Communication Plan

of the FP7 project

MOTivational strength of ecosystem services and alternative ways to express the value of BIOdiverstiy

BIOMOT

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Introduction

This document contains the communication plan of the BIOMOT project. It describes the objectives, the SWOT analyses and the key messages for the project, followed by a description of the target groups, which are subdivided into three categories: a Science-Policy Interface, Science-Science Interface and Science-Society Interface. A schedule of communication actions is included at the end of this document.

The communication plan was designed by the central communication team in close cooperation with the communication teams of all partners using the SPIRAL principles (SPIRAL 2014) and the example of the FP7 project BIOFRESH.

Objectives of the Project

The objective of BIOMOT can be broken down into an overall objective which describes the ideal situation, to be pursued by the whole BIOMOT project and team; and the purpose, to be realised at the end of the project.

The overall objective is to *motivate policymakers, scientists and society to act for biodiversity.* The specific purpose is, to enrich *policymakers, scientists and societal leaders with appropriate knowledge to stimulate key actors in society, politics and business to more decisively act for biodiversity.*

SWOT Analysis of the Project

It was clear that an examination of the strengths and opportunities and of the weaknesses and threats of the BIOMOT-project would be advisable to realise the above-mentioned objective. This inquiry, in the form of a so-called SWOT analysis, would elucidate the basic strengths and principles, and reveal eventual obstacles, and the efforts necessary to overcome them. That would benefit the project as a whole, and greatly enhance the internal and external communication, qua process and effectiveness.

The interdisciplinary character of BIOMOT, and especially the composition of the team, turned out to be a great **strength**. The team accommodates economists, (social)-environmentalists, philosophers, policy scientists, social psychologists, engineers and sociologists; and they all work intensively together. The scientific level is high due to a combination of the right research fields, the right people, high skills and a good team spirit. The used mix of quantitative and qualitative methods is innovative and will produce an extremely rich dataset. The outcomes of the project will be of *great relevance for all layers of state, economy and society in and outside of the EU, for all stakeholders, from the EU policy-level down to local level, who have a direct or indirect stake or other interest in biodiversity.*

The main **weakness** of BIOMOT may be underestimation of the necessity of extensive external *communication from the start on,* and the workload involved in organising this. That weakness is now recognized and tackled. Another possible weakness, although extravagance would perhaps be a better term, is the danger of empirical overload. The BIOMOT-project employs a rich mix of methods, a mix that will deliver abundant information. A possible downside of this is the fact that all these data have to be processed, and that the project-time to fully do so may be too short. Another more theory-based weakness, with mainly analytical and synthetic consequences, is the overemphasis on actor oriented methods, compared to the attention paid to the structural level. The presently emerging theory of motivation to act for biodiversity (key outcome of WP 4) is a conscious response to the weakness, as visible in its current title, which si the Energizing-Structurizing theory of action.

One of the communication-related **opportunities** is that the *research topic is not only highly relevant, but also interesting* for almost everyone, at all levels of society, even if there is no direct professional relationship, which makes it easier to communicate, inform and involve stakeholders. Biodiversity has a *high and growing policy relevance.* The notion of ecosystem services is high on the policy agenda. BIOMOT is about efforts to embed this notion and redefine its applicability, as far as motivational power is concerned; BIOMOT intends to spearhead the discussion on Ecosystem Services, on the question of their adequacy, when it comes to action that benefits biodiversity.

The main **threat** to the project has to be sought at the level of the results. There is a possibility that the results will have a motivational *impact on the individual actor level, but fail to really affect the underlying structures* to generate systemic transitions. A strong focus of results on *public* discourse seems warranted here.

The communication should highlight strong aspects of the project such as the interdisciplinarity, diversity of methodologies and analyses (qualitative and quantitative), richness of datasets (on projects and individual people) quality of research and high relevance for society as a whole, and as a result all stakeholders. BIOMOT communication should emphasize how crucial motivation is for biodiversity action, from the highest policy level downwards, for all actors and within all fields, including the field of ecosystem services. The signalled weaknesses such as possible empirical overload, not enough attention for underlying structural factors, and delayed external communication, can be compensated or mitigated by a combination of extra commitment to communication, the right choice of theory and methods, geared towards smart data selection and analysis, and a strategic choice and application of communication tools, means and media.

