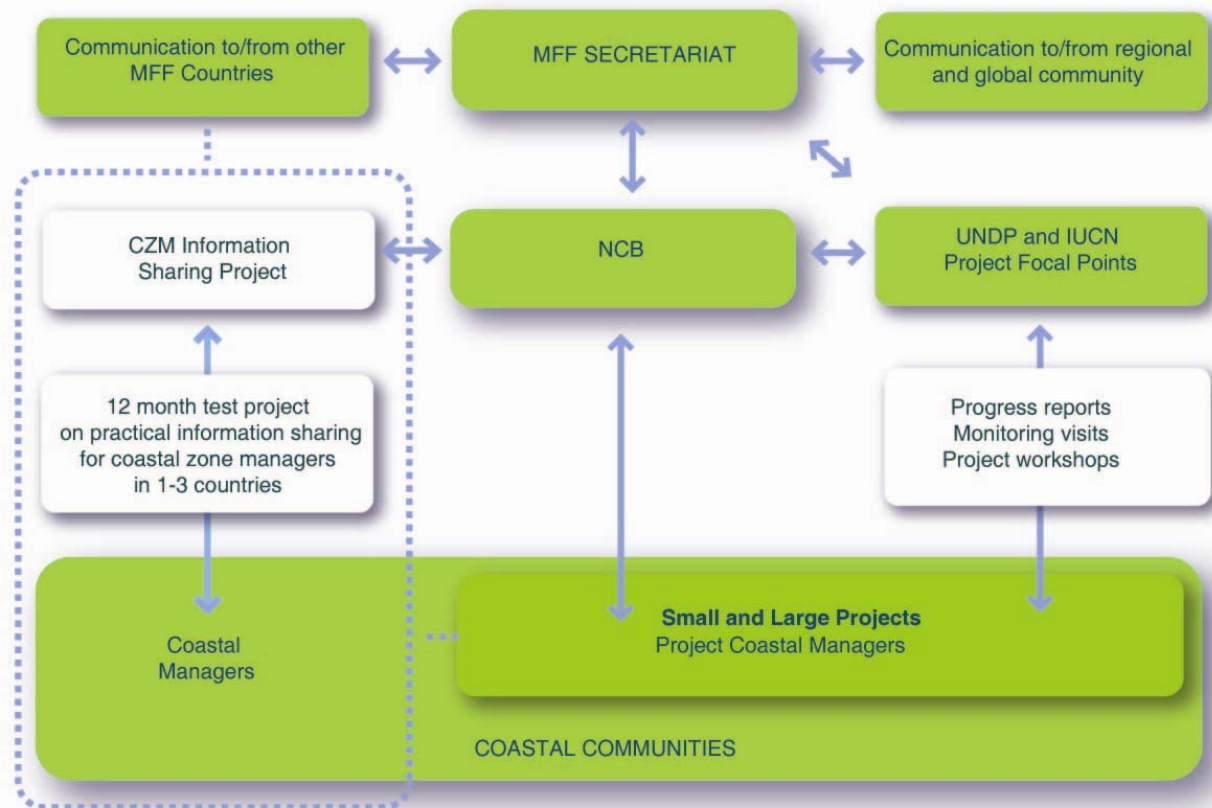


Figure 1 MFF Information Flow chart indicating the main directions of information flows are indicated.

## Resources

Coordinating and delivering communications objectives requires networking, planning ahead, monitoring and evaluation, sufficient budgeting, and liaison with the MFF network. To meet the objectives, adequate human resources are required, as well as good communications and transparency between focal points. To implement MFF communications the secretariat will draw on existing and identified staff resources. The main points of contact will be:

### MFF Secretariat

Minna Epps  
Communications Officer

### IUCN

Michael Dougherty  
Asia Regional Communications Coordinator

### UNDP

Communication focal point/adviser to be defined

### FAO

Communication focal point/adviser to be defined

### UNEP

Communication focal point/adviser to be defined

### CARE

Communication focal point/adviser to be defined

### Wetlands International

Communication focal point/adviser to be defined

## Country Level Project Focal Points (contact person to be defined)

India	IUCN India Country Office
Indonesia	UNDP Indonesia Country Office
Maldives	UNDP Maldives country office, supported by IUCN SL
Seychelles	IUCN East Africa Regional Office
Sri Lanka	IUCN Sri Lanka Country Office
Thailand	UNDP and IUCN Thailand Country Office

Budget implications are treated below. The CZM Information Sharing initiative will be proposed and budgeted separately. In addition each project proposal should have a clearly defined communication plan. The percentage of the project proposal allocated to communications will depend on the type and size of each project and its objectives.

MFF is a regional initiative covering a wide geographical and culturally diverse area. Cultural differences and language barriers will be considered when designing communication products. Cost of translation should be factored into project communications budgets to ensure effective reach across levels.

