

# 1. INTRODUCTION TO THE AWARENESS RAISING STRATEGY

## 1.1 Rationale

The Global Plan of ERNP Resource Unit commits that in collaboration with the Communication and Education Units of IUCNP, an awareness raising strategy for the project to identify and develop methods and tools of communication and education will be developed. This would promote environmental awareness among the local communities.

The Plan further states that the strategy will be prepared in order to provide a framework to all the complex levels of communication involving various actors, from the communities to the government. It was established at the very outset of the project that one of the major objectives is to raise awareness among the project's primary stakeholders – the communities – about the sustainable use of natural resources.



## 1.2 Uniqueness and constraints

The present awareness raising strategy, which chiefly consists of the communication action plan for the staff and communities in the three sub-projects of ERNP, is somewhat unique since it is formally developed three years after the project was initiated. This would mean certain constraints in terms of messages, dealing with existing understanding of the project, and recommendations that may fall just over the boundary of the scope of this strategy. Therefore, the strategy document has to be appreciated and then implemented accordingly.

## 1.3 Methodology

1. Two separate questionnaires in Urdu were developed, one for the social organisers and the other for the communities, and a field trip to three sub-projects, namely, URDP, MKKS, NRCP Galiat and DKP, for the consultant was organised.

2. The Publications and Communications Officer from the Resource Unit who made a team with the consultant to visit the field was briefed on the process before setting off to the field.
3. The interviewees, both from the staff and from the communities, were selected at random and no prior information was relayed to the villages where the community interviews had to be held.
4. The questionnaires for the ERNP staff were filled through one-to-one interviews by two interviewers including the consultant and one ERNP-RU staff.
5. Initially, only the social organisers had to be interviewed from the staff. However, following the suggestion of the project management at the field level, some extension workers and technical experts who come from the government departments were also interviewed. This proved to be quite useful.
6. Some staff members including the Project Directors and monitoring personnel were interviewed without any questionnaire since it was deemed irrelevant in their case.
7. The SOs were briefed about the interview process in the project offices before the field visits.
8. The interviewing team accompanied the project staff while they were on their regular visits and meetings in the villages.
9. The consultant, Publications and Communications Officer of ERNP-RU, and the Social Organisers (SOs) interviewed the male and female community members in the three project areas.
10. The total number of people interviewed is 77 including 22 staff members and 55 community members.
11. After the end of the field trip the questionnaires and interview notes, largely in Urdu, were collected and compiled by the consultant.
12. The information acquired was translated into English and analysed in the light of the terms of reference and the project background followed by a description of the actions to be undertaken.



## 2. THE CONTEXT

In order to set the context, it is essential to give a brief overview of the ERNP project before analysing the issues identified during the investigation process for developing the awareness raising strategy. ERNP is a collaborative effort of the Government of Pakistan, European Commission, Agriconsulting, IUCNP and the local communities for rehabilitation of environment in select districts of the NWFP and the Punjab. The total cost is 31.8 million Euro and is a seven-year long project that started in 1997. ERNP consists of three sub-projects. They are called:

- Upland Rehabilitation and Development Project in Dir-Kohistan (DKP)
- Natural Resource Conservation Project (NRCP) in Galiat
- Upland Rehabilitation and Development Project for Murree, Kahuta and Kotli-Sattian (URDP-MKKS)



The project aims at halting and reversing ongoing process of environmental degradation in the above mentioned areas of northern Pakistan through integrated measures of rehabilitation/conservation of natural resources and socio-economic development. It underscores the need for full involvement of local populations in the management of the resources on which they depend. The activities include forest management, range management, soil conservation, and interventions in agriculture and livestock sectors in order to increase incomes and ensure sustainable rural development.

### **The long-term objectives of the project are:**

- Local capacities for sustainable resource management and utilisation are developed;

- The process of degradation of watershed land and natural resources is interrupted;
- Local communities adopt sustainable land use practices;
- The process of ensuring a balance between economic growth and the conservation of natural resources is established.

**The immediate objectives are:**

- Local communities are more aware of environmental issues and sustainable use of natural resources;
- The income level of the local population, especially women, is increased;
- Practices in water run-off control, forestry and rangeland management are improved;
- Agricultural and livestock management practices are improved;
- Sustainable community development process is fostered;
- Productive working partnerships are established between the local communities and provincial Government line departments.

In order to achieve the project objectives, interventions are made through:

- **Social Organisation**
- **Natural Resource Conservation and Rural Development**
- **Human Resource Development**
- **Physical Infrastructure**

The management structures of the sub-project level provides a tripartite forum for planning, implementation and monitoring called Project Management Unit (PMU). The Project Director (GoP), Project Technical Advisor (EC) or their nominated consultants, Agriconsulting, and Field Programme Manager (IUCN) act as Co-Directors. At the provincial level, a Project Steering Committee in Punjab and a Review Board in the NWFP, and at the federal level an Advisory Board consisting of all the partners. The Resource Unit in IUCN's Islamabad office provides coordinating and technical support services to the sub-projects.