This last aspect, i.e. ways to develop an adequate communication strategy, will be worked out in the next part. The first step is the definition of the communications objective. That will be followed by a SWOT analysis of the communication, the formulation of key messages, the selection of target groups, the choice of communication means; and finally the elaboration of a detailed action plan.

Communication Objective

To reach the project's objective the following communication objective has to be realised. **Relevant policy makers, scientists and actors in society know the key messages and tools of the project and find them credible, relevant and legitimate, so that they will be more motivated and capacitated to act or motivate other people to act for biodiversity.**

SWOT Analysis of the Communication

A communication *strength* is that there is now a *strong communication team at the lead partner*, which leads the internal and external communication around BIOMOT. This team builds a sound basis for the BIOMOT communication. Another strength of the communication is the *sound scientific basis* of the research that the project communication is built on. In addition the communication has a *high synthetic capacity in designing the key messages.* The *cultural diversity* in the consortium ensures consideration of specific cultural preferences in the way messages should be presented and relevant stakeholders approached.

One of the *weaknesses* of the communication is that it was *underestimated* in the beginning of the project. A *late start* and *weak funding* are consequences of this underestimation. Another outcome is the *weak involvement of non-leading partners*, which is an after-effect of the non-inclusion of substantial communication in the design of the project.

An *opportunity* for the communication of the project is the *rising attention to the risks of the single focus on Ecosystem Services* and the *high relevance of the key messages* for almost everybody. The key messages in addition have direct *policy impact*.

A *threat* for the communication of the project is the *information overload* and related to that the *lack of time especially policymakers* have. This overload and the lack of time make it difficult to reach policymakers with our messages and make them aware of the relevance of the project and the outcomes. The use of audiovisual media would make it easier to work against the information overload and lack of time but the *key messages are highly verbal and difficult to visualise*. In addition, the *key messages lie outside of the main discourse of Ecosystem Services* and even contradicts their discourse to a certain extent.

The communication plan should compensate weaknesses and threats by using strengths and opportunities. The underestimation in the project's beginning can be compensated by the strong communication team at the lead-partner and its effective planning and delegation of communication

actions. A distinct communication plan and frequent monitoring of the implementation of its actions can help to motivate non-leading partners. To compensate policymakers' lack of time the project's key messages can be linked to the rising attention for risks in policy circles to the risks of putting all bets in the Ecosystem Services basket. Therefore the leading-partner's communication team has to seek for a connection between the key messages and the main discourse. By combining verbal and visual elements like a video clip, the project's key messages can be visualised and compensate for policymakers' lack of time by transferring information in a short time.

Key Topics

Key topics translate the objectives into specific messages. The communication content is built around these key topics and the communication means are directly derived from them. For BIOMOT, the following five topics are constructed, of which II to V represent the respective work packages. Through this approach every work package is represented in one topic.

I. The importance of motivation to act for biodiversity.
II. The limitations of (economic) valuation for motivation.
III. Motivational key factors for initiating biodiversity action.
IV. Motivational factors in biodiversity policy projects.
V. Enabling frames/factors for energizing and structurizing biodiversity action in and through the public discourse.

Target Groups

The BIOMOT project and the results produced during this project are relevant for policymakers, scientists and society. For all three target groups, interfaces were designed with a special storyline for each of them; Science-Policy Interface, Science-Science Interface, Science-Society Interface.

Science-Policy Interface
For policymakers the communication line presents a broad view of the topic by starting with the explanation of the concept of biodiversity in relation to its relevance in BIOMOT followed by the connection to Ecosystem Services and what they are. This explanation includes the limitations Ecosystem Services have and leads to the impact and importance of the question BIOMOT tries to answer i.e. the key issues on people's motivation to act for biodiversity. The line ends with a presentation of the results and the answer to the question what motivates people to act for biodiversity.

Biodiversity → Ecosystem Services → Limits → Alternative Motivations → Results

Science-Science Interface

The line of communication for scientists starts with a short definition of biodiversity as applicable in BIOMOT and relates it to the idea of Ecosystem Services. Here a contradictory view of the topic is presented by focussing on the limitations of this ES approach. This emphasises the need to know what the motivations behind action for biodiversity are and through this the importance of the BIOMOT research. This line of communication also ends with a presentation of the results.

