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BGR



IWRM in the Cuvelai-Etосha Basin

Training Module

on

Communication and Facilitation

for

**Basin Support Officers and Basin Management
Committee members**

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Developed by

Desert Research Foundation of Namibia (DRFN) and Heyns International Water Consultancy (HIWAC), October 2012, on behalf of the "IWRM in the Cuvelai-Etосha Basin" - Project

Table of Contents

Learning objectives	3
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	4
CHAPTER 2: MAKE MEETINGS WORK	4
CHAPTER 3: REPRESENTATION	6
CHAPTER 4: STAKEHOLDER MOBILISATION	6
References	7
Annexures	8
Annex 1: Presentation on Communication and Facilitation skills.....	8

Learning objectives

At the end of this module it is expected that a Basin Support Officer (BSO), Basin Management Committee (BMC) members and other participants are:

- equipped with effective networking skills and sharing of information
- able to effectively manage meetings
- acquire good leadership skills that are beneficial in executing their activities

Materials needed:

- Flip chart stand and paper
- Brown sheets
- Pens
- Cards
- Notebooks

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1. What is communication?

Communication is simply the act of transferring information from one place to another or the act of sending and receiving of ideas, thoughts, or feelings from one person to another or more persons in such a way that the person who receives it understands it the same way that the sender wants him/her to understand.

1.2. Methods of communication

Communication methods can be broadly categorised into: 1) verbal and 2) written communication.

Verbal Communication: includes face-to-face, telephone, radio, television or other media. For stakeholders in the Cuvelai-Etосha Basins, face-to-face e.g. meetings and radio would be best suited to convey information or raise awareness on certain issues. Verbal communication has the following advantages: allows for direct exchange of ideas and information with stakeholders, it makes it possible to have a detailed discussion with stakeholders, thus clarifying issues and one is able to communicate to millions of stakeholders if using the radio option.

Written Communication: letters, e-mails, books, newsletters, posters, brochures or via other media. When using this method it is important to ensure that the documents are translated into a local language that stakeholders would understand. Moreover, one should also consider the use of visuals. This method has an advantage in a sense that the documents can be filed for future use.

Visualizations: visualisation such as graphs, charts, maps, cards and other visualizations can communicate messages/information effectively. Visualisation is important because it helps people to participate, to understand issues and it provides a permanent record of discussions and decisions taken at a meeting.

CHAPTER 2: MAKE MEETINGS WORK

2.1. What is facilitation?

Means to facilitate the interactions between members of a group of people so as to improve the communication between people. Facilitation of a meeting helps to encourage participation, allows the flow of ideas, reduces unproductive time and allows for active participation. A facilitator's role:

- to help the group accomplish a common task within the time available and to assist them in making necessary decisions and plans for implementation.
- A facilitator does not make decisions for the group, but suggests ways to help the group move forward. S/he makes participants feel that they are in charge and that each person has a role to play.

2.2. How to prepare for facilitation of meetings?

Preparation by the facilitator and of the facilities and participants is key to ensure a successful meeting or workshop. For details, refer to the manual “GTZ & LGA. 1995. Make Meetings Work: A Course on Visualisation and Moderation” that was used during training.

Preparation by the facilitator

- Read the background material and familiarize with the topic
- Anticipate pit-fall that may be experienced during the meeting
- Assemble required materials relevant for the meeting
- Prepare an agenda ahead at a time and circulate it to all the participants. Also ensure that the presenters on the agenda are aware and have confirmed their availability accordingly.

Preparation of the participants

- Advised of the topic so that they can prepare ahead at a time
- Advised of the time, place and agenda
- Who is to contribute what (presentations/speeches/materials)
- Advised on the meals and accommodation. Participants should be informed whether they have to bring along their meals or provision is made for them.

Preparation of the facilities

- Set-up the venue (e.g. room or under a tree)
- Make sure needed equipment are in order and it important to test them ahead at a time to prevent delays on the day of the meeting.
- Supply of food and refreshments
- Environment – ensure that it is a suitable venue for the event e.g. meeting

2.3. How to facilitate meetings?

- Break the ice – depending on the size of the group, allow the participants to introductions themselves.
- Introduce the objectives of the meeting, just so the participants know what to expect.
- During the meeting:
 - Guide the meeting towards achieving its goal
 - Encourage contribution from all, esp. the shy and quite ones. This could be done through brainstorming sessions where you give each participant cards to write down their suggestions or thoughts and this is anonymous.
 - Stop any individual from dominating the meeting. This has to be done in a polite and careful way and not directly.
 - Manage the pace of the meeting to maintain interest by the participants
 - Take regular breaks to allow people to mingle and relax. Also consider ice breakers e.g. jokes.
 - Summarise the results of the discussion at the end of each discussion point.

2.4. What are the important things to keep in mind when facilitating meetings?

- Use of positive body language

- Avoid irritating habit e.g. chewing gum, playing with pen, watch or anything that irritates the participants.
- Maintain eye contact
- Maintain the correct volume, speed and voice projection
- Listen to the views of the participants and ask questions to show that you understand and have captured their suggestions.
- Know the culture and norms. It is advisable to know the culture and norms of the participants/group. Find out before the meeting.
- Be patient
- Stand up to be seen - the facilitator should stand in front where all participants can see him/her when facilitating or expressing themselves.
- Speak to be heard – facilitator should speak loud enough for participants to hear him/her. Especially if in a group there are elderly people.
- Do not speak too long to be appreciated – the facilitator should give a chance to the participants to express themselves.

At the end of the meeting, allow the participants to evaluate the meeting. This will be useful for future, to allow improvement.

NOTE: Other sections such as 1) chairing of meetings, 2) minute taking, 3) time management, and 4) effective presentation are included in the module on “Project management and administrations”, page 23 – 27.

CHAPTER 3: REPRESENTATION

This topic (Representation) is covered in the module on “Stakeholder participation and engagement” for Basin Support Officers (BSOs) and Basin Management Committees (BMCs), page 12.

CHAPTER 4: STAKEHOLDER MOBILISATION

This topic (Stakeholder mobilisation) is covered in the module on “Stakeholder participation and engagement” for Basin Support Officers (BSOs) and Basin Management Committees (BMCs), page 4 – 7.

References

1. GTZ & LGA. 1995. Make Meetings Work: A Course on Visualisation and Moderation.
2. Kruger, B. Personal Communication (2013). Facilitation skills. Windhoek, Namibia.

Annexures

Annex 1: Presentation on Communication and Facilitation skills

See separate document for presentation.