



Malaysian Environmental NGOs

Consensus Building on External Communication

1 External Communication

It is the exchange of information and messages between an organization and other organizations, groups, or individuals outside its formal structure. The goals of external communication are to facilitate cooperation with groups such as public, government agencies, local authorities, grassroots, communities, Indigenous and to present a favorable image of an organization and its products or services provided to potential and actual customers and to society at large. A variety of channels may be used for external communication, including face-to-face meetings, print or broadcast media, and electronic communication technologies such as the Internet. External communication includes the fields of PR, media relations, advertising, and marketing management.

Things like establishing a brand, marketing your products and services, advertising, working on things like public relations, media management and even dealings with customers or other agencies fall in the category of external communication.

External communication covers how a provider interacts with those outside their own organisation. This may be with the public, community based organisations, local authorities, funding bodies, specialist agencies and other training providers.

2 Strengths of Communication

- Good use of collaborative partnerships to widen participation
- Productive partnerships that enhance the learner experience
- Effective communication with outside agencies
- Close working relationships with employers and others

3 Rapid Response

MENGO is made up of twenty civil society groups working on environmental concerns and issues. The diversity and individualism of each member organization of the group must be acknowledged, respected and recognized at all times.

In the past since the inception of MENGO in late 2001 till 2004 there was no concerted effort to streamline communication with the external world. This may have led to some misinterpretation and miscommunication amongst members.

Chairperson and Vice-Chair have the mandate of MENGO and MCC to act on their behalf. This is simply because these 2 individuals are elected by the members of the network and have the authority to act on behalf of the network to endorse and decide, control viewpoint, manage communications, seek rapid response and provide an avenue for members to sign on to agree or disagree on a particular issue.

All press statements be circulated to Heads of Organizations and/or Senior Management through e-mail and then confirmed with SMS if the need arises. A response must be obtained from the member organization on the press statement/release. In the event, only a few members agree on the press release, then the names of those organizations should be included with the press release without mentioning MENGO. Silence from an organisation does not mean consent to release the press statement. A disclaimer can be included to say that this is the opinion of the members listed in this communication only and does not reflect the viewpoint of the MENGO network as a whole.

Here is a chart that was developed after the AGM of 2005 where there was deliberation on the subject of the mechanism in place regarding the position and response from MENGO on external communication.

Mechanism for response and seeking common viewpoint

Areas of concern	Practiced prior to 2005	Currently being practiced
<p>1 Responding to emerging issues</p>	<p>Sending e- mails with attachments on issues</p>	<p>➤ Work towards a common stand on particular issues and generate a consensus at the time of the issue / occurrence or even ahead of the issue being raised</p>
<p>2 Specific request from the government to review a guideline/policy or be a member of a committee</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ MSU forwards information and requests to MINGOs i.e. 10th Malaysian Plan ❖ Facilitating role only but with no collective stand 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Scenario 1: One member is invited and that MINGO feels there should be larger representation and input. Call for a broader participation of MINGO ➤ Scenario 2: MSU gets invited to make a collective view point ➤ Scenario 3: MINGO member is represented at meeting and provides feedback by way of e- mail, input through submission brief reports to MSU/MINGO <p><i>Rationale: Working principle is to encourage government agencies/ministries, where necessary broader consultation of NGOs and stakeholders are required rather than limit to invitation to just one or two MINGO members.</i></p> <p><u><i>One organisation is consulted does not mean that Civil society /NGO consultation and engagement has taken place</i></u></p>

<p>3 Invitation to attend government meetings</p>	<p>❖ MSU forwards to only interested NGOs who respond promptly and have an interest in the subject matter being discussed at the meeting</p>	<p>➤ Scenario 1: Only one NGO is invited and MSU seeks a broader representation</p> <p>➤ Scenario 2: If only one organisation is allowed to attend, then collect a consensus/position statement from coalition before participation at the meeting</p> <p>➤ Scenario 3: Controversial and sensitive issues –include positions and view point of individual members in the communication</p>
<p>4 Monitoring trends and current affairs</p>	<p>❖ MSU forwards to only interested members who responds to the adhoc topics or issues</p>	<p>To obtain from each member in order of priority, a list 5 areas of concern /issues that they are interested to participate in and provide feedback and comment on a regular basis</p>
<p>5 General Feedback from MINGOs</p>		<p><i>Working principle: Individual member organisation sends brief reports and minutes of meeting to MSU</i></p>

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