Biodiversity → Ecosystem Services → Limits (negative) → Alternative Concepts of Motivation → Results

Science-Society Interface

Interested members of society will get offered a line of communication starting with an explanation of what biodiversity/nature is. In this interface both words are used to describe the same concept because it seems that some members of society experience the word biodiversity as rather abstract and difficult. The following step will be to put the concept of biodiversity in a context of everyday life that interested members of society can identify with. The message will be presented in a way that individuals realise that he/she is not the only one who loves nature and that acting in a group is most effective. Through this approach negative consequences of decreasing biodiversity becomes clear and the importance of knowledge about motivation to act for biodiversity gets emphasised. Just like the two others, this communication line ends with a presentation of the results.

Biodiversity/Nature → Relevance of the Context, Consequences → Results: Concepts and recommendations for effective motivations to act for nature.

Means of Communication

Several factors should be taken into consideration for the choice of communication means. Communication is built of a combination of verbal, non-verbal, vocal and non-vocal symbols. Depending on the combination of symbols a channel and medium are chosen. A channel is an infrastructure through which symbols can be transferred from one place to the other. A medium is a concrete, tangible means through which a message is communicated (Veenman, 2009). Messages transported with vocal and verbal symbols (spoken words) can be transported by channels such as face-to-face situations, telephone and video outputs. A medium could be a speech at a conference, a meeting or a telephone call. Verbal but non-vocal symbols (written word) can be transported by channels such as printed documents, computers and the internet. A medium could be a book, an e-mail or a newsletter. According to Daft, Lengel and Trevino (1987) the richness of a message depends on four criteria. First, the possibility of instant feedback such as questions. Second, the possibility to integrate multiple cues such as physical presence, words and numbers. Third, the variety of language

which means that depending on the content, different kinds of language are needed. Fourth, the personal focus which means that the meaning of a message can be transported in a more complete way when factors like body language are included. This means that a rich message is one which includes all four factors like a face-to-face conversation. An unaddressed flyer containing nothing but numbers in contrast has a very low richness.

Bearing this in mind, the communication team has chosen the communication means for each interface. All three interfaces (Science-Policy, Science-Science, Science-Society) use written as well as face-to-face communication media and try to get into a dialogue with the members of the target groups. Some communication means are suitable for all three interfaces. The Advisory Board as well as the panel contains expertise concerning all three interfaces. The flyer and newsletter (published on a monthly basis) are distributed inter alia amongst the panel members of all countries. The Mid-Term conference is meant to be attended by members of all three interfaces focusing on impact, through its invited attendants, its messages and its interactive design. The official BIOMOT website is a pool of information also meant to be used by members of all three interfaces. Video output such as filmed interviews will be put on the website for everyone to see.

Science-Policy Interface

For the Science-Policy Interface, the networks of all work package leaders will be used to inform policy makers about BIOMOT face-to-face. In addition BIOMOT was represented at conferences of CEE-Web (Budapest) and IPBES (Leipzig). More events are planned, such as the ESP conference in Costa Rica. In March 2014 the Mid-Term conference of the BIOMOT research consortium took place in Brussels, including relevant policymakers from Belgium and the Netherlands. In June 2014, interviews will be hold with policymakers on how they prefer BIOMOT results to be presented to them so they can take the results in. Around April 2015, as may project partners as possible will stage a policymaker meeting to foster a dialogue. At the end of the project in 2015 there will be an international high level final conference of BIOMOT held in Brussels. Journalists and policymakers will be invited. The conference content and process will be designed for impact.

Written media will also be used to inform policy makers about BIOMOT. Next to the shared communication means mentioned above journals, policy briefs and EU platforms are examples for media by which written or visual output from all partners can be published. In addition every country publishes in local newspapers and other mass media. To make sure to reach policymakers in all partner countries and to set the right tone regarding differences in intercultural communication every country will produce content for at least one newsletter and every policy brief will be circulated for feedback from partners. Five more policy briefs are planned to be published.

