APFNet Project Visual Identity and Communications Guide

Asia-Pacific Network for Sustainable Forest Management and Rehabilitation (APFNet)

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1. Introduction and purpose

Communication and dissemination (C&D) is an essential part of APFNet projects for ensuring that project objectives, activities, resources and outcomes are communicated and disseminated to relevant stakeholders in a clear, consistent and effective manner. The **visibility** of APFNet and its funded projects should be promoted through the C&D process and project partners are required to use the APFNet logo and visual materials coherently. Meanwhile, effective project **documentation** enables the preservation of information and creation of knowledge products by APFNet and partners both during and after the project. It is thus crucial to be done diligently.

The **APFNet Project Visual Identity and Communications Guide** provides general guidance and good practices on recommended C&D activities, visual identity, and the documentation of APFNet-funded projects.

The guide, therefore, has four main purposes:

- Assist EAs in developing and implementing C&D strategies to communicate their work effectively to target audiences.
- Determine the nature and frequency of C&D products that EAs and partners should develop specifically for use by the APFNet Secretariat to disseminate the lessons learned in APFNet-funded projects to target audiences.
- Guide APFNet logo use and help project partners prepare C&D materials in a coherent way to promote the visual identity of APFNet projects.
- Enable EAs and partners to properly document project activities, both for APFNet's and the EA's future use.

2. Project Communication and Dissemination Strategy

Effective project C&D activities are crucial to ensure that key ideas and lessons learned through the project have a long-term impact. In fact, the "demonstration" part of demonstration projects can only be done via effective communication! As such, project C&D should stand front and center when developing the Project Proposal (PP) or thinking about what kind of change the project is supposed to induce. In order to achieve all of these goals, an effective C&D strategy is needed.

A C&D strategy is defined in this guide as a document that sets out a project's C&D objectives, target audiences, budget, work plan and mode of evaluation. It should guide media and public relations activities and ensure that such activities are cost-effective and serve strategic purposes.

All APFNet-funded projects should have C&D strategies to ensure that knowledge and information are disseminated effectively to target audiences with the aim of scaling up successes, influencing policies in government and the private sector, and informing future interventions.

Project C&D activities should be planned carefully from the initial stages of any intervention to maximize its impact and cost-effectiveness. This includes an overarching target for C&D set up with key audiences identified in **new project proposals**, which are required to be developed into full project C&D strategies in the Project Documents (PDs) (see Annex C of the PD template) that conform to this guide, including a proposed budget. **Projects already underway** or approved should make strong efforts to develop and implement C&D strategies using existing resources. Each AWP should include an Annual C&D Plan as an annex outlining the communications goals for the upcoming year. The APFNet Secretariat and EAs should work closely together to ensure the effective implementation of C&D activities in accordance with this guide.

In general, developing and implementing a communication strategy consists of the following steps:

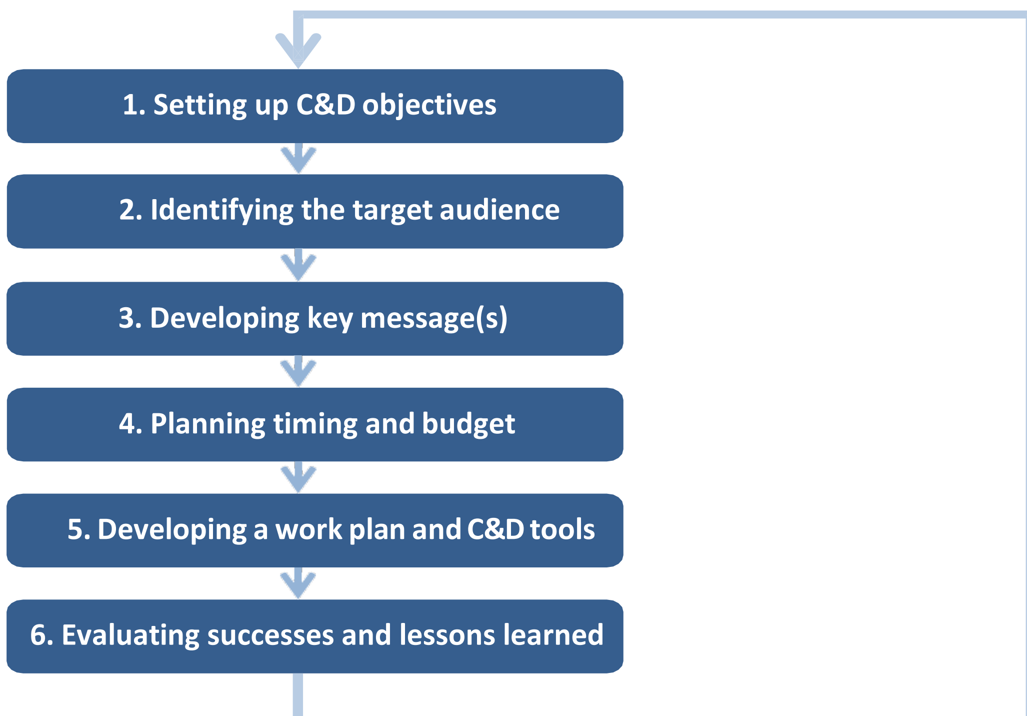


Figure 1. The communication strategy cycle

Step 1) Setting up C&D objectives

Project C&D objectives are usually set up in accordance with the specific project objectives and/or outputs and serve to achieve the overarching goal/objective set out by a project.

When developing objectives, ask yourself: What do you hope to achieve as a result of your communications activity? How does the C&D objective fit in with your project-specific objectives and outputs? Not every project objective, output, or activity has a corresponding communications objective. When developing the C&D strategy, carefully go over all project objectives, outputs and activities and determine whether achieving the objectives would require any communications effort.

Example of project objectives and the corresponding communication objective:

Project Objective/Output	Project C&D Objective
Investigate key issues associated with mangrove conversion and degradation	Increased awareness of key issues and drivers associated with mangrove conversion and degradation
Conduct participatory micro-planning for mangrove management is associated with agriculture and aquaculture development	(None)
Apply best practices in mangrove restoration and management and aquaculture in mangrove forests in the project area	Increased knowledge of best practices in mangrove restoration, management and aquaculture in their own mangrove forests
Enhance policy development capacity to facilitate the design and implementation of mangrove restoration and management	Identify issues with current forest policies associated with mangroves and propose solutions
Contribute to sustainable livelihood and community development within the project area	Increased knowledge about sustainable livelihood alternatives in mangrove forest areas

Step 2) Identifying the target audience

Who is your target audience?

Considerations about audience strongly influence how the C&D objectives will shape up. The more refined the target audience description, the more precise and effective your communication will be. "General public" is rarely a target audience and rather a symptom of a lack of thought behind whom you want to reach. Be as specific as possible and include age, gender, and the location of the audience.

In general, target audience can be split into two types:

- **Primary Target Audience** – These are the key persons or groups you communicate with directly.
  - For example: Forestry students in APFNet member countries – men and women aged 18-25.
- **Secondary Target Audience** – people who will also benefit from hearing the messages or people who influence your target audience now or in the future.
  - For example: Campus leaders, such as professors, heads of student bodies and other organizations.

<u>Current attitudes, habits and knowledge of your target audience</u>

The better you define your target audience, the more you will understand them: how relevant & engaged is the target audience in the issue?

What is their level of knowledge and attitude on the subject you are communicating? What are their beliefs on the issue? What might be their motivation or barriers to hearing, believing and accepting the information? What would persuade them? What is their 'language' (how they speak)? Where do they live? Where do they get their information?

