COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

Contents

1.   General Objectives

Why do we need a communication strategy and what is it for?

1.1.   What is a communication strategy?

A communication strategy ensures that information is shared with appropriate audiences on a timely basis and by the most effective means, and it defines which information should be shared.

1.2.   Why does CCB have a communication strategy?

This communication strategy helps CCB and its member organizations to send the right information to the right people at the right time. It sets the general line of the communication activities and provides guidance on how to become active.

Communication planning is the art and science of reaching target audiences using communication channels such as online information, events, print publications, personal communication, press work etc. The communication strategy helps to streamline these activities, minimizing efforts, maximizing output and ensuring joint and coordinated activities.

1.3.   What does the communication strategy include?

The communication strategy relates all aspects of internal and external communication going on in CCB. In six short chapters it addresses all key questions, namely:

➢ **WHY?**   General objectives *(chapter 1)*
➢ **WHO?**   CCB's Target audience *(chapter 2)*
➢ **WHAT?**   CCB's Key messages *(chapter 3)*
➢ **HOW?**   Communication Tools and Budget *(chapter 4)*
➢ **BY WHOM?**   Communication Processes and Responsibilities *(chapter 5)*
➢ **WHEN?**   Schedule and timing *(chapter 6)*

   Additionally, a chapter on **Evaluation** (Monitoring and reviewing, *chapter 7*) helps to keep an eye on efficiency and possible improvements.

2.   CCB's Target Audience

Who do we address the communication to; with whom do we communicate?

2.1.   What is a target audience?

A target audience is the primary group of people that communication is aimed at. A target audience can be people of a certain profession, sharing specific interests, belonging to a certain geographical region etc. The target audience can be within CCB, could solely consist of outsiders or might possibly be a combination of these. Each of these groups requires different tools and methods to be successfully reached.

2.2.   Who is CCB's main target audience?

CCB generally addresses communication to

➢ its **Network** of member organizations and observers to harmonize joint activities
➢ its **Working Partners** **and allies**, to inform about plans and activities
➢ political **Stakeholders** for successful lobbying in decision making processes

➢ the **General Public** and information and education on environmental issues

The first one of these has an **internal focus**, the last three are **external**. Additional details on both the internal and external targets will follow in the next two chapters (2.3 and 2.4). Communication with working partners and allies will usually also includes some internal messages, but these will have a clear connection to the respective cooperation field or project. Working partners and allies **will not** use CCB's communication tools outlined in chapter 4 (e.g. CCB's logo). In the case of joint publications or releases with CCB, the use of CCB's logo should be agreed on with the CCB secretariat on a one time basis.

If partners are interested in a stronger integration in CCB's internal information flow or the use of CCB's full communication capabilities, an application for membership will usually be the best option.

Although we independently deal with internal and external communication in this communication strategy, keep in mind that they are actually closely linked. A good internal communication eases the preparation of clear CCB messages and positions to be sent out to target audiences. A well run external communication raises the opportunity to get feedback and new information to feed into internal discussions.

2.3. External target audience

The three main external target audiences mentioned in the previous chapter can be defined in a bit more detail. CCB mainly communicates with seven types of external target groups:

a. Working Partners and allies

➢ **Expert working groups:** National or trans-national groups or expert bodies working on specific matters of importance for the Baltic Sea environment and related to the CCB working areas. CCB is involved in working groups such as ASCOBANS, ESEC, EUSBSR, BSRAC, HELCOM, NASCO.
<u>CCB's aims:</u> Influence the programmes and the decisions; Gain new information and expertise.

➢ **Scientists and scientific institutions**
<u>CCB's aims:</u> Get info on new scientific data; Make scientific institutions do research that will be useful for solving the Baltic Sea's ecological problems; Raise awareness on Baltic ecological problems; Gain scientific advice and support.

➢ **Other NGOs** which are not CCB member organisations but work on matter of importance for the Baltic Sea environment.
<u>CCB's aims:</u> Be aware of other NGOs working programmes related to the Baltic Sea; Co-work with other NGOs to reach common goals in a more efficient way.

b. Political Stakeholders

➢ **Politicians and other political deciders** in governmental and inter-governmental institutions taking decisions and regulating the Baltic Sea environment. CCB targets especially: The Ministries of Agriculture, Fisheries and Environment of the Baltic Sea region countries; HELCOM; BALTFISH; European Union institutions.
<u>CCB's aims:</u> Pose CCB's demands; Give factual input for decision making; Influence the decisions; Gain new information; Raise awareness on Baltic ecological problems and show needs for action.