## Monitoring and Evaluation

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

**Table 2 MFF Communications Monitoring System**

Objective	Verifiable Indicators	Means of verification
1. Communicate MFF activities to internal stakeholders and external audiences in a timely, accurate and professional manner;	E-newsletter subscription increase	Bi-monthly Report
	Number of website updates	Bi-monthly Report
	Website usage statistics	Bi-monthly statistics
	Uptake of news items by press	Monitor press articles
2. Adopt a pro-active communication approach, communicating successes and seeking new opportunities	Media tracking Partnership formation Project proposal submissions	Monitor press and blogs New partnerships Increased project portfolio
3. Build organizational communication capacity to effectively deliver the MFF's objectives;	Number of project reports received	Secretariat records
	Number of project reports used in promotional activities	Website and e-newsletter log
	Contributions to e-newsletter	e-news review
	Frequency of press release	Bi-monthly report
4. Track and manage an MFF knowledge product portfolio across the programme and projects to support outcomes-based evaluation.	Number of training tools developed and disseminated	Report, Questionnaire
	Number of coastal managers receiving information regularly	Quarterly Web-based Questionnaire
	Number of coastal managers contributing information regularly	Quarterly Web-based Questionnaire
5. Facilitate the acquisition of funds and co-financing opportunities to advance sustainable coastal ecosystem management in the region.	Regular communication Timely reports	Level of engagement and interest in MFF activities  Increased/continued support

Table 3 Communications Matrix

<b>Audience Group</b>	<b>Information Category</b>	<b>Communication Tool</b>
Internal Communications (RSC, NCB, and internal donors)	Programme Management Information Training & Capacity Technical Information Topical Information	Internal Communications On-line
Country-based project focal points	Programme Management Information Training & Capacity Technical Information Topical Information	Internal Communications On-line Print
Project Managers	Programme Management Information Training & Capacity Technical Information Topical Information	On-line Training and Capacity
Gov, NGOs, Donors, and Private Sector	Topical Information	On-line Public Relations
Academia	Technical Information Topical Information	On-line Print
Media	Topical Information	On-line Public Relations
General Public	Topical Information	On-line Public Relations
Coastal Zone Managers Info Hub	Technical Information Topical Information	On-line
Coastal Communities	Training & Capacity Technical Information	On-line Print Public Relations Training and Capacity Selected project specific communications

### Branding and Visual Identity

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

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

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

## Estimated budget

Activity/Product	Estimated cost in USD
<b>MFF Programme Printing and Dissemination</b>	<b>7500</b>
Bulletin x 2	3000
Brochure (3000 copies)	1000
Reprinting Action Plan	1500
MFF Strategy	1500
In-house printing	500
<b>Promotional Materials</b>	<b>4500</b>
T-shirts	1500
Hats	1500
Pens, cards, stickers	500
Posters	1000
<b>Events</b>	<b>25 000</b>
RSC x 2	2 000
Press Event	3 000
WCC	8 000
Training Course	5 000
Mangrove Symposium	7 000
<b>TVEAP Short films</b>	<b>12 000</b>
<b>Monitoring &amp; Evaluation</b>	<b>10 000</b>
Questionnaires and reporting	4 000
Media Tracking	6 000
<b>Software</b>	<b>5 000</b>
Sub-total	64 000
Contingency at 15%	9 600
<b>Total estimated cost (USD)</b>	<b>73 600</b>



## MFF Communications action plan and schedule

Activities/events	Audiences	Communications Products and Tools	Expected outcomes	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
RSC Reporting	RSC meeting participants, and other MFF stakeholders	Meeting report	Inform MFF stakeholders on the progress of MFF activities							
RSC meeting	RSC members	Preparatory documents	Update and endorsement of recommendations							
Website updates	MFF Stakeholders and the general public	Web stories, Press release, MFF reports and documents	Effective and timely dissemination of programme information							
E-newsletter	The MFF Network (including partners and donors)	A 6p newsletter with stories from the region, and up date on events and other activities	Raising awareness and keeping existing MFF stakeholders up dated							
Regional Training course, Indonesia	Practitioners, associated partners and project staff, academia	Promotional materials, Training packages, press	Capacity building (economic valuation of coastal ecosystems, and community participation in coastal resource management), Press articles							
Information Bulletin	Coastal managers, policy-and decision-makers, MFF countries, partners, and other stakeholders	Production and dissemination of bulletin	Disseminate information and raise awareness on coastal issues and emerging management trends							
Scientific symposium 22-25 November Ranong, Thailand	Experts, relevant Governments and agencies, and Media	Brochure Website	Technical information shared and practical solutions adopted							
WCC Press event Sept, Bangkok	Press, general public, Regional policy-makers and government	Key speakers, Media Advisory, briefs	Increased awareness of MFF and the congress							
WCC The IUCN World Conservation Congress, 5-14 October, 2008, Barcelona Spain	MFF partners, IUCN members, conservation NGO's, academia, governments, potential donors, and media	Media, posters, t-shirts, hats, revised brochure	Identify opportunities for new partnerships, investments from new donors and media coverage							