<u>Desired response from your target audience</u>

How do you want your target audience to feel? What do you want them to do?

The following are some examples of what you might want them to do:

- Change their awareness or attitude
- Adopt different approaches demonstrated by the project

Initial C&D objectives and the identified target audience need to inform each other in order to develop complete SMART C&D objectives: **s**pecific, **m**easurable, **a**chievable, **r**ealistic and **t**imely. These are focused on changing the knowledge, attitudes, and behavior of individuals. They specify the following four aspects:

1. Intended audience
2. Type of change/behavior expected
3. Time and place of communications activity
4. Monitoring criteria.

Example: The following table shows examples of aspects needed for consideration when developing C&D objectives. Please note that **all columns** are part of the full C&D objectives, even if only their abbreviated form (the first column) will later be incorporated into the C&D strategy template.

C&D Objectives	Audience	Behavior/Change	Time/Location	Monitoring Indicator
Increased awareness of key issues and drivers associated with mangrove conversion and degradation	**Practitioners and environmental professionals, local people** in project area, policymakers, and people of Myanmar	Should be able to give a simple explanation of drivers and key issues associated with mangrove conversion and degradation found by the project	Six months after the start of communications activities	At least 50% of survey takers can correctly state at least 50% of key drivers and key issues

Increased knowledge of best practices in mangrove restoration, management and aquaculture in their own mangrove forests	**Mangrove restoration practitioners, organizations and professionals**, local people, other environmental professionals	Should be able to apply project restoration, management and aquaculture approaches outside the project	Six months after the end of the project	At least 50% of recipients of communications efforts know how to apply the respective approaches and at least 10% plan to apply aspects or all approaches
Identify issues with current forest policies associated with mangroves and propose solutions	**Policy makers**, environmental professionals	Policymakers are aware of issues with current forest policies and use some proposed solutions to adjust policies	Within one year after publishing communication materials	At least 1 of the identified key policies at least partially adjusted
Increased knowledge about sustainable livelihood alternatives in mangrove forest areas	**Local people,** forestry, and environmental professionals	Change in livelihood activities to more sustainable ones	Within one year after project	Representatives of at least ten communities in the area have heard about the livelihood alternatives, and at least 2 of them try them on their own

*typed in bold are the primary audience

Step 3) Developing key message(s)

After you have selected your target audiences for every C&D objective, it's important to decide what you are going to say to them to increase their knowledge, influence their attitude or make them change their behavior.

A **key message** sums up your message in a short statement. Your key message has to include a benefit for your target audience; otherwise, they won't be willing to change.

Examples of why people would be willing to change behavior:

- Local communities may change their behavior because:
    - It will protect them from damage and danger
    - It will create opportunities for new sources of income

A key message and call to action should be developed for each target audience.

A **call to action** describes exactly what you want your target audience to do – this is your target for a specific target audience. This target should support the achievement of your communications objective.

Example of a key message for local people in a mangrove area:

> As the demand for timber intensifies, local people are facing increasing pressure on logging mangrove areas for income. Mangrove restoration combined with sustainable aquaculture offers an opportunity to improve local livelihoods, reduce deforestation and improve forest quality, and strengthen good governance.
>
> Together we can promote sustainable mangrove aquaculture by implementing the model in our own community forests; earning good income from the resulting sales; and motivating neighbors to try out sustainable aquaculture as well.

Call to action

A **slogan** can be developed based on your key messages. (Note: a slogan is typically used as a tool to deliver a key message in a concise and attention-grabbing way, but the slogan itself is not a key message!)

Example of a slogan:

> Sustainable mangrove aquaculture holds the key to healthy mangrove forests.

Step 4) Planning the timing and budget

Timing is essential and needs planning. You need to identify the best time to communicate. In projects, this is often tied to when a project activity is planned or how long the project lasts in total. When the timeline of activities changes, so may the timelines of the corresponding communications activities.

When would be the best time to communicate over the duration of the project? What would be the best time to launch your effort? Could you exploit key events throughout the project and push your message more effectively? These can include either event set by the project (e.g., a workshop) or external events (e.g., a conference or a specific international day).

Managing your budget is integral to making your communications effort a success. Annual C&D budgets, even if just estimates, HAVE to be included in the PP and PD to ensure resources for all communications efforts are available. In each AWP, the specific details with the exact time and budget should be included in the "Communications" section. To realistically estimate financial needs, ask yourself the following questions:

- How much money do you need throughout the project lifecycle to achieve your communications goals?
- How much budget is available? If there is not enough budget for some communications activities, are there cheaper alternatives (e.g., online meetings vs. in-person meetings) or ways to downscale the activities (e.g., a 40-minute project movie by a professional team vs. a short self-made project video)?
- What communications activities will likely require no budget (e.g., newsletters and articles written by staff, photos of project published on social media)?

The communications budget for demonstration projects should consider the following additional factors:

- Budget for translation to English or local languages
- Design and print costs
- Costs for project videos (professional team vs. the self-made, cost of the camera and auditory equipment, editing costs, etc.)

In these cases, while developing the PD, the EA should try to contact the relevant professional agencies to get price estimates.

Step 5) Developing a work plan and C&D tools

The C&D tools you will use are dependent on the answers to the above questions: what you want to achieve, the message you want to communicate, your target audience, the profile of the audience, your timeline, and resources available.

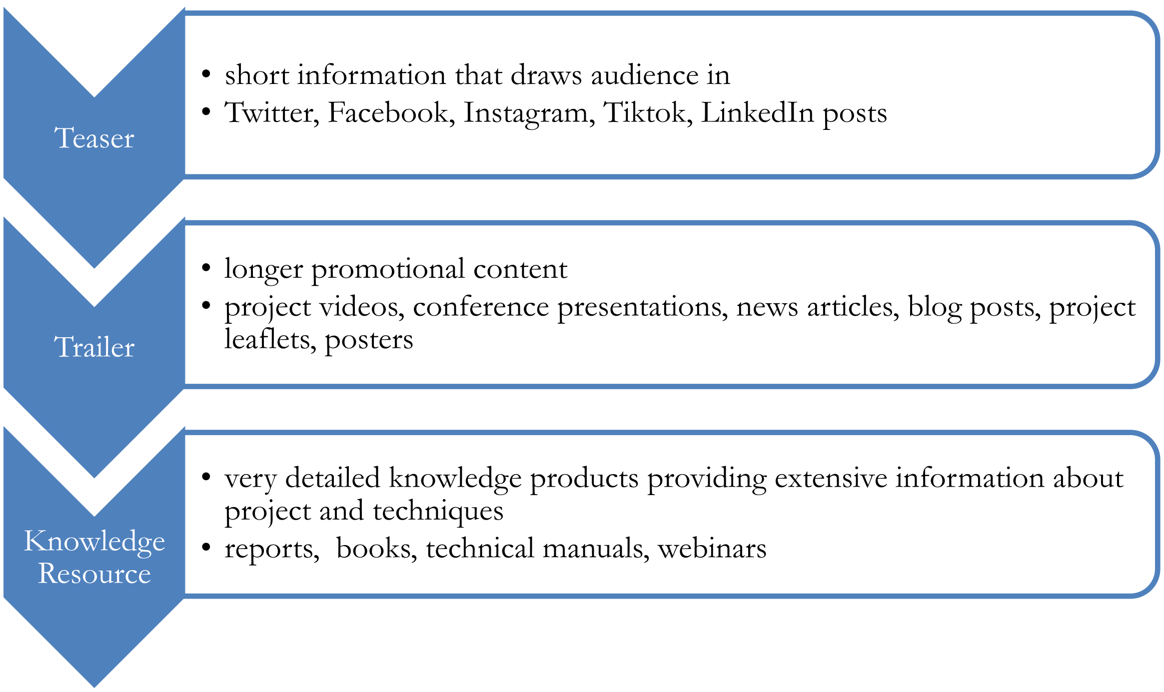
C&D activities can generally take two forms, which are not necessarily mutually exclusive, depending on the primary goal of the C&D objectives:

1. **Publicity:** promotional efforts highlighting certain aspects of projects, designed to attract and influence an audience that would otherwise not engage with the project. These can be sub-divided into two sub-categories:
   a) **Teasers**: provide short, snappy bits of information that grab people's attention and draw them in (most social media, such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, project photos, blog/news article titles)

b) **Trailers**: once the audience has been drawn in, provide longer content in an interesting way for the audience without exceedingly going into detail (blog posts, conference presentations, news articles, project videos, project leaflets, project briefs, posters, etc.)

