

Review and Readership Survey of the IUCN/WWF *Arborvitae* Newsletter

Executive Summary

Recommendations

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Purpose and Scope of Current Review and Survey

Arborvitae has evolved in recent years, including the move towards dedicating each issue to a particular theme; this has involved significant financial and human resource investment by the forest programmes of both IUCN and WWF.

Before committing to maintain this level of investment into the future, IUCN and WWF have commissioned this review of the *Arborvitae* newsletter in order to clearly identify how useful and effective the newsletter is considered to be by its readership, and what further improvements they would like to see in it.

The reviewer has thus addressed the following;

- does the newsletter reach the right target audience (key forest/other sector decision makers and practitioners who are active in forest conservation or whose actions impact on forest conservation)?
- does the newsletter satisfactorily meet the information/knowledge needs of the target audience in terms of content, style and format?
- what changes or improvements are needed to the newsletter, including in terms of content, style, format, design, frequency and distribution, to improve its effectiveness and influence?

Methodology used for the *Arborvitae* Mailing list Review

Arborvitae Mailing list Review

A detailed analysis of the present mailing list distribution has been undertaken to determine the readership profile, the breakdown into geographical regions and also breakdown by main categories of organization-types.

The mailing list was then compared to an ideal-case scenario, which involved identifying an ideal readership and also identifying which countries and categories of organization-type could be considered key targets.

Comparison with IUCN Membership list

As part of the mailing list analysis an appraisal was made of how many of the addresses appearing in the IUCN Membership List receive the *Arborvitae* newsletter.

Methodology used for the *Arborvitae* Readership Survey

A detailed questionnaire was created, aiming to be brief and easily completed, containing mostly multiple-choice answers simply requiring the addition of a mark to respond.

A hard copy of the questionnaire and a self-addressed envelope were enclosed in each copy of *Arborvitae* No 28. There was also an announcement giving the URL address of the on-line version of the questionnaire hosted by Survey Monkey. The WWF and IUCN websites furthermore provided readers with the possibility of downloading the questionnaire.

Additionally, the views, opinions and advice of key IUCN and WWF staff associated with *Arborvitae*, both past and present, were sought.

Recommendations to improve the *Arborvitae* Mailing list, based on the results of the analysis

Readership profile

Overall the readership profile and matches the ideal readership, and needs no modification, other than to make serious attempts to increase readership.

It is recommended that efforts be made to increase readership within the current profile.

Geographical Distribution

A number of countries where distribution of *Arborvitae* is either very restricted or non-existent were identified. It is of course a drawback for many of these countries that *Arborvitae* is available only in English, and this is reflected in the low distribution rate in some cases.

It is recommended that strenuous efforts should be made to increase the distribution within those countries that are seriously under-represented in relation to their forested areas and/or timber imports, and to commence a subscription campaign in those countries that are not yet on the mailing list.

Distribution by category of organizational type

The most obvious gap in the present mailing list is the insufficient distribution of *Arborvitae* to decision makers at government ministerial level.

It is recommended that ways should be considered to include in the distribution list the Ministries of Forests, Agriculture, Finance, Tourism, Environment and Natural Resources and Education of ALL member states, or if this proves too expensive, then at least to those countries identified as being essential target countries.

*Comparison of *Arborvitae* mailing list with IUCN Membership list*

The reviewer identified 507 IUCN members engaged in the field of forestry conservation who are not on the mailing list and just 95 IUCN members that are on the *Arborvitae* mailing list.

It is strongly recommended that the remaining 507 names be added to the list.

The opportunity to update the master mailing list, entering in up-to-date details from the over 200 replies to the Survey should not be missed.

It is recommended that a clerk be assigned the task of incorporating the data from replies to the survey, plus the IUCN members, into the master mailing list.

Recommendations to improve the content, style and periodicity of *Arborvitae*, based on the results of the reader survey

The overall consensus of opinion from readers on content, style and periodicity is very positive so very little need be changed in these areas.

One third of readers indicated that they would accept and/or prefer to receive *Arborvitae* electronically.

It is recommended that a future issue be sent first as a PDF attachment to all of the viable e-mail addresses on the mailing list, prior to posting the hard copy. The e-mail should contain a message inviting readers to send a request for a hard copy if that is what they would prefer. The print distribution may thereby be reduced by several hundred copies, and these should be redirected to appropriate Ministries.

The analysis of the survey highlights that relatively few new subscribers are being recruited.

It is recommended that a recruitment drive would be desirable to bring in new readers.

An increase in subscription numbers would be highly desirable to the organizations in promoting their messages on forest conservancy. This might have budgetary implications that would present difficulties, however, the popularity of the newsletter would indicate that such expenditure should be given serious consideration.

Several readers voiced disappointment and frustration that *Arborvitae* is available only in English.

It is recommended that a short résumé of all of the articles, features and news items in each issue be translated into several major languages and that these be made available on the WWF and IUCN websites. The total cost for five languages is estimated at 2000 Swiss francs per issue or 6000 Swiss francs per annum.

This would encourage non-English-mother-tongue readers to attempt to read or have translated the English edition of the articles of particular concern to their work.

Not covered in the brief for this review, but mentioned here for consideration, is the option of charging an annual subscription fee for *Arborvitae*.

Whilst the cost of administering a subscription service might outweigh the revenue, if either of the organizations already has an operational subscription service it would be worth studying the advantage/disadvantages of this.