➢ **Stakeholders** that influence political decision processes.
<u>CCB's aims:</u> Find possible allies for lobbying; Influence the decisions; Gain new information; Raise awareness on Baltic ecological problems.

c. The General Public

➢ **Citizens** of the Baltic Sea catchment area can be reached directly by information campaigns or CCB's general interest publications.
CCB's aims: Give general information and raise awareness; Get people engaged with CCB member organizations at local or national level; Enable people to act more environmentally aware in everyday life.

➢ **Media**, especially TV, radio, printed and online newspapers, are an ideal means to reach a large number of people with comparatively little effort.
CCB's aims: Provide clear and attractive information to be broadcast or published by the media.

2.4. CCB Internal Actors

Internal information flow in the CCB network consisting of member organizations and observers happens between four major groups:

➢ The CCB Secretariat

➢ The CCB Board

➢ The **Working Area Leaders** (and possibly Working Groups)

➢ The **Member Organizations** and Observers in all Baltic countries

All of these can be considered internal actors, and each of them should regularly forward relevant information to other internal actors if it can be of interest for these. They are also responsible for regular communication with external actors in their respective fields and geographical regions of action. The means that can be used for this will be described in chapter 4, the concrete responsibilities in chapter 5.

3.   CCB's Key Messages

3.1. The key messages

CCB's work is centered around the Baltic Sea environment, and so are CCB's messages, both internally and externally. CCB's messages are not about political issues that have no connection to the Baltic environment.

CCB's messages proclaim and communicate facts and actions resulting from CCB's activities. The thematic fields of CCB's activities are fairly constant over the years, as much of the work requires a lot of experience and expertise that can only be gained over the long term. CCB has jointly decided on 7 Working Areas that are important for all its members:

➢ Water Protection in Agriculture

➢ River Basin and Wastewater Management

➢ Fisheries and Aquaculture

➢ Hazardous Substances and Marine Litter

➢ Biodiversity and Nature Conservation

➢ Sustainable Development in Coastal and Marine Areas

➢ Harmful Installations and Maritime Transports

The first three areas (set in bold) are priority working areas, meaning that these are the areas where the main focus of activities should be put and the majority of resources should be allocated. A public profile for CCB is most conveniently built around these priority areas. But

of course CCB's communication can and will also address all other of the above working areas.

Typical messages out of these areas would be:

a. to an external audience

➢ What **environmental problem(s)** do the Baltic Sea or its tributaries face and why are you concerned about these?

➢ **Which actions** does CCB demand (from politicians or other political deciders / from companies / from municipalities or states / or others, but they should be named), and **why is it necessary** to fulfil this demand?

➢ **What has CCB achieved** (and who else has contributed to this)?

Telling the external audience a bit about CCB's main scope of work is usually a good idea if you can assume that they don't yet know what CCB is about. This could be:

➢ CCB is a large network of concerned NGOs from the whole Baltic region, striving for
  - a good ecological water status in the Baltic Sea Region
  - prevention of installations and transports harmful to the Baltic marine and coastal environment
  - the development of sustainable Baltic Sea fisheries

➢ CCB supports implementation of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan, as well as the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) and Water Framework Directive (WFD), and CCB demands an environmentally aware implementation of the EU Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP), constantly contributing expertise to these and other policy processes.

b. internally

➢ **News** that could be **interesting to other partners** in the whole CCB network or for partners active in the respective working area.

➢ Do I need some **assistance or cooperation**, or could some joint project work possibly be of benefit to other partners in the network?

3.2. How to use the key messages?

There are ways to take advantage of key messages and make your messages positively received, well understood and further proliferated:

➢ Translate messages into your national language.

➢ Add your own regionalized messages.

➢ Constantly communicate these messages to the target groups.

➢ Use the messages in all kinds of communication tools, e.g. flyers, websites, brochures, events, press releases, interviews etc.