2. **Knowledge resource**: providing extensive information about the project and techniques/insights gained from one or more of the projects (books, reports, manuals, webinars)

Note that once an audience has been drawn in via teasers, trailers are key for incentivizing (simple) change, while knowledge resources provide extensive knowledge on more complicated techniques and approaches. This means that communications strategies should consider multi-tiered communications approaches, with knowledge products often being the final (but essential) step. For each step, the right tool has to be available.



For example, to promote a new technique developed in a project, the technique would have to be disseminated to a wide relevant audience. If this audience is professionals, a conference, for instance, would be a good choice. The EA should, however, alert relevant parties (especially conference attendees) about the event using Teasers, such as Twitter, with the appropriate hashtag. During the conference presentation, the presenter should keep in mind that the main purpose of a presentation at a conference, which is a Trailer, is not to purely convey knowledge, as time for extensive knowledge provision is too short, but rather he should aim to incite enough interest in participants to later read about the technique in detail. For this, finally, the Knowledge Resource itself should be developed ahead of the trailer event, to provide for participants interested in trying the technique themselves.

C & D tool is in only some cases pre-determined to be either purely used for knowledge provision or publicity. Still, some general divisions can be drawn: Below are examples of various C&D tools to consider.

Table 1. Knowledge provision and publicity communication tools

Medium	Teaser	Trailer	Knowledge Resource
Press	• News/blog article title • News/blog article picture	• Press release • News Article • Radio • Opinion editorial	• In-depth feature • How-to Tutorial
Print	• Ad	• Project Summaries • Project Brochures • Letters/leaflets • Posters • Paper Newsletter	• Academic Journals • Technical Manuals • Project Reports • Books
Face-to-Face	• Mention at a different event • Word-of-mouth	• Panel Discussion • Presentations (e.g., at conferences) • Launch events • Info Stands • General events • Competitions	• Training • Longer Meetings/Workshops • Project staff (Q&A for any relevant questions)
Television & Radio	• Ad	• News • Features • Interviews • Short Project video	• Documentary • Longer/in-depth tutorial
Online	• Social media (Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, TikTok) • Photo-gallery • External websites linking to project	• E-newsletter • Podcast • YouTube/Vimeo videos • Online news article • Blogpost • Thematic/angled story • Story of Change	• Video tutorials • Project website

Section 3 of this guide provides full descriptions of some of the common tools.

After selecting appropriate tools, the final communications actions should be integrated into the PD and each AWP[1] as an activity, meaning they should clearly state the activity pursued, tools used (aim

[1] This step should already be done as much as possible during PD development, however some details (such as the specific combination of teasers, trailers and knowledge products) may only be fully developed in the respective AWPs. However, it is important to have a general idea as some communications efforts can span multiple project years.

to integrate all three categories), the timeline, budget, and measurable indicators for success. This can take the following shape:

Activity x.1: Introduce at conference xx new mangrove aquaculture restoration models to mangrove experts (Trailer). Teaser: various social media, starting one month ahead of time. Knowledge resource: Technical manual on mangrove restoration models (Activity x.3). Timeline: Y3Q1. Audience: mangrove experts. Budget: USD 2,000 Indicators: Attendance at seminar + survey

Activity x.2: Produce project video to introduce project and new models to the people of Myanmar and a wider international professional audience in English and Burmese (Trailer to promote Activity x.3). Timeline: Y3Q2-Q4. Audience: Myanmar people, mostly in cities. International professional audience. Budget: USD 8,000 (professional team), Indicators: Nr. of views online.

Activity x.3: Produce technical manual on mangrove restoration models (Knowledge resource). Promoted via Activity x.1 and x.2. Timeline: Y2Q4. Audience: professionals, practitioners. Budget: USD 2,000. Indicators: Nr. of publications handed out + number of downloads.

Note that in some cases, these activities can be added as activities to a related objective (e.g., the development of a report on mangrove restoration models could be an activity under the larger objective of developing mangrove restoration models). In contrast, in other cases, it may make more sense to develop standalone objectives, often called "Project communications," that outline activities that cannot easily be sorted under existing objectives (e.g., developing a project video).

Additionally, the activity stated in the AWP may be written in a simplified form, e.g., "3 conferences for target audience practitioners", while in the C&D strategy, details about the exact conference, dates, presentation contents, and communication goals are listed.

Steps 1-5 will result in the C&D strategy shown below:

C&D Strategy

C&D Objectives	Target audience	Key message	Monitoring Indicator	Work plan and budget				
				Activities (what)	C&D tools (how)	Time[2]/Location (when/where)	Responsible person (who)	Estimated budget (USD)

[2] Time can be a duration or multiple times.

Step 6) Evaluating success and lessons learned

How will you know if you have succeeded and met your objectives? How are you going to evaluate your success? What performance indicators and evaluating measures will you use? It is important to assess your efforts so that any changes, if necessary, can be made when engaging in a similar effort in the future.

Some questions to ask when evaluating the success of your communication efforts:

- Have you achieved your objectives?
- Did you reach the right audience?
- Did they understand what the message was, and did they respond in the way you intended? Did you achieve the impact you hoped for?

In order to evaluate effectively, your evaluation plan must be built into the communication work plan first. Some techniques for evaluation include:

- Periodic surveying or tracking, stakeholder surveys given to peers, focus groups on evaluating changes in awareness or knowledge
- Direct evaluation of whether actions were taken (and by how many people, if relevant), for example:
    - Whether a policy was amended
    - Whether people outside the project now use a demonstration promoted by the project
- Statistical regular tracking (e.g., website hits, number of downloads/views/likes, number of email subscriptions, etc.)
- Monitoring media and third-party use of key messages

The monitoring indicators should be integrated into the C&D strategy and in Annex B of the PD, as well as Annex E of the AWP template.

3. Project Communication and Dissemination Tools

This section outlines the most common C&D activities that should be carried out in APFNet-funded projects, divided by their general use as Teasers, Trailers, or Knowledge Resources. EAs are encouraged to identify the most appropriate means of communicating about their projects and to discuss with their APFNet project managers in the project planning stage how C&D might be incorporated into project workplans and deliverables. PDs should include a C&D strategy plan and budget[3] and explanations of how the C&D strategy plan will add value to the project.

Publications released in print or electronic form should include the following disclaimer:

> This publication is an output of a project implemented with the financial and technical assistance of the Asia-Pacific Network for Sustainable Forest Management and Rehabilitation (APFNet). The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the official opinion of APFNet.

