

GUIDELINES FOR ASSESSING IMPACTS OF MEDIA ACTIVITIES IN THE POVERTY ENVIRONMENT INITIATIVE (PEI)

The overall objective of the PEI in Rwanda is to reduce poverty and improve the livelihoods of poor. The strategy has been, and continues to involve incorporating environmental issues into national planning and development processes with the involvement and participation of civil society, community based organizations and private sector on the importance of environmental protection.

A significant component of the support to environmental mainstreaming that was undertaken by PEI in the first phase was a media strategy. Radio programmes were run twice a week for six months and covered topical issues on poverty and environment. A relatively broader approach for enhanced public awareness and media sensitization is planned as an essential component of PEI phase II. This will involve television, radio, and print media as well as other appropriate media avenues for creating public awareness on poverty environment issues.

The purpose of these guidelines on how to assess/measure impacts of media activities, is to support the media consultants that are commissioned to produce Radio and TV programmes for the PEI Phase II. The general approach is that all communication efforts should be possible to follow up and evaluate in order to control the process and to gain knowledge on the effects/impacts of the efforts among main target audiences.

The steps/guidelines below are applicable for all media activities in the PEI (radio, tv and print media).

I. Understand the situation and evaluate earlier experiences

The current formulated main objective for the media activities is to ensure the broad coverage of environmental issues in Rwanda and poverty environment relationships in particular among the general public. The overall objective is that all media efforts will support Rwanda Environment Management Authority (REMA) in its execution of the environmental protection mandate.

Effective implementation of the upcoming media activities and facilitation of reliable monitoring and evaluation will depend, in a significant measure; on experiences from earlier activities undertaken on media strategy. It is also important to make the links between the overall objective for PEI and the media activities clear.

A number of questions have been formulated to guide the process of evaluating the level of success on the media strategy based on results from PEI I & II. Here below are questions that will be used by PM and the media consultants to generate information on media activities already executed under the project.

Examples of questions/actions:

- a) Define the overall objectives of the PEI programme and the timeframe in order to link with the media activities! Discuss and understand the objectives.
- b) Discuss earlier experiences. Are there any evaluations done on the radio programmes that were broadcast in phase 1, for example. Did the radio programmes work? Did they support the overall objective?

For the activities in phase I, i.e. the radio programmes, and for the TV programmes that are already broadcast in phase II it is possible to evaluate the process and the outcome to some extent. But again it is important to be very clear about the objectives. Was it to increase the knowledge, change attitudes and/or behaviour.

- When were the programmes broadcasted?
- How many programmes in total?
- How many listeners/viewers? Here it is possible to estimate. How many people, for example, have access to radio/TV. Access means that one can listen to the radio or view the TV, it is not necessary to own one. Ask ORINFOR and HCP for example.
- Was the message coordinated? Did it have a human face?

These steps can be done by simple research. The next step is a bit more demanding.

- Carry out a small survey among listeners/viewers (about 20). It might be difficult though to identify listeners after such long time. They need to remember. But if it is possible it is worthwhile. Questions to be asked, for example and depending on the objectives, are:
 - Did you listen/view frequently? How many programmes?
 - What was good about the programmes and why?
 - Did you learn something? Was the content relevant?
 - Did it change your attitudes towards environmental issues?
 - Did you do something as a direct result? What?
 - What was bad?
 - What kind of information do you need?
 - Any other comments, wishes, needs?

2. Know your target audience

TV, radio and television are excellent channels for masscommunication. But in order to reach the audience it helps to ensure that the message gets to the right people and that they absorb and/or act on the information. Depending on the results from the situation analysis there might be a need to develop a baseline.

Examples of questions/actions:

- a) Do we know who the target audience is? Is the general public a too broad definition?
Are we for example focusing on rural or urban people and does this change the content?
- b) What motivates our audience? What are their needs?
- c) Make a small survey/focus group if possible!

3. Set clear and achievable objectives

Make it clear what we want to achieve in the forthcoming media activities. Use the results above. There is a big difference between increase knowledge/raise awareness and to change attitudes and/or behaviour.

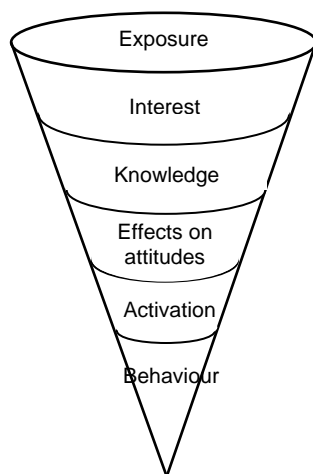
Radio: According to the ToR the objective is to increase the understanding and participation of the entire population of Rwanda with focus on decision makers, local government, private sector and civil society. (What is the level of understanding today among the different stakeholders?)

TV: According to the ToR the objective is to produce a “Plateau” for television production for 30 minutes with panel guided illustrative interviews. (There must be another objective!)

Examples of questions/actions:

- a) Formulate clear, realistic and measurable objectives based on the situation analysis and the target audience research. What do we want to achieve? What is possible to achieve? Again - do we want to raise awareness, change attitudes or behaviour – or all three.

E.g. How many listeners and viewers can we expect? The estimation is based on theory and experience in terms of behavioural change. As a model for the expected impact the following simplified figure can be used. The figure illustrates different steps towards behavioural change. The figure shows e.g. that there is a big, big gap between exposure and behavioural change.



4. Develop strategies, formulate messages and set channels

Careful thought needs to be given to the message that appeal to our audience (which is going to be defined above). The impact of the message will depend on the channels. In this case the channels are already set.

Examples of questions/actions:

- a) Is there a central message that should be set? Check with the overall objective!
- b) Is there a need/is it possible to tailor the message?
- c) Is there a need to coordinate the efforts?

5. Management and Implementation

The effect of the media activities will depend to some extent on the quality of the implementation.

Examples of questions/actions:

- a) Develop a project management process.
- b) Develop a crisis management plan! What if e.g. the response to the activities is negative? Is it possible, necessary to test the messages (programmes) on the target audience in a focus group?
- c) Ensure continuous feedback within the project.

6. Monitor and Evaluate

Did the activities take place and did we reach the objectives. There are basically three different ways of monitoring and evaluation.

- Process – what messages were communicated to how many people, where and how often?
- Outcome – what was the change in the audience/s awareness, attitudes or behavior? **This requires a survey before and after the activities (a baseline). E.g How many viewed the TV programmes at the start and after, how many listened to the radio programmes in Phase I and how many listened after phase II?**
- Impact – what impact had the programmes on the overall objective? **N.B it is important to pick the right measure, we can not measure behavioural change if the objective is to change attitudes or to increase the knowledge.**

Examples of questions/actions:

- a) Make a baseline survey if possible!
- b) Get feedback from the audience and document!
- c) Document and report the evaluation.

Recommendations/way forward

A small workshop/meeting. Discuss (PMU and mediaconsultants) the objectives of the PEI and develop realistic targets for the media activities. This may also serve the purpose of linking the activities together (win-win). To assure that we have the same main message, that we learn from each other etc.