### 3. ISSUES IDENTIFIED

#### 3.1 Process

As mentioned earlier, some important information was acquired through informal Interviews with project staff and observations made by the consultant. However, most of the information was collected through interviews based on set questionnaires. The table below gives the details of persons interviewed.

	Community Women	Community Men	Female Staff	Male Staff
MKKS	6	12	3	3
Galiat	10	15	2	5
Dir-Kohistan	None	12	none	9
Total	16	39	5	17

Below are the sets of questions, translated from Urdu, asked from the staff, mainly social organisers and extension workers, and the community members.



#### Questions asked from the Social Organisers/Extension Workers/Staff

1. What is the difference in your area and other areas of Pakistan in terms of environment and natural resources?
2. What is the difference between an environmental project and a rural development project?
3. Does that difference exist between ERNP and rural development projects?
4. In your view, which interventions/packages are more important and which ones are less or could be avoided?

5. In what specific words do you introduce ERNP in the community?
6. What are the weaknesses in your project?
7. How do you think those could be rectified?
8. While remaining within the scope of this project, please explain what are the responsibilities of women in this area and their corresponding needs?
9. Please relate any incident involving you as a person or an experience you had with ERNP.



#### **Questions asked from the community**

1. What do you understand by 'environment'?
2. Why should we protect it?
3. What is the link between 'protection of environment' and 'area development'?
4. Name the natural resources in your area.
5. What do you think are the objectives of ERNP?
6. What is being done under this project?
7. Is there anything in the project which is not according to your needs?
8. What is the benefit of making VOs?
9. What is the advantage of making WOs?
10. What do you think are the responsibilities of VOs/WOs, IUCN and the Government?

11. Who would benefit the most from this project?
12. Are there any other NGOs or development projects in your area?
13. Please relate any incident involving you as a person or an experience you had with ERNP.

### 3.2 Findings and Analysis:

#### Existing Strengths:

Since the project was initiated almost three years ago, it is heartening to find out that the old staff, both SOs and sectoral staff, and the senior community members who are involved since the inception of the project are largely aware of:

#### a) The differences between an integrated environment-focused project and a generalised rural development project;

The interviews and responses to the questionnaires elicited that most people knew that a rural development project focuses mainly on physical infrastructure development, economic uplift schemes including credit and savings essentially exploiting the available resources and capital formation. The environment-focused project means the conservation and resuscitation of people's habitat.

#### b) The environmental significance of the project area;

Staff and community members were fully aware of the differences their areas had from other parts of Pakistan in terms of natural resources.

#### c) The significance behind certain interventions/packages;

There was no doubt here as well. Both staff and community see all the packages as useful and beneficial. None of them found any package redundant in response to the specific question in the questionnaires.

#### d) The role of communities in husbanding their natural resources;

People of the area have been taking care of their habitat besides exploiting its riches for centuries. In recent times, the excessive economic pressures compelled them to overuse their resources besides being powerless in the face of external exploitative forces. ERNP further reinforced the appreciation and need for this role.

#### e) The primary benefit goes to the communities if the project is successful.

None of the fifty-five community members interviewed thought that someone else was the primary beneficiary. They knew they would benefit the most if the project is successful.

#### Shortcomings:

The shortcomings identified below are divided into two parts, i.e., the gaps in project's internal communication system and the limitations in the external communication with the community.

### 3.3 ERNP's Internal Communication System:

- Among the ERNP personnel, especially between the IUCN and the Government staff, refined and transparent organisational structures, and institutionalised social values by which individuals collect, process and exchange information with other individuals are either missing or not implemented. Tripartite institutional arrangement is perceived and interpreted differently by different partners. All field teams have a combination of Government and IUCN staff with support from Agriconsulting. IUCN is responsible for social organisation, training, monitoring, awareness raising and project promotion while Government has provided staff for agriculture, forestry and livestock in NRM and other sectors.

- At the field level, overlap between Government and IUCN staff happens on some occasions affecting teamwork. A major communication gap exists in some cases. To quote an expert deputed to the project by the Government,
 