3.1. Teasers

3.1.1. Social media

The use of social media can be to draw in a wide audience. Social media can help raise awareness of project activities and objectives and provide followers with interactive experiences. APFNet encourages EAs and other partners who operate their own social media accounts to expand and strengthen the advocacy work of their projects through social media. APFNet's visual identity and website links may be used where feasible and appropriate.

Whatever format they take social media posts should grab attention. Text should be held short and focus on catchy language that incentivizes users to seek further information about the topic. A link to a Trailer product (and sometimes directly to a Knowledge Resource) should be provided whenever possible. Use appropriate hashtags relevant to the topic. The images used in these posts should be suitable and attention-grabbing.

Example:

New project proves that mangrove restoration combined with sustainable mud crab aquaculture earns twice as much input as traditional approaches! More information under: http://mangroveproject.com/mangroveaquaculture #mangrove #aquaculture #apfnet #myanmar #mudcrab

[3] Where feasible, communication products should be edited by a professional editor or native English-speaker before submission to the APFNet Secretariat. Such editing should be included in the CV&D plan and its cost added to the budget.

Social media posts should be sent more than once, with the frequency depending on the platform.

3.1.2. Photographs

Interesting, eye-catching photographs are often a main teaser tool to incentivize the audience to immerse themselves more deeply into a topic they are linked to, for example, when being part of a social media post. Of course, beyond their Teaser function, good-quality, systematically organized photographs are essential for illustrating project activities and showing the benefits they provide. EAs should plan their approaches to obtain a photographic record of their field sites, activities, staff, and stakeholders ahead of time and regularly take photos throughout the project, even when no photo is immediately needed. In each APFNet-funded project, the aim should be to show the diverse activities undertaken, the landscape (and potentially social) changes brought about over time, and the beneficiaries of outputs and outcomes. APFNet particularly seeks the following types of photos:

- **Field sites** – photos should be taken in a way that maximizes the comparability of photos as sites change over time. Thus, photos should be taken at the same locations and from the same angles at regular intervals. Other field site photos should show activities being undertaken, the landscape context, issues being addressed by the intervention, and local biodiversity. They should be marked in terms of the time of the intervention, e.g., before, one year after, and at the project's end.
- **Nurseries and seedlings** – photos should show the various species being grown, the general nursery site, nursery activities being undertaken, and any innovative aspects of nursery management.
- **Local communities and community activities** – photos should show local people engaged in intervention activities to capture the human and social dimensions of the intervention.
- **Events (workshops, meetings, and conferences) –** Photos of keynote speakers, experts, and other people engaged in conference activities and presentations should be taken. Photos should also capture further proceedings during the event, such as networking sessions, working groups, coffee breaks, and the audience at presentations. Informal shots are usually more effective than posed photos in capturing the dynamic nature of events.

The following information should accompany all photographs: the photographer's name, the date and location of the photo, the activity shown in the photo, the names of people in the photo (where available), and other relevant information.

All projects should designate a contact person responsible for taking, compiling, and documenting photos. A selection of photos (recommended at least 3-5 photos per project activity) should be submitted to the project manager with each progress report as separate full-resolution files. Images should be clearly described in terms of when they were taken, which activity they belong to, who is displayed, and so on. Where photos are designed to show changes to landscapes over time, they should be taken at planned intervals (e.g., quarterly, half-yearly, or annually).

Technical parameters and quality requirements

Given that photos are used in print and online publications of varying types and sizes, digital photos should have a minimum resolution of 300 dpi at the desired publication size, which usually equates to a file size of more than 2 MB. This resolution should be obtainable from any mid-to-high-range point-and-shoot camera or newer cellphone.

3.2. Trailers

3.2.1. Online articles

Online articles are considered one of the key forms of Trailers as they lure the audience to explore the projects more in-depth.

Promotional pieces can be mainly featured on the EA's own channels, but also via other channels, like news outlets, APFNet and other partners (international NGOs, research institutes, etc.). Depending on the audience, they can be written in English or the local language. All types of online articles should, whenever possible, link to a knowledge resource or a contact person for more detailed information. They should always include interesting images and/or illustrations to enrich or clarify what is said in the text. Never only rely on text.

Recommended frequency: EAs may decide to publish their online news in their local language(s). English versions or separate articles are also necessary if their key audiences are within the international community. All projects should aim to publish project news at least twice per year. The articles may be used for integration with APFNet news.

Reporting: A description of online articles the EA has published throughout the year (this can be a list of links) should be submitted to APFNet in the progress reports under the communications section, and the articles themselves should be attached as an annex.

Types: There are different forms of online articles that draw attention in different ways, the most common ones being the following:

a) Simple News/Event Updates

This type of news aims to inform the audience about new developments in the project, such as a major milestone achieved (e.g., restoration of an area or a new publication). While often the most popular form of online article for many EAs, it should be kept in mind that this article often only engages an audience already interested in the project. While project progress updates are important, they should <u>not</u> constitute the only form of online news published. Also, always re-summarize the project briefly, as many readers will not automatically know about the project.

Example: The inception of APFNet's first project in South America

b) Angled Stories

Angled stories highlight an aspect of the project that seems especially relevant and interesting and can be used to draw in new audiences or explore one aspect of the project more in-depth. Stories can be angled in that:

- the angle itself is novel, e.g.
  - project in Myanmar proves how blue carbon is a significant part of the overall forest carbon stocks worldwide
  - less is more – a project in Miyun shows that thinning in forests can improve watershed water quality
- it's relevant to a specific event/day or topic currently discussed, e.g.
  - how improving wildlife habitat can boost tourism (could be a guest entry for a wildlife conservation or tourism organization)
  - how forests in project XYZ contribute to peace in the region (during World Peace Day)

The idea is that only some of the project is covered in the story, but more one part that is relevant to the audience. Generally speaking, angled stories should only convey *one message* (for the first example that could be that mangrove forests are important in relation to climate change and should be conserved) and not attempt to describe the project itself extensively. Such stories are ideal to be featured in non-EA outlets as well (e.g., a magazine focusing on wildlife).

Example: Understory planting of epiphytes for ecological and economic enhancement

c) Personal Stories & Stories of Change

Personal stories and stories of change are potentially powerful ways of conveying the impact of interventions by, for example, telling the stories of individuals in communities. These stories appeal to the audience as they clearly show how a given project has made a positive impact on somebody's life. One common approach to developing stories of change is to identify individuals whose lives have changed (ideally, at least partly as a result of an intervention). Explore with that person through conversations what her or his life was like before the change, what sparked the change, and what the situation is now. Then draw wider conclusions about the impact of the intervention or the lessons to be learned from the story.

Due to the very nature of the story, these stories should only be produced towards the end of a project and in close cooperation with the project management team. Good times to gather relevant information are during field visits. As this information is fairly easy to gather for the EA, which is in constant contact with the locals, it puts the EA in a unique position to tell the project's story through individual voices.

For the creation of such stories, the following should be considered:

- It's a story intended to appeal to the emotions of the audience, thus should not be written in an objective and overly scientific manner
- Vivid and narrative descriptions of (life) conditions are encouraged, e.g.
    - The snowflakes falling from the sky were to Ms. Zhang like an absolution – it had not rained in the Miyun area for nearly half a year, and she had grown increasingly worried that a fire would break out, as it is regularly the case in Northern China's cold winters. It would have destroyed the efforts she had been making during the past year.
    - Vuthy shook her head. "I still cannot believe I will be able to stay here. Until last year, I prepared myself to eventually move to my son's home, as the money we were able to make through selling timber was reduced to nothing when the government put a logging ban on this area. But now, growing coffee *underneath* the trees, there is something else we will be able to do."