Science-Science Interface

Within the Science-Science Interface face-to-face communication actions were attended such as the CEE-Web conferences and the first stakeholder meeting of IPBES. More events are planned such as the ISSRM conference in Hannover (June 2014) and the ESP conference in Costa Rica (August 2014). Before August 2015 each country will present BIOMOT at an in-house colloquium.

The focus of the Science-Science Interface however lies on written media, especially peer-reviewed science journals, e.g. Ecological Economics, Environmental Conservation, Ecology and Society. In addition key research documents are made available at the BIOMOT website.

Science-Society Interface

The Science-Society Interface organises two discussions at relevant organisations in each country to ensure the face-to-face communication and get feedback from interested members of society.

Further actions are focused on written media. By inviting journalists to the Final conference mass media will be enabled to report about the BIOMOT findings. Examples for mass media are general public conservation journals, general journals and newspapers. As said already, all this will be supported by the BIOMOT website.

Communication Action Plan

Communication Actions	Content	Interface	Time
Website	Reports, Policy Briefs, Newsletters, Findings for All and other documents are published on the website.	Sci-Pol Sci-Soc Sci-Sci	Continuous
Findings for All #1	What motivates people in biodiversity projects? A first encounter.	Sci-Pol Sci-Soc Sci-Sci	01/03/2014
Findings for All #2- #15	First results of the motivational cards is planned as #2; the others are yet t.b.d.	Sci-Pol Sci-Soc Sci-Sci	Continuous
Policy Brief #1	Limitations to economic environmental valuation.	Sci-Pol	Done
Policy Brief #2	Towards a more comprehensive classification of ecosystem services.	Sci-Pol	Done
Policy Brief #3	Transdisciplinary research for biodiversity action.	Sci-Pol	Done
Policy Brief #4	t.b.d, e.g. on childhoods	Sci-Pol	Around Oct.

			2014
Policy Brief #5	t.b.d, e.g. on political framing	Sci-Pol	Around Dec. 2014
Policy Brief #6	t.b.d, e.g. on economic discourse	Sci-Pol	Around Feb. 2015
Policy Brief #7	t.b.d, e.g. on SPI	Sci-Pol	Around April 2015
Policy Brief #8 and onwards	BIOMOT results	Sci-Pol	Around July 2015
Newsletter #1	After Value – Putting a price tag on Biodiversity doesn't work.	Sci-Pol Sci-Soc Sci-Sci	23/01/2014
Newsletter #2	Profile of workpackage 3 leader Marino Bonaiuto.	Sci-Pol Sci-Soc Sci-Sci	11/03/2014
Newsletter #3	Profile of workpackage 2 leader Tom Dedeurwaerdere.	Sci-Pol Sci-Soc Sci-Sci	19/03/2014
Newsletter #4	The Mid-Term conference.	Sci-Pol Sci-Soc Sci-Sci	Before the end of April 2014
Newsletter #5- #10	Profiles other WP leaders; news from partner countries, …...	Sci-Pol Sci-Soc Sci-Sci	Continuous
Attended Conferences (face-to-face)	Members of BIOMOT frequently attend conferences to tell the BIOMOT story and results	Sci-Pol Sci-Soc Sci-Sci	Continuous
Seminars and workshops (face-to-face)	Members of BIOMOT frequently attend seminars to discuss the BIOMOT project in all partner countries (e.g. Klugheit-Glück-Gerechtigkeit, Nature Is Not for Sale etc.).	Sci-Pol Sci-Soc Sci-Sci	Continuous
Miniworkshop and Colloquia (face-to-face)	Members of BIOMOT organized a public miniworkshop to discuss BIOMOT (Soeterbeek workshop,	Sci-Soc Sci-Sci	Continuous

	meeting at University of Wageningen, late-night public discussion at Science Museum The Hague, ……).		
Various public events focussed on one interface (face-to-face)	The BIOMOT partners organise various public events for focussed on the three interfaces (e.g. at the Edinburg Parliament, the Manchester Museum, Science Museum at Brussels etc.).	Sci-Pol Sci-Soc Sci-Sci	Continuous
Public dissemination	Invitations, press releases, presentations to public media	Sci-Soc	Focus on April- August 2015
Meetings with relevant stakeholders of the three inter-faces	BIOMOT members repeatedly attend formal and informal meetings to tell the BIOMOT story (e.g. WikiWoods.org, Head of NGO NABU-MV, etc.).	Sci-Pol Sci-Soc Sci-Sci	Continuous
Panel	Every BIOMOT partner started a panel consisting of members of all three interfaces to foster a dialogue.	Sci-Pol Sci-Soc Sci-Sci	Continuous
Advisory Board	Every BIOMOT partner sat up an advisory board to consult with at certain points during the project.	Sci-Pol Sci-Soc Sci-Sci	Continuous

