**Baltic Compact**

# Target-audience based communication

## 4.4.2 Target Audience based Communication

In the introduction section entitled "Communication", the external context and internal setting of the communication process is outlined as being of importance (Janse 2006); relating to this, *target audience based communication* was identified during the coding process as a crucial element of successful communication that is often overlooked.

*Target Audience based communication*, is communication in which the message is formulated with terminology, word-use and style that is suited to the target audience with whom the communication is taking place. Essentially it is communication while taking into account the target audience (i.e. to whom are you speaking). Not all individuals do this, but the implementation of *target audience based communication* as a simple guideline can greatly reduce all language barriers and work towards lessening other theme problems. This will also affect condition and process codes, such as promoting trust, understanding, knowledge base, awareness and empowerment, and lessening misconceptions, misunderstandings, conflicts etc. Essentially this is the first step towards rectification of the communication process and should be undertaken by all individuals; it is a very powerful tool by which successful communication, relations and roles can be built quickly.

This suggestion is represented by the code *target audience based communication* under the themes *inter-stakeholder group language barrier* and *scientific cultural problems.* The influence these themes have on other theme problems means that the application of *target audience based communication* has the potential to affect these other theme problems too, via bettering the state of communication in general.

### Target Audience based communication in the Examples

*Target audience based communication* is applied by H in OiB when undertaking any communication with any individual stakeholder or stakeholder group, as described in the following statement: "(The) language barrier when speaking to farmers can be lessened by addressing ideas and changes in money, as this is the priority of the farmer; the environmental benefits are a bonus. But when speaking to the community the environmental benefits are the priority, so communication needs to be target audience based. One needs to think about to whom one is communicating and communicate accordingly… you have to figure out, first, before you open the mouth, what the target audience's priorities are." It is also applied when using their "box-metaphor" describing the functioning of a technique on a farm through the input and outputs according to the changes made; this metaphor is easy to understand and can be used when communicating with all stakeholder groups.

This kind of communication does not seem to be applied much in Latvia, although its importance is highlighted in J's suggestion that there needs to be more conferences, symposiums and demonstrations, as well as mentioning that rules and regulations for "green projects" are too long, and that for the farmers they need to "be the size of a pamphlet." Problems obtaining information that is relevant, practical and comprehensible from the scientific community also indicates a lack of the use of *target audience based communication*.

B applied *target audience based communication* when communicating with the communities and implementation-level stakeholders within the project, describing benefits and outlining subsidies which would be important for farmers. Based on the interview it seems that other individuals within wetland restoration, such as Prof. Succow (interview B. Lezius, 2013, pers. comm.) (Ernst-Moritz-Arndt-*Universität Greifswald*), have also applied this kind of communication when spreading information, targeting communication at society in general and farmers through the press. B outlines a need for a change of mind-set resulting in "individuals thinking about to whom they are going to be speaking to when preparing an excursion or a presentation… People should talk to the region before they hold a

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presentation, to properly prepare at the real communication level. One could even hold a preparation presentation in front of one of the local people."

Excerpts from:

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