A story of change should always focus on the base problem (e.g., a lack of income), how the project fixed that problem (e.g., creating different forms of income), and what positive effects this had on the person or for the area at large (e.g., greater self-determination, etc.). While dramaturgic elements are encouraged, writers should be careful to stick with the facts.

Example: Project changes the lives of two ethnic communities in the Sungai Medihit Watershed, Malaysia

d) Interviews

Projects can directly interview project participants or other stakeholders involved with the project. This can bring a more raw/honest reflection of the project to the audience as opposed to Stories of Change, it is less framed. Interviews should, whenever possible, after agreement of the participant be recorded in order to ensure the interview faithfully reflects what the interviewee had to say. Interviews also lend themselves well to the video form.

3.2.2. Project newsletters

Newsletters can be useful for showing progress in projects and drawing attention to important events. Project newsletters typically contain articles on accomplishments and previous, ongoing, and upcoming activities. They may include interviews with stakeholders, policymakers, experts and observers, and other features. Newsletters should include illustrative photographs.

EAs are not required to follow a specific newsletter template. In producing effective newsletters, EAs should consider the following:

- **Alignment with overall communication strategy.** Determine what you wish to achieve by sending out newsletters. How would a newsletter align with and add value to other project-related communication, visibility, and dissemination activities?

- **Clearly identified target groups.** A common goal of newsletters is to build and maintain awareness among target groups. Typical audience groups for project newsletters are:

- Policymakers in the forest and environment sectors
- Foresters, researchers and members of academia, non-governmental organizations, and other technical stakeholders
- Project beneficiaries, such as local communities
- Media and press
- General public.

Newsletters may be produced with a specific group in mind or directed at several groups simultaneously. The tone and language of the newsletter must suit the target group or groups; in some cases, different versions of a newsletter may be needed to reach other groups.

The common types of newsletter articles are:

- **Fillers (100 to 150 words)**
  - News briefs
  - Upcoming activities and events
  - Short messages or announcements
- **Short articles (200 to 300 words)**
  - Consists of a main paragraph with the most important information and sometimes supplementary information
  - Should have an "angle" or perspective that makes the article unique and attracts attention
- **Feature/major articles (500 words or more)**
  - Follows the standard structure of a news article with a main paragraph ("5 Ws") and subsequent paragraphs
  - Often consists of interviews or perspectives of experts or relevant individuals
  - Has an angle or perspective that makes the article unique and interesting
  - May involve the use of side panels, quotes, or fact boxes to break up the text and make reading easier (these maybe 50–125 words in length and consist of key facts, figures, quotes or other information that adds depth to the article)

Recommended frequency

EAs may decide to publish newsletters in their local language(s), the timing determined according to needs. All large projects should aim to publish dedicated project newsletters (either in print, or electronically) in English at least once per year. The articles may be used for integration with APFNet organizational newsletters.

3.2.3. Project briefs, leaflets, flyers, and posters

Project briefs, leaflets, flyers, and brochures are useful for quickly publicizing information to wide audiences. Flyers, leaflets, and posters tend to be printed, short, single- or double-sheet materials used to present simple facts or convey key messages about and achievements of the project, primarily offline. Project briefs are their online equivalent, primarily created for a brief introduction of the project on a website. All have in common that while they aim to introduce the full project with all aspects, they don't provide a great amount of detail and are used as trailer material to incentivize the audience to seek out more extensive material on specific aspects after. Potential impacts should be included as well.

All these shorter trailer materials should aim to give a quick introduction to the project, and thus should contain the following contents:

Type	Content
Overview Table	Project duration, EA, SA, IA, Partners, Main topics, Econom(ies) the project is implemented in, Grant amount, link to project page, contact person
Map	Map showing both the project location within the world and within the economy
General Introduction	Summary of what this project is about and why it's relevant in 1-2 paragraphs
Main topic 1	Key Activity the project is involved in (e.g., forest restoration) with key information (e.g., ha restored, technique used, what makes it novel)
Main topic 2	2nd most important activity the project is involved in (e.g., livelihood improvement) with key information
Other	Other relevant activities (e.g., capacity building) in mention, without necessarily going into detail
Relevance and Future Impact	More detail/updated if produced in later stages of the project

Recommended frequency

For print materials, an initial short project flyer/brochure should be produced right after project initiation to be able to inform people about the project, followed by a longer trailer product later in the project that focuses more on project achievements and impact (especially if it wants to incentivize people to specific actions).

For online materials, it can be sufficient to simply initially produce a project briefly after the project start and then update the project brief on the website and add relevance, key messages and future impact as they become available.

Example: Integrated Forest Ecosystem Management Planning and Demonstration Project in Greater Mekong Sub-region (Cambodia)

3.2.4. Press releases

A press release is a short (1–2 page) document announcing, for example, a (forthcoming or just-ended) event, a newly released publication, or the findings of a recently completed study. Generally, press releases are designed to catch journalists' appetite so they are encouraged to investigate the story further and report on it. In conjunction with direct contact with journalists, press releases can be cost-effective ways of disseminating information on interventions, attracting media coverage of events, and promulgating the lessons learned from studies and interventions.

Recommended frequency: EAs should prepare and issue press releases, as required, in conjunction with newsworthy events (e.g., conferences and workshops), publications, and announcements.

3.2.5. Events, Talks and Presentations

Events and talks, including launch events, presentations at conferences, and panel discussions, are great tools to engage audiences and inform them about the project in person without necessitating them to read project materials. Naturally, the ability of the speaker/presenter to talk about the project in a relevant and engaging way is a key factor in determining the success of using this type of trailer tool.

a) General events and conferences

Organizing events or conferences is a great tool to engage stakeholders on a specific topic, usually in person. Events can have different goals, ranging from providing information on a wide range of topics, which the project or aspects of the project are involved in, to supporting the launch of a very specific part of the project, such as the inauguration of a building or the launch of a knowledge product. Sometimes, they can be an opportunity for stakeholders to meet and strengthen their connections.

While the range of possibilities is large, each event, especially if organized by the EA, should have a clear internal strategy outlined, which includes the goal of the event, expected outcomes, key information or messages, key audience, logistics, budget, and any other partners involved in organizational aspects. Additionally, events should develop their own promotions plan in terms of how and where the event will be advertised ahead of time (e.g., newsletter, website, social media, usually Teaser tools) and what the key outputs are (e.g., an event report).

b) Kick-off and launch events

<u>Project kick-off events</u> specifically should focus on engaging project-relevant stakeholders, informing them about the purpose, goals, and activities of the project, while also receiving feedback on planned activities. Project kick-off events at a minimum should involve members of the PSC (if there is one), the project team, APFNet representatives and key collaborators.

<u>Launch events</u>, which can also be part of a general event or conference, are great tools to promote knowledge products (e.g., a report or book) that the audience may need to learn about. The events themselves serve as a brief introduction to the knowledge products, which are still intended to be read

by attendees. The audience can be both intended for consumers of the knowledge product and the audience that should know about its existence, especially to promote it to others (this can be representatives of an organization/economy that would bring it back to relevant departments).

Similar to general events, an event strategy should be designed ahead of time.

Example: [Conference on Forest Rehabilitation in the Asia-Pacific Region and Associated Meeting]

c) Presentations and Talks

Presentations and talks about the project, be it at a self-organized event or an external conference, should always aim to convey important (but simplified) information about the project while keeping the audience engaged and interested throughout the talk. As such, it is not sufficient for the presentation to merely focus on providing facts. Questions such as "Is this relevant for my audience" or "Would my audience care about this?" should be asked at each step throughout the presentation. If slides are used, they should be clear, uncluttered, and provide enough information but not so much on each slide that distracts the audience from what the speaker has to say. If the presentation is in a language not everybody in the audience is familiar with, speed should be adjusted, and words should be carefully pronounced so as not to lose the audience. Never forget that when giving presentations, you usually have a goal (e.g., to convince others to adopt practices from your project), so achieving that goal should be front and center.