➢ For specific target audiences, use different wording. Communication towards scientists and experts can usually be more complicated and use specialist words, for the general public, keeping it short and simple is of utmost importance.

➢ For specific target audiences chose the messages that are relevant for this target group.

4.   Communication Tools and Budget

4.1. CCB Logotype and Corporate Design

For all official CCB communication, the CCB corporate design rules should be followed. The CCB design consists of two main elements:

➢ **The CCB logo**: The well known "Coalition Clean Baltic" caption in blue type is CCB's logo. It will usually be used with white colour as the background, but on light colours that do not conflict with the blue type; the background might also be set to transparent. There is also an inversed logo version with a blue background and white type that should only be used when the normal version would lead to graphically dissatisfactory results.

➢ **CCB graphic profile**: CCB's graphic profile explains how to use CCB's design elements, i.e. the logo and the associated usage of colour and form.

You can download the CCB logos from
www.ccb.se/about-ccb/ccb-logotypes/
You can access CCB graphic profile from
https://ccb.se/visual-identity-guidelines/

The CCB Secretariat can also send graphic materials or templates by email and will also provide graphical advice upon request.

4.2. Press releases and media work

Giving interviews, holding press conferences or sending press releases are common means to get into the media. Press conferences are usually limited to larger events and possible front page messages - from the journalists' view, the news they offer must be "worth" the several hours of time it will usually take them to attend the press conference. Always have pictures at hand (also as a file on CD-ROM or USB stick or via a secret download link) and prepare a small press kit with written background information. Having a well known person or an international guest at the press conference (either from inside CCB or an external expert or decider) will make it much more attractive for journalists.

Press conferences also are a great opportunity to give interviews on the spot or to get acquainted with journalists who will later approach you for some spontaneous spoken words, possibly on the phone.

For press releases it is most helpful to always have a constantly updated list of local, regional and national media at hand (email addresses). Today, the only serious way to send those releases is by email. Do not stoically send everything to the whole list, but rather select those media that your message will be interesting for. Choose a catchy and informative subject immediately telling the core of your message and why it is important.

When targeting journalists some general rules should be kept in mind, the most important ones being:

➢ Prepare press releases and media events **only if there is really a chance** for the information to be published.

➢ Press releases must be **short and concise**, usually less than one-page long. If you don't keep the text to an acceptable length, the journalist will shorten it and maybe cut out your most important messages, or the journalist might even dread the considerable editing effort and discard it completely.

➢ Stick to the **local language** (i.e. do not use English), especially in the Southern and Eastern Baltic.

➢ Use an **understandable wording** avoiding specialist terms and long sentences.

4.3. Face-to-face communication

Personal contacts are an extremely effective way to communicate matters, but they are also relatively time consuming and thus should be used primarily in justified cases. Possibilities for eye-to-eye communication range from personal talks, interaction in workshops to holding presentations, the impact getting less direct and interactive in this order.

Personal contacts are a regular way for communication with working partners and allies (see chapter 2.3) and can also be very effective to address political stakeholders.

The four rules named above for press releases are figuratively just as true for presentations. Keeping people awake and attentive is crucial for bringing the messages to their minds, so a long and monotonous reading of pre-written scripts is usually not the best way to success.

4.4. CCB Publications

CCB has published a wide selection of publications on the Baltic Sea environment and its protection. They cover almost all aspects of this matter, even those that CCB may not be currently working on. Publications that are already a few years old may, however, be a bit out of date in some respects, so use them with care or consider an update (and propose this to the CCB Secretariat), if you can provide the appropriate expertise. Most of CCB's publications are available for download (usually as a pdf file) on CCB's website:

www.ccb.se/publications/

4.5. The CCB Website

The website **www.ccb.se** is the central web based information portal for CCB's work.

The website was revised in 2018 and is regularly updated.

4.6. CCB's Mailing lists

CCB has three mailing lists.

➢ **ccbboard-l**: Forwards emails to all CCB Board members (incl. alternates) and the CCB Secretariat

➢ **ccbmembers-l**: Forwards emails to all CCB Member organizations, CCB Observers and to persons acting as contacts for CCB in these organizations, as well as to the CCB Secretariat

➢ **ccbinternal-l**: Forwards emails to a wide array of persons and organizations inside the CCB network and also (despite the list name) to close partners of the network. Besides members, observers and partners, emails reach most persons that are active inside CCB on a professional or voluntary basis, and a lot of people that are active in Baltic Sea environmental protection and value CCB's work.