BIOMOT communication in terms of the SPIRAL Recommendations to EU Research Projects (SPIRAL 2014, p. 26)

SPIRAL recommendations	Activities	Interface	Time
Design strong strategy for all three interfaces, dissemination and action plan according to SPIRAL	This communication plan	Sci-Sci Sci-Soc Sci-Pol	Done
Engage with policy, social and scientific actors	Members of the Advisory Board are relevant actors in the interface they are representing as well as members of the panel.	Sci-Sci Sci-Soc Sci-Pol	Continuous
Cooperation – work with other projects	Various communication actions (e.g. conferences) are planned and implemented in cooperation with BESAFE. Other projects to be invited.	Sci-Sci Sci-Soc Sci-Pol	Continuous
Ensure early links with relevant actors	Dialogue with relevant actors on BIOMOT results.	Sci-Sci Sci-Soc Sci-Pol	Done
Communicate different types of knowledge	Policy briefs, Newsletters, Findings for all, website.	Sci-Sci Sci-Soc Sci-Pol	Continuous
Maintain a database of key contacts and build the 'brand' of your project	The database was developed together with the panel and gets updated on a regular basis.	Sci-Sci Sci-Soc Sci-Pol	Continuous
Make project scientists aware of how the different interfaces work	By core communication team on BIOMOT workshops.	Sci-Sci	Continuous
Ensure you have knowledge brokers on board	BIOMOT relies on capacities of WP leaders, the communication team and talents within partners.	Sci-Sci Sci-Soc Sci-Pol	Continuous
Improve involvement of policymakers, scientists and societal actors at relevant levels	BIOMOT panel, lunch meetings and other network meetings are used to involve relevant actors at various levels.	Sci-Sci Sci-Soc Sci-Pol	Continuous

Use advisory boards and stakeholder groups	Panels and advisory boards are consulted.	Sci-Sci Sci-Soc Sci-Pol	Continuous
Use existing science-policy, science-science and science-society inst.	IPBES, CEEWeb, ESP; others to be identified.	Sci-Sci Sci-Soc Sci-Pol	Continuous
Develop sections for the interfaces on website	Not done explicitly but website pre-indicates type of knowledge per document.	Sci-Sci Sci-Soc Sci-Pol	Done
Ensure interaction events at the end of the project, and beyond	Various presentations at conferences, Newsletters, Policy briefs and Findings For All; website; Final conference	Sci-Sci Sci-Soc Sci-Pol	Continuous
Engage with users when developing scenarios, storylines, models and decision-support tools	Interactions are present but not explicitly organized in BIOMOT		
Connect with present and past projects working on related topics	Strongly connected with BESAFE; others are now grwong, e.g. GREENSURGE and TEEB.	Sci-Sci	Continuous
Produce targeted and attractive briefs	>8 Policy briefs 10 Newsletters 15 Findings For All	Sci-Sci Sci-Soc Sci-Pol	Continuous
Make use of existing dissemination channels	BIOMOT has been mentioned in media already; systematic action to be staged around Final conference	Sci-Soc Sci-Pol	Focus May-August 2015
Use open meetings for dissemination	CEEWeb, ISSRM; ESP; to be stepped up.		
Disseminate more broadly	Video output, Newsletters, Briefs, Findings for all, website, lunch meetings, colloquia, public discussions	Sci-Sci Sci-Soc Sci-Pol	Continuous
Provide training in interfaces	Not done or planned		
Make you data available to other researchers, policy makers, and the public	Website, Findings For All; peer-reviewed papers, ….; all will be open access.	Sci-Sci Sci-Soc Sci-Pol	Continuous

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