3.2.6. Project Videos

Project videos are a great and engaging way to convey information about a project visually and especially online. However, while it may seem easy to film a few things and make a project video, many attempts fail to consider the storyline or simply do not have film material because it was not filmed at the right time.

Whenever project videos are intended to be produced as part of a project's communications efforts, this should be planned before project start, together with the available budget, as this will determine the amount of effort and scale of the project video. A number of aspects should be considered for project videos:

Aspect	Consideration
Project Video Topic	Does the project video intend to introduce the full project or only aspects of the project?
Length	Is the video intended to be short (e.g., 3-5 minutes) and primarily for the teaser-type promotion or longer (e.g., 20-60 minutes) and intends to describe the project or part of the project in detail?
Storyline	What is the storyline behind the video? If project videos are boring, people are disincentivized to watch the video. Thus, there has to be a storyline involving conflict and solution.
Video Team	Is the video externally produced or does the project team itself produce it? Externally produced videos can be very expensive but are generally of much

	higher quality as film professionals know better what it takes to produce informative and engaging videos.
Video Source Material	What kind of video material would you need for the project video? Which material can be filmed anytime (e.g., interviews with people) and which ones can only be filmed at specific times (e.g., project activities such as thinning)? You need to plan ahead to make sure you have all video material you need.
Platform	How are you planning to distribute the project video? Think about the platforms (e.g., YouTube vs. local screenings) you want to use.

Any project video should, similar to the planning of an event, come with its own plan and strategy for execution. If budget is available, it is recommended to involve professionals early on to ensure best results.

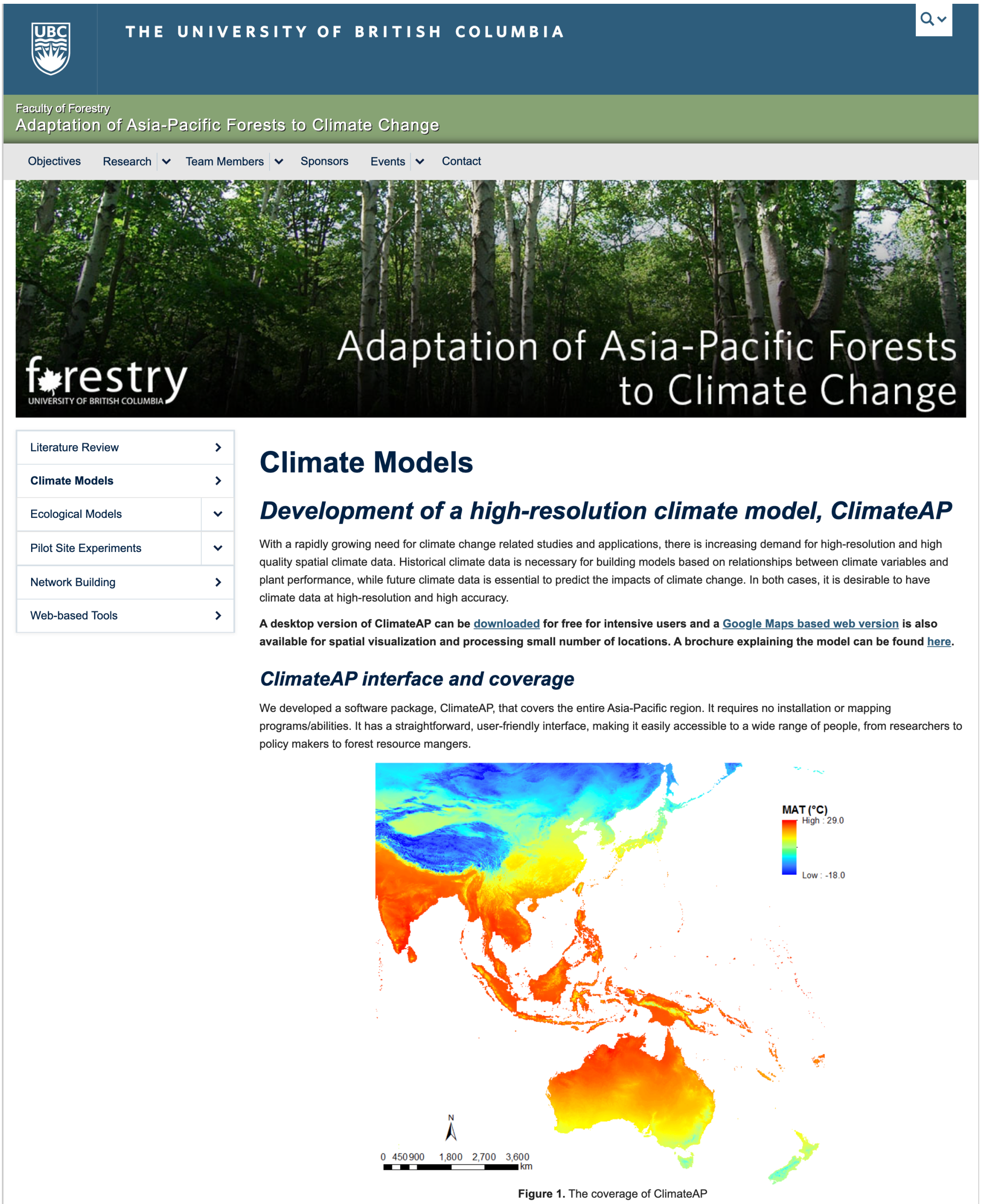
Example: Community-Based Sustainable Forest Management of Sungai Medihit Watershed Project

3.3. Knowledge Resources

3.3.1. Project websites

The development of websites or (subsites in other websites) is encouraged for interventions seeking a wide impact. While in some sense they also serve a promotional purpose, websites are intended as places to store information about the project. EAs that develop dedicated project websites or subsites should do so in close consultation with their APFNet project managers. APFNet should be informed when websites are launched so that links can be established between the project website and that of APFNet. Websites should include the following disclaimer:

> This website is an output of a project implemented with the financial and technical assistance of the Asia-Pacific Network for Sustainable Forest Management and Rehabilitation (APFNet). The views expressed on this website do not necessarily reflect the official opinion of APFNet.



Webpage of the project "Adaption of Asia-Pacific Forests to Climate Change"

EAs and other partners should acknowledge their partnerships with APFNet in suitable ways on their websites or subsites. This includes placing the APFNet logo in a prominent position, accompanied by text such as:

> This project is the result of a partnership with the Asia-Pacific Network for Sustainable Forest Management and Rehabilitation (APFNet), [list other involved partners]. The [name of

organization] gratefully acknowledges the financial and technical support of APFNet in implementing this project.

Where possible, links should be made to the APFNet website using the following URL: www.apfnet.cn. The APFNet Secretariat will publish dedicated news items on its website to boost the visibility of project websites.

Websites can host trailer type materials (videos, news, blog posts) but should also host other knowledge resources, such as technical reports, project summaries, and so on.

3.3.2. Project Summaries

Project summaries typically report longer than project briefs and flyers, which intend to introduce the project in greater detail. While they may not be as detailed as full technical reports, they can span dozens of pages. Compared to project briefs, they fully cover all project activities and give a complete overview of what the project has done and achieved. They are usually produced towards the end of the project, sometimes in collaboration with APFNet.