CCB's mailing lists always hide the recipients' mail addresses (equivalent to the "BCC" field in the email program), so the only way to find out who actually receives these emails is to enquire with the CCB Secretariat. Please note that this is confidential information to be used with appropriate care and that some data might not be available due to the GDPR EU's privacy law. The CCB Secretariat manages these mailing lists, so requests to add new recipients should be addressed there. Ccbboard-l is a closed list that only involves the current Board members, so no requests are accepted. Ccbmembers-l is limited to the CCB membership.

Starting from 2017, CCB has implemented the use of a new email list tool, MailChimp, used for sharing internal and external events, news and funding opportunities that might be of interest for CCB network.

Some additional mailing lists might be set up in the near future for CCB's working groups. The working group leaders and the Board decide on the further procedure.

4.7. Emails

Emails are the central means of CCB's internal communication and are also widely used for external communication. The main constraint with emailing is that overall email numbers are constantly rising, with more and more emails slipping through unread or unnoticed. It is therefore crucial for all CCB email communication to state a clear subject and make emails as quickly comprehendible as possible. Ideally, an email should include:

➢ Clear subject
➢ Main information
➢ Short description of the context
➢ Time frame: Date or period
➢ Related documents (reports, press release, pictures)
➢ Action required, by whom
➢ Contact details of the person sending the message

All internal communication should be sent with open recipients ("To" or "CC" fields in the email editor), meaning that all recipients can see to whom - besides them - the email was sent. Hidden recipients ("BCC") on the other hand are usually the only option for external communication with a larger number of addressees.

Always consider if one of CCB's mailing lists could be suitable to spread your information to the desired recipients.

4.8. Social media

Social media are a great means to reach the general public and furnish bi-directional communication and highly up-to-date information. To keep this medium active and attractive, it needs a constantly high allocation of manpower for the necessary everyday input and moderation. Due to this reason and in order to run the daily communications routine,

CCB hired a dedicated Communication Officer from the beginning of April 2018.

CCB has strongly engaged in social media activities like joint campaigns on eutrophication and harmful substances in products that have been run in cooperation with members and external partners. Along with this social media campaigns, two new Instagram accounts have been created (the first one dedicated to the Baltic harbour porpoise and the second one is dedicated to CCB activities) and live streaming on CCB Facebook, Twitter and Instagram

page have been launched. In these live streaming, called *Baltic Talks*, CCB covers a relevant topic related to its activities and the protection of the Baltic Sea Region.

Moreover, some additional efforts have been put into the website to make it a more attractive and comprehensive information platform.

4.9. Goodies and Giveaways

CCB has a few small goodies or giveaways like bags and beanies (the available goodies vary over time) to use for promotional purposes and thanksgiving. All of these goodies carry a clearly visible CCB logo, so they will help to remind of CCB and its activities. Although CCB goodies are generally of low value, please keep in mind that CCB has a strict anti-corruption policy, so do <u>never</u> try to use them to directly influence decisions or to grant an unjustified personal advantage.

4.10. CCB Communication Officer

A Communication officer in the CCB secretariat handles all affairs of communication work of CCB, including acting as a consultancy for member organizations in cases where they feel they might need some assistance. The position has been reinstalled in April 2018.

5.   Communication Processes and Responsibilities

5.1. Responsibilities of the CCB Secretariat

The CCB Secretariat's communication responsibilities will typically include:

➢ Receive, gather and distribute information from / to / between member NGOs, Board members and working area coordinators and outside the CCB network;

➢ Prepare, implement and monitor the information and communication activities;

➢ Produce information materials related to the CCB working areas;

➢ Communicate project results to the stakeholders, target groups and general public;

➢ Target the audience with information they are interested in;

➢ Update, maintain and develop the website;

➢ Invite CCB associated experts to relevant CCB-organised meetings and to send other relevant information to them;

➢ Ask CCB associated experts on advice and comments when CCB is developing positions/statements;

➢ Inform CCB members and observers on interesting activities/events/positions of other relevant Environmental NGOs, related to CCB Priority activities.