“During January to March 2000, GoNWFP staff distributed 37 animals but the quarterly report compiled by IUCN staff says that nothing could be done due to funding constraints. They didn’t even checked with us and brought out the report. There’s no ill will involved. It is just that we lack information sharing systems.”
- Some staff members hint at an anomaly in the financial agreement which says in one place that IUCN’s Resource Unit will implement strategies and at another place it says that PMU will be responsible for implementation. A few of the IUCN staff believes that the Government staff is individualistic, didactic while dealing with the communities and work less. Whereas the Government staff believes that they are paid less, have little exposure or training and are not taken into confidence or consulted properly. If there are no major conflicts, this is due to the personal goodwill of individuals working with each other for some time. Nevertheless, community did get different messages at times from the project staff;
- Although, the field staff are aware of the financial difficulties faced by the project they have little knowledge of the budgets resulting in hesitant ownership of the project in some cases. Sub-project wise budgeting is not even known to the senior social organisers (SSOs). This is a communication gap between the senior managers of the project and those responsible for implementation at the ground level;
- Within ERNP, the specificity of DKP should be appreciated while creating messages, sharing information and organising training workshops. Since the area is more conservative and people are sceptical, women programmes may only be knit around their health and education needs at this stage. Sharing women’s achievements in other two sub-project areas can bring about a gradual change. Moreover, three elections were held during the of course of ERNP project planning. Those who got elected over publicised it to gain political mileage and later creating scepticism in the community. This has to be dealt with sensitivity and carefulness not only by those in the field but also the relevant communication and management personnel in the Resource Unit.

### 3.4 External Communication with the Communities:

- A holistic or total system approach to communication – a systematic application of appropriate knowledge, sensitively designed and strategically presented to those concerned through community systems – has been missing. Therefore, between ERNP staff and communities, it has become a communicator-to-passive-receiver activity. A livestock assistant related an incident.
 

“I was vaccinating a pregnant cow. It reacted to the vaccine and aborted her baby. None of the community members said anything for they didn’t know, either about the vaccines or my responsibilities.”

What he meant was that community members should be knowledgeable and empowered enough to hold people responsible.
- Due to the absence of a coherent communication, education and awareness raising system, new VO members lack basic knowledge about (i) the environmental and development issues, and (ii) ERNP project and other organisations/development agencies working in their project area. One new VO member quite earnestly said,
 

“It is not bad to form a VO. There isn’t much use though but tell me how would we get chicken and saplings otherwise?”

### **3.5 Common Gaps in Internal and External Communication:**

- There is a need for an information sharing mechanism across the three sub-projects for the staff and the communities on a regular basis. To make it accessible to most of the people, Urdu language should be used as a medium for any information-sharing tool.
- The link between environment and development needs not just to be known but thoroughly understood by both the ERNP staff and the communities. At a more practical level, staff and communities should be able to appreciate the linkages between policy makers, government line departments, local government and NGOs.
- In URDP-MKKS and NRCP Galiat, staff and communities are well aware of the role women play in the economy and to make the project successful. However, there is not only a need to have gender training, the theme should be integrated into the project messages.

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## 4. ACTIONS TO BE UNDERTAKEN

### 4.1 Approach

Awareness raising demands opening of a continuous dialogue between source and receiver, the ERNP staff with SOs providing the direct link, and the communities in case of the ERNP-Community communication. ERNP Resource Unit, PMU senior staff and the IUCNP Communication Unit will act as source and field staff as receiver in case of ERNP-Field Staff (primarily SOs, sector heads, experts) communication. Communities will be involved in message development, elaboration and delivery in the first case and ERNP's own field staff in the second.

The interface of top-down and bottom-up information flows would be created. Feedback shall be two way and processual in both the cases, reflecting the inherent characteristic of a dialogue. The ERNP staff and communities would be performing equal roles shaping their own responses consciously, rather than helplessly or in a dependency mode.

The message design models used most commonly by development communication planners and implementers include (a) the 'participatory, horizontal communication' model and (b) the 'social marketing communication' model. The first one emphasises the receiver-controlled message environment, where message creation is effectively left to the community. In the social marketing model, change is controlled and strategic choices are made in identifying community, sharing message elements, determining the media mix, varying the frequency of message dissemination, providing learning aids, and when possible, creating appropriate support structures. A combination of the two shall be used in ERNP.

The NCS Communication Strategy specifies that awareness creation is not an end in itself but should lead to a behavioural change in the communities and all other social actors. The combination of two message design models will expedite the process in ERNP project areas. What will be discouraged is the 'Large Volume Error,' producing a large number of communication messages without analysing the effects. Also, 'communication' is not a synonym for 'mass media' therefore over-dependence on mass media would be avoided.

Keeping in view the above approach, actions – realistic and simple – are recommended.