Project summaries should include the following content:

Component	**Content**
Executive Summary	Gives a 1-page overview of the entire report, including key findings.
Acknowledgments	Acknowledges all contributors to the report. If produced independently of APFNet should still acknowledge APFNet as a donor.
Introduction	Introduces the report and its purpose.
Background (history, geography, ecology, social context)	Gives the audience context of the project, including the history leading to the current state of being, basic geography introducing the natural abiotic conditions and an introduction of important ecological factors, including dominant forest types. Should also introduce relevant cultural and social aspects influencing the project (e.g., minorities, political system, accessibility, etc.).
Project Background and Rationale	Beyond general background, introduce why this project was proposed, who the key actors are and what key goals and objectives of the project are
Project Activities	Describe all project activities and knowledge obtained/goals achieved in this context to date.
Key Insights and Lessons Learned	Key models and insights gained in the project and lessons learned throughout the project.
Conclusion	Conclusion of everything described so far.
References	If literature references were given, list references here.

While the project summaries should rely strongly on the project document, annual work plans and progress reports, it should be kept in mind that public project summaries might be quite different from the standard format of internal reports.

Some such differences can include:

- Activities should not be listed in the Output-Activity style described used in the project document and progress reports but should follow a more topical approach
- Budget disclosure should be screened for publicly available information
- More images and more engaging design in general
- Details about institutional management, PSC, PMB, and details of specific people may not be included

Alternatively, comprehensive reports on the partner organization's work in certain areas (e.g., forest rehabilitation or agroforestry) can be created; however, the audience should be kept in mind.

Examples of project summaries can be seen for a project in the Prek Thnot Watershed in Cambodia and a project in Pu'er, Yunnan Province, China.

3.3.3. Technical Reports and Manuals

Technical reports and manuals generally do not focus on introducing the entire project, but rather focus on a specific aspect/activity/technique that needs a detailed description to explain to other practitioners how to implement the activity in their own local context. These reports can be longer or shorter depending on how technical they are. An important difference from other products previously mentioned is that their purpose is *not* to draw in and entertain; rather, an audience that has previously been drawn in would access this type of material. As such, they are not intended to be particularly exciting (although they should convey information clearly and in a well-structured manner) but should rather provide as much detail as possible. Technical reports should, whenever possible, provide contact information for follow-up.

Example: Holding Forests Accountable: APFNet and Forest Carbon Accounting

3.3.4. Articles in Academic Journals

Whenever possible, projects that have sufficient data about their interventions should aim to publish their results in a peer-reviewed journal to cater to the scientific community. If such an article is to be published, priority generally lies in submitting it to the highest-ranked journals. Submission language is strongly preferred to be English in order to cater to an international audience. Both intentions of submission and acceptance and publishing of the article should be reported to APFNet, and a copy of the article and a link should be sent to the relevant project manager in a timely manner. Any journal article should include an explicit statement that the research was funded by APFNet and include the official project name under which the research was conducted.

4. Recommended C&D outputs by project size

As set out in its C&D strategy, a project may involve using a range of communication tools and outputs designed for local, national, or international audiences to meet the communication aims of the project. Table 3 provides an indicative guide to the types of C&D outputs that should, at minimum, be produced specifically throughout the project by size of the project.

Table 3. Indicative C&D outputs for APFNet Secretariat, by size of project[4]

Duration of project	Recommended outputs and description
Small projects (less than 1 year)	▪ 1 **Kick-off event** ▪ 1 **Trailer product introducing the project** (project brief, flyer, poster, etc.) ▪ **At least 2 news items** on major achievements (e.g., release of studies, publications, significant developments) ▪ **1 story of change** ▪ **1 project summary** ▪ **1 key knowledge resource (report, technical manual, etc.)** ▪ **Photos** of activities, intervention sites and stakeholders
Regular (1 to 3 years)	▪ 1 **Kick-off event** ▪ 1 **Project completion event** ▪ 2 **Trailer products introducing the project** (project brief, flyer, poster, etc.) online and offline ▪ **At least 2 news items** on major achievements (e.g., release of studies, publications, significant developments) **per year** ▪ **2 stories of change** ▪ **1 project summary** ▪ **1 key knowledge resource (report, technical manual, etc.)** ▪ **Photos** of activities, intervention sites and stakeholders ▪ **1 project video**
Large (more than 3 years)	▪ 1 **Kick-off event** ▪ 1 **Project completion event** ▪ 2 **Trailer products introducing the project** (project brief, flyer, poster, etc.) online and offline ▪ Project newsletter, distributed at least twice annually ▪ **At least 2 news items** on major achievements (e.g., release of studies, publications, significant developments) **per year** ▪ **3 total of stories of change, interviews, op-eds, etc.** ▪ **1 project summary** ▪ **1 key knowledge resource (report, technical manual, etc.)** ▪ **Photos** of activities, intervention sites and stakeholders ▪ **1 project video**

[4] New project proposals are required to include a communication plan that conforms to this guide, including a proposed budget. Projects already underway or approved should make a strong effort to develop and implement a communication plan using existing resources.

5. Project visibility

All projects should appropriately acknowledge the role of APFNet as a contributor (of funds, oversight, and expertise) and help raise APFNet's profile. This includes displaying the APFNet visual identity at intervention sites and incorporating written, verbal, and visual recognition of APFNet's role in publications, press releases, interviews, websites, and other dissemination materials.

5.1. APFNet Visual Elements

5.1.1. Naming

APFNet's full name is the *Asia-Pacific Network for Sustainable Forest Management and Rehabilitation*. The abbreviation is APFNet. The correct usage of the organization's name, written in full or as an abbreviation, is compulsory in all official documents as well as in communication materials.

LOGO

WORDMARK

Asia-Pacific Network for Sustainable Forest Management and Rehabilitation

FULL SIGNATURE

5.1.2. Logo

The logo of APFNet plays a very important role in visual communication. Only the logo version presented in this manual should be used. The logo must always be included in all official documents, as well as in all communication materials related to APFNet projects. It should be placed in a central and visible position at the top of the material.

The APFNet logo should only be used in full color. Examples of the APFNet logo used on light and dark background are presented as follow.

Logo with light background

Logo with dark background

5.2. Examples of using APFNet visual identity

APFNet's visual identity should be displayed at project sites (e.g., on permanent signs) and at workshops, conferences, and other related events. All fixed assets, such as vehicles or equipment procured with APFNet funds, should also clearly show APFNet's visual identity.

5.2.1. Billboards at project sites

At the start of the project, the EA shall put up a permanent billboard at a location visible to the public at the main demonstration project sites. The billboard must state at least the project title, the Executing Agency, the donor, and project duration. Additional necessary information, such as a map of the demonstration plots, project goal, objectives, and outcomes, can also be added to the billboard. On the reverse side of the billboard (if existent), a general introduction of APFNet should be displayed to the public.