5.2. Responsibilities of the CCB Board

Board members are responsible for the information flow between the Board and **all** member organizations (and potentially observers) in their country. They do not represent their member organization in the Board, but are the representative of the respective country. They are also an important actor in connecting the member organizations and observers in their country to the CCB Secretariat and vice versa. Typical communication activities of the Board members are:

➢ Report relevant activities, events etc. from their country to the Board. This always includes news on activities and plans of CCB's member organizations in the respective country. Also, any relevant information obtained by participation in various meetings should be reported.

➢ Report relevant discussions and decisions taken during the Board meetings to the Member organisations and Observers in their country.

➢ Assist the member organisations and observers in their country in finding the right contacts in the CCB Secretariat and the network.

➢ Assist the Secretariat in finding suitable contacts in their respective country.

The CCB Secretariat attends all Board meetings and also receives all communication in the ccbboard-l mailing list to ensure that all information discussed or presented in the Board is also available to the Secretariat.

5.3. Responsibilities of the Working Area Leaders

Working Area Leaders have been newly installed in 2015, replacing the hitherto existing lead parties. They deliver professional coordination and expertise especially on the three priority areas (see chapter 3.1) since some dedicated funding is planned for this.

Typical communication activities of the working area coordinators include:

➢ Facilitate network contacts and discussions to promote CCB activities within each CCB priority area and trigger cooperation between CCB-partners;

➢ Send information on international environmental policy developments and trends related to the working area to CCB member organisations (2-3 times per year);

➢ Update CCB website with news, events, reports, etc.;

➢ Communicate with CCB member organizations/partners and develop joint CCB project activity proposals to be submitted for granting institutions;

➢ Report on CCB financed activities to CCB organizations / network and Board;

➢ Invite and exchange information with CCB associated experts to relevant CCB-organised meetings;

➢ Actively ask CCB associated experts for advice and comments when CCB is developing positions/statements.

5.4. Responsibilities of the Member Organizations

CCB's Member Organizations and Observers provide the direct link for CCB to the national level, including the national societies, politics and languages in the whole Baltic Sea region. Their activities on the national level will be somewhat variable, depending on size and thematic orientation of the respective organization, but all of them share some common responsibilities:

➢ Each CCB Member Organisation shall appoint a CCB contact person (Board Members in respective country will be responsible that national MO will provide such info);

➢ To facilitate the internal work on CCB Working Areas CCB MO will provide national contact persons for CCB Working Areas;

➢ MO appointed person is responsible to transfer info from CCB Secretariat and info from the national CCB Board Member internally (identify target persons and provide these with relevant info, e.g. CCB Board meeting short summaries in national language);

- Forward externally the information received from CCB Secretariat;
- Support general communication: e.g. by forwarding invitations and other prepared information to individual target persons or groups, e.g. by using own mailing lists, by offering opportunities to contribute to own organization's media, by translating communication material;
- Report on national environmental activities of special interest and CCB MO activities to national CCB Board Members;
- Provide up-to-date content (announcements, short reports, texts, visual material) for the website and for CCB's internal communication events (see chapter 6.2) to the CCB Secretariat;
- Include a weblink to the CCB website on their organization's website(s);
- Use CCB messages and logos in all material produced in CCB financed activities;
- Identify possible collaborations in an early planning stage of communication and other activities and actively approach the potential partners;
- MO shall announce contact persons for CCB Working Areas to the CCB Secretariat, where appropriate;
- Carry out local media work and forward translated CCB press releases to national media.

6. Schedule and Timing

6.1. How is the CCB communication scheduled?

CCB's communication does not follow a preset schedule. It is, nonetheless, possible to strive for an optimal timing of communication. Conferences or political meetings can be a good peg to successfully slip in with some related messages, especially with CCB's demands or proposals.