## 4.2 Actions

**For improving communication and raising awareness among the ERNP field staff.**

INPUT	RESOURCE	TIME FRAME	MONITORING INDICATORS
<b>Meetings</b>			
- Sub-project level all staff meeting where information is exchanged, all reports and documents in draft form are shared, budget and performance monitored, and outstanding issues discussed	Sub-project PMU	Monthly	- Minutes of the Meeting
- ERNP all staff mass meeting which provides an opportunity to the staff to interact at a wider level, discuss, plan and share their learning	Resource Unit	Once in every six months	- Meeting record - Report in the newsletter
<b>Training/ Workshops</b>			
- Environment and Development Concepts - Effective Communication Skills + Development Communication and Gender	ERNP Resource Unit + IUCNP Communications Unit + Expert Resource Person IUCNP Communications Unit + PRA expert/SO or Consultant Resource Person (if needed)	A cycle of training programmes and workshops on all identified themes shall take place after every six months until all or most staff is covered. The process will start in July/August 2000. Due to the forthcoming local body polls in the country, it is important for the staff to understand the local govt. functions.	- Training reports - Evaluation forms
- NGO-Govt. Collaboration for Development and NGO scene in Pakistan	IUCNP + NGORC + SUNGI + Outside Resource Person		
- Role of the Local Govt.	Expert Resource Person	Once every six months for a select number of staff	- Trip Reports - Articles, impressions of the staff and
- Exposure Trips to			

<p>other Environmental or Development Projects</p> <p><b>Newsletter</b></p> <p>Containing news, views, ideas, resource information, photographs, illustrations, progress reporting, and thematic messages</p>	<p>ERNP-RU/ Sub-project</p> <p>ERNP-RU with input from PMUs and IUCNP Communications Unit</p>	<p>Quarterly</p>	<p>photographs in the newsletter</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Newsletter published and circulated</li> <li>- Letters from the readers including members of the communities ERNP works with</li> </ul>
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#### For improving communication and raising awareness among the communities

INPUT	RESOURCE	TIME FRAME	MONITORING INDICATORS
<p><b>Meetings</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In all regular scheduled meetings with the community, SOs and other ERNP staff will share the latest developments in ERNP and discuss the objectives of the project in an interactive manner</li> <li>- Sub-project level meeting of VO/WO representatives to share the lessons learnt and discuss new ideas</li> </ul>	<p>SOs, sectoral staff, other project staff</p> <p>PMU</p>	<p>All field visits and meetings</p> <p>Quarterly</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Field reports</li> <li>- File notes</li> <li>- Meeting report</li> <li>- Newsletter</li> </ul>
<p><b>Training</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Environment and Development Concepts for VO/WO members (basic level)</li> </ul>	<p>ERNP-RU + PMU + SOs + Expert Resource Person (if needed)</p>	<p>A cycle of training programmes and workshops on all identified themes shall take place</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Training reports</li> <li>- Evaluation forms</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- NGO-Govt. Collaboration for Development and NGO scene in Pakistan</li> </ul>	Same as above	after every six months until all VO/WO representatives are covered. The process will start in July/August 2000.	
<p><b>Publications</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Newsletter containing news, views, ideas, resource information, photographs, illustrations, progress reporting, and thematic messages</li> </ul>	ERNP-RU with input from PMUs and IUCNP Communications Unit	Quarterly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Newsletter published and circulated</li> <li>- Letters from the readers including members of the communities ERNP works with</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Illustrated posters and flyers in large print and catchy illustrations educating about the environmental themes, objectives of the project and packages offered under ERNP will be published, distributed and displayed</li> </ul>	RU with support from IUCNP Communication Unit	As and when needed starting from now	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Posters are seen in all the villages, local schools, mosques and other public places</li> <li>- Flyers are used and referred to in ERNP staff-community meetings</li> </ul>
<p><b>Other Channels</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Contact with local religious leaders/imams will be made, especially in DKP but also in URDP and NRCP</li> <li>- Radio Stations will be contacted in Rawalpindi and Abbotabad to broadcast informational programmes and talk-shows on environment and ERNP on a regular basis and/or cassettes are distributed</li> </ul>	<p>SOs supported by other field team members + PMU</p> <p>PMUs in MKKS and Galiat with active support from RU and input from IUCNP Communication Unit</p>	<p>On a regular basis starting from now</p> <p>Programmes shall be broadcast on a weekly basis after the initial breakthrough is made by the end of December 2000</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Local religious leaders speak to people about ERNP</li> <li>- Posters are displayed outside the mosque and flyers are distributed after the prayers</li> <li>- Radio programmes are broadcast</li> <li>- ERNP staff and community</li> </ul>

<p>- Journalists from the local newspapers will be sensitised by holding meetings, providing them with ERNP material, newsletter and would be invited for the Environment and Development Training</p>	<p>SOs + PMU + RU</p>	<p>On a regular basis starting from now</p>	<p>members are invited to some of the programmes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cassettes are used by the radio and the communities</li> <li>- News items and reports published in the local press</li> <li>- Some local journalists attend the training programmes and workshops of ERNP</li> </ul>
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### 4.3 Evaluation Timeframe

On the basis of the monitoring indicators for each of the action points (INPUTS) above and the existing issues and shortcomings in communication, identified in Chapter 3, a performance evaluation shall take place in March-April 2001. This paper will provide the framework for an evaluation exercise as well as any changes needed in communication practices at a later stage in the ERNP project.