The front side of the project billboard

The reverse side of the project billboard

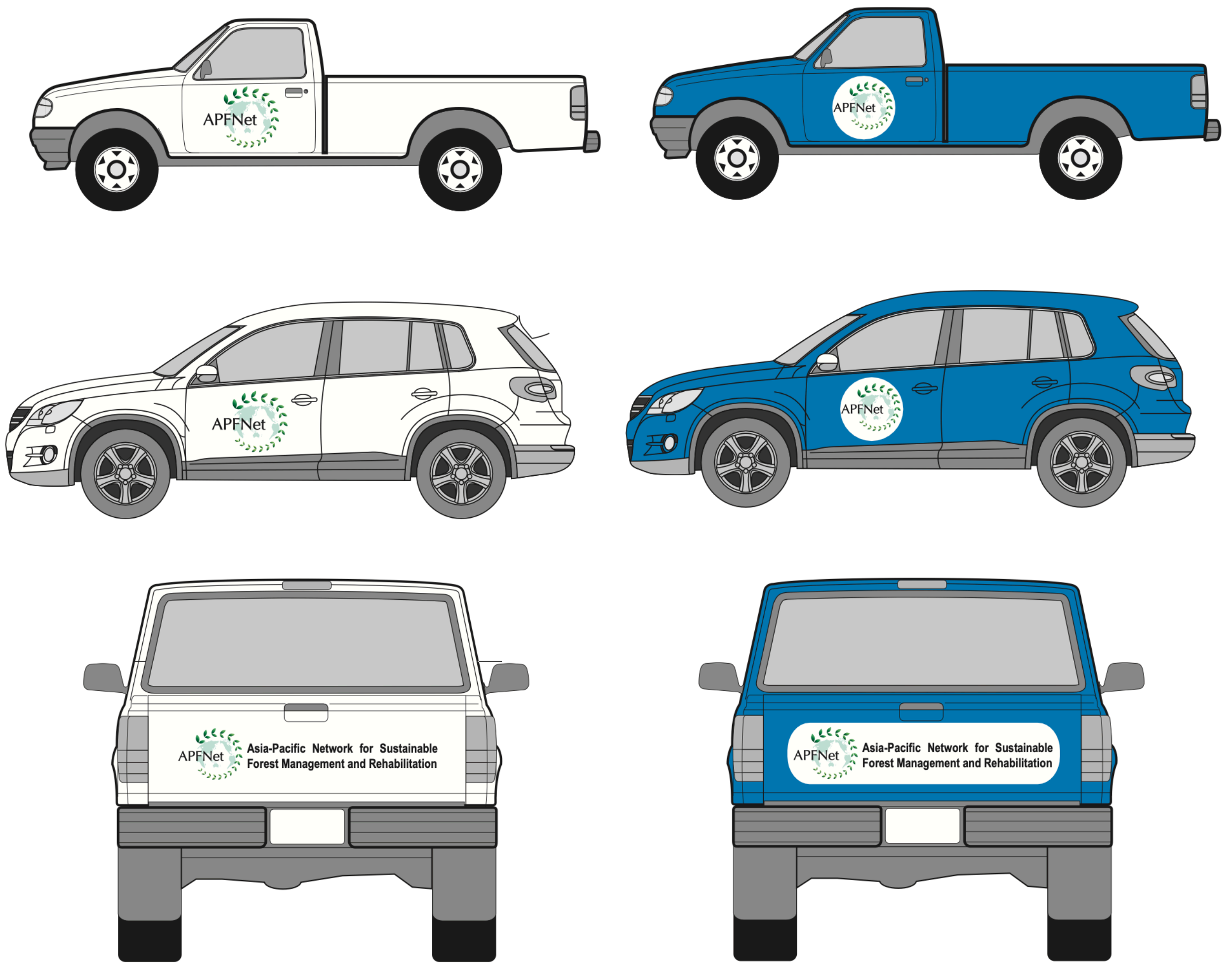
5.2.2. Plaques of the Project Management Office

Within two months after the project initiation, the project EA shall set up a project management team and the project management office. A plaque (minimum size: 60 cm × 35 cm) for the Project Management Office, stating the project title and that APFNet finances the project, should be placed at the entrance of the office, visible to the public.

Examples of plaques for the Project Management Office

5.2.3. Vehicles/motorbikes

The APFNet logo is compulsory for all vehicles and motorbikes funded by APFNet and should be printed and placed on each of vehicle or motorbike. The following pictures illustrate where stickers should be placed on various vehicles.

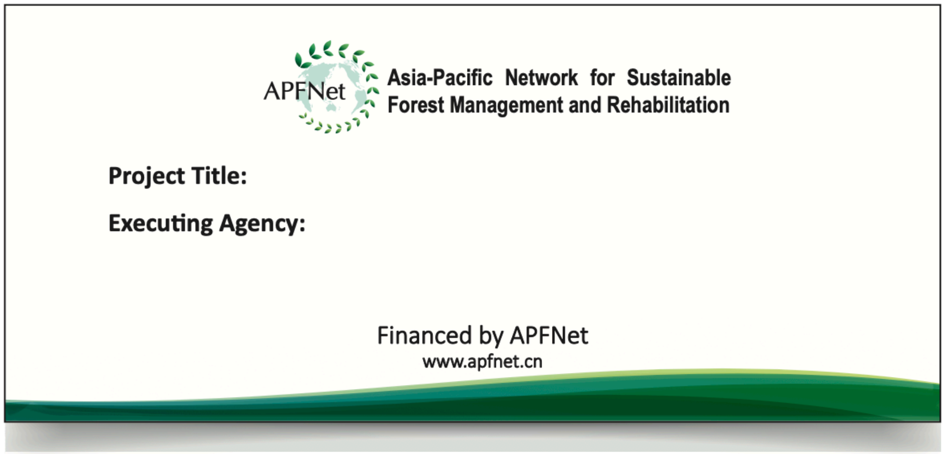


Stickers for vehicles of white/light colour

Stickers for vehicles of dark colour

5.2.4. Equipment

When purchasing high-value equipment (e.g., computer, printer, etc.), stickers should be applied in a visible place. Stickers should contain the following mandatory information: APFNet logo, full name, website address, the title of the project and the EA. For low-value, very small, and consumable equipment, a sticker of only the APFNet logo can be placed on the equipment. For equipment that will be used outdoors, a PVC sticker with UV polishing is compulsory to protect against rain and sunshine. Project-funded wear, such as T-shirts and hats, should also feature an APFNet logo.



Example of stickers for small equipment

6. Documentation

Good project documentation should be done on an ongoing basis throughout the project cycle. Documentation ensures that all materials, information, and documents produced throughout the project are organized and stored for future reference and use.

Documentation is the process of compiling, organizing, and storing materials and documents. It is a component in the continuum of information gathering—knowledge development—communication planning. It is a key ingredient in successful project management and essential for effective communication, but it is often overlooked because many people find it very hard to do. It's often different from conducting the activities themselves. Ideally, it can be included as an activity output. For example, the activity "conduct a workshop on sustainable mangrove aquaculture" only specifies the activity, but not the documentation. One of the outputs of the activity should thus be a workshop report to ensure proper documentation. Nevertheless, a well-designed documentation process is deceptively easy to implement.

Project Part	Documentation
Internal Management and Decisions	Internal project documentation log, including • Challenges faced • Decisions made • Remarks about local conditions/situations to keep in mind
Project Activities	• Basic data: Date, corresponding project activity, people involved, location • Photos • Videos • Internal log documenting activity, including challenges faced

	• Note down feelings/comments of community
Events (workshops, trainings, etc.)	Generally, an event report is required, which should include the following • List of participants with position/role and contact information, if applicable • Photos/video of the event, including of speakers and discussion/activity • Log of what was discussed + opinion of participants • Key insights/lessons learned/outcomes of the event • Follow-up actions post-event
Formal project documents	• Project agreement • Annual work plan • Project progress report • Project change request • Financial and audit report

A documenter for each project should be designated. Additionally, the collected information should be properly and systematically stored. This can be via word documents, photos, excels or physical papers, but it should have a coherent system everyone in the project team knows. Digital backup copies of physical papers are generally recommended. Whenever identified as a formal activity output, the output should also be shared as an annex with APFNet upon submission of the progress report.