International awareness days related to the CCB working areas can also be a fitting time to remind of necessary actions:

- **17 January: Helsinki Convention Day**
- **2 February: World Wetlands Day**
- **3 March: World Wildlife Day**
- **14 March: International Day of Action for Rivers and Against Dams**
- **21 March: Baltic Sea Day**
- **22 March: UN World Water Day**
- **21 April: World Fishing Migratory Day**
- **22 April: World Earth Day**
- **9 May: Europe Day**
- **2nd Saturday in May: World Migratory Bird Day** (the 2nd celebration day is in October)
- **17 May: Endangered Species Day**
- **3rd Sunday in May: International Day of the Baltic Harbour Porpoise**
- **20 May: European Maritime Day**
- **21 May: NATURA2000 Day**
- **22 May: UN World Biodiversity Day**
- **5 June: UN World Environmental Day and Day Against the IUU fishing**
- **15 June: CCB Birthday**

- ➢ **3rd Saturday in September:** **International Coastal Clean-up Day**
- ➢ **26 September:** **World Maritime Day**
- ➢ **30 September:** **World Rivers Day**
- ➢ **1st Monday in October:** **UN World Habitat Day**
- ➢ **15 November:** **HELCOM BSAP Birthday**
- ➢ **19 November:** **World Toilet Day**
- ➢ **21 November:** **World Fisheries Day**

6.2. CCB's internal communication events

Along the year most Members, Observers, Board members and employees of the Secretariat participate in meetings, conferences, seminars and other events. This offers great and necessary opportunities for exchange and communication. It is a good idea to communicate any topic that will need more time to discuss well in advance to the respective organizers or persons.

The central internal communication event is CCB's **Annual Conference**, which bi-annually includes the **General Meeting**. The latter is CCB's formal members' assembly, with elections of the Board and other formal decisions being made. Each Member Organization has one vote in the General Meeting. The Annual Conference serves as a multifaceted exchange forum between Members, Observers, other CCB bodies as well as internal and external activists, each year focusing on one topic central for CCB's current activities. **Board meetings** must be held at least twice a year and involve the Board Members (or an Alternate if the Board Member is unable to attend) and representatives of the Secretariat.

A course "**Our Common Baltic**" is held in each summer to educate activists of CCB's Member Organizations in environmental matters crucial for Baltic Sea protection. As many of CCB's MO are grassroot movements with many voluntary activists, this course is a central means to spread expertise among these often highly motivated people wishing to assist in saving the Baltic Sea environment and thus push efficiency and effectiveness of their activities to a substantially higher level.

7. Monitoring and Reviewing

7.1. Why does CCB monitor and review its communication?

Monitoring and evaluation are important to ensure that CCB communications are strategic, helping to understand and learn from what works, what doesn't, when and for whom. It is also an important tool for accountability, helping to demonstrate uptake, and that the work is of high quality and useful.

To ensure that the communications work is efficient, it is relevant to develop a communications plan. This does not need to be a complicated or long document, but it should include:

- Clear objective(s)
- Target audience(s)
- Key messages
- Outputs and activities
- Evaluation

For large projects and programmes, it is necessary to have a more sophisticated communications strategy. This will follow the same form as above, but go into more detail. Once the communication plan is set, systems and processes should be in place to deliver it. These do not need to be complex since the organisation should already have systems in place for managing project delivery (such as project plans, Gantt charts, routine meetings and reporting). Just ensuring that communication activities and products are clearly identified, and that they are realistic given your resources, should be enough.

7.2. Which methods and indicators does CCB use for monitoring and reviewing?

Outputs are designed to reach a target audience. We define outputs broadly as tangible communication products, activities and services. These can include: publications, events (including meetings, workshops, webinars or face-to-face discussions), articles, websites and other digital platforms, infographics, media and social media activities, presentations, videos, podcasts, photography and so on. Outputs can also be a package or larger body of work, not just individual products or activities.

When planning monitoring and reviewing of the communication plan, it is important to look across three dimensions: reach; quality and usefulness; and uptake and use. Each dimension has specific indicators for measuring.

CCB uses the following tools to gather data:
- ➢ Google Analytics
- ➢ Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube Analytics
- ➢ Iconsquare
- ➢ Bitly
- ➢ Feedback forms or Surveys
- ➢ Internal feedback log
- ➢ MailChimp
- ➢ Programme/Project evalutations

Monitoring and reviewing is also part of some CCB's projects, with the processes usually adhering to specifications set by the funder.