



Communications and Engagement Strategy

Communications and Engagement Strategy

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Australia-China Environment Development Program

Supporting and improving policy development in China in environmental protection and natural resources management

The Communications and Engagement Strategy was prepared by Steven Chaytor, Communication & Engagement Specialist for the Australia-China Environment Development Program (ACEDP). This strategy updates the draft strategy submitted in August 2007 and is based on face-to-face and key informant interviews with the Chinese Ministry core partners as well as qualitative and quantitative analysis of questionnaires circulated to all Australian Department and Chinese Ministry core partners.

The Communications and Engagement Strategy has been prepared in the context of Australia's and China's interest in promoting China's sustainable development. This strategy has been prepared in accordance with AusAID's framework to move away from a small number of large projects towards a mix of smaller, more responsive activities, primarily concerned with increasing knowledge and capacity to inform future policy making.

The strategy links with the three main components of the program:

1. To demonstrate methods and applications of improved environmental governance in China and to develop and enhance the environment policy dialogue between China and Australia;
2. To assist with the practical application of Integrated River Basin Management principles in China;
3. To provide strategic direction to the Environment Program and effective coordination and efficient management of the program.

The objectives of the Communications and Engagement strategy are to:

1. Develop engagement between program partners to strengthen the delivery of the program's components;
2. Ensure effective communication with a network of interested parties;
3. Publicise the achievements of the program.



Communications and Engagement Strategy

Communications and Engagement is a crucial element of the program in achieving the main objective of the ACEDP, namely to support China's policies for a better environment. Only by creating close Government-to-Government linkages can a sustainable framework be created whereby experiences and best practices can be shared to combat environmental issues. Australian and Chinese engagement is crucial since environmental degradation is not an intra-national problem, nor are environmental issues unique to single countries. Environmental awareness and international cooperation is vital to the fight against environmental degradation, as is the need to involve many actors working together for the same goal, such as NGOs and researchers. Based on the responses from the program partners, this strategy will provide recommendations as to how best to use resources to further these aims and raise awareness.

This strategy aims to incorporate the input, suggestions and key findings from both the Chinese and Australian Government core partners to develop a framework for engagement which incorporates the objectives of all partners. It also aims to integrate suggestions based on the core partner responses as to how communications between ACEDP and the core partners should be implemented. ACEDP communication is necessary to ensure smooth implementation of the program due to the central coordination role of the PCO. Communication also necessarily includes communication with interested stakeholders and the wider public. All questionnaire responses have been provided to the Project Control Office (PCO) as a previous document attachment.

One questionnaire was answered by each of the Chinese Ministry partners: the Ministry of Water Resources (MWR); the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC); the State Environment Protection Administration (SEPA); and the State Forestry Administration (SFA). One questionnaire was answered by each of the Australian Department partners, with the only exception being the Murray Darling Basin Commission (MDBC) who did not respond to the questionnaire. The Australian partners who completed the questionnaire are: the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF); the Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts (DEWHA); the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO); and the National Water Commission (NWC). All questionnaires represent a collective agency response whereby input has been given by various members of staff and returned by the focal point.

The face-to-face key informant interviews with the Chinese Ministry core partners were held in late December 2007 and early January 2008. Interviews with SFA key informants took place on 24 December; NDRC on 26 December; SEPA on 28 December; and MWR on 2 January. All responses have been evaluated with equal weight to represent an objective assessment of all core partners relating to communications and engagement within the framework of ACEDP.



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Part I: Engagement Overview

Current Levels of Engagement

All core Chinese Ministry and Australian Department Key Informants expressed that their current levels of involvement with ACEDP were meeting their expectations. In terms of the satisfaction levels of the current engagement, three of the four Australian Departments who completed the questionnaire stated that they were highly satisfied, whereas the NWC expressed only an average level of satisfaction. No questionnaire response was received from the MDBC and their level of engagement remains limited. The answers of the four Chinese Ministries were more varied. Two of the Ministries regarded their satisfaction level as high, while the NDRC rated their satisfaction level as average and the MWR rated their satisfaction level as below average. The Key Informant from the MWR explained that this low level of satisfaction is due to a comparison with other international ongoing dialogues in which the MWR is engaged. In his opinion, the “information from the PCO is not enough to access the program”.

Activities to Develop and Active Partnership/ Policy Development

The Chinese and Australian Key Informants answered very similarly when asked to state the types of activity that would help create an active partnership between the two Governments. Joint ownership and coordination on specific technical projects, as well as on-site cooperation, were considered the most effective tools for developing active partnerships. DEWHA stressed most clearly a sentiment which was widely held, that the projects must be of mutual interest and importance.

The Key Informant for DEWHA noted that “specific issues must be discussed as broad brush information exchange is pointless and wears out good will”. In terms of policy dialogue the Key Informant from the MWR noted that ongoing dialogue and the establishment of a channel for policy exchange is the most important part of the project as “technical issues are easy to solve... [whereas] capacity building at a policy level is more difficult and requires joint building of commitment and sharing the same vision”. The NDRC added that “Policy Dialogue should take place at the working level – where Australian experts can exchange efficiencies – and is facilitated by high level visits and study tours to encourage policy exchange”.

The overall objectives for involvement in policy development were relatively similar for the Chinese Ministries, i.e., that the Australian Federal Government could provide input on developing the latest environmental development policy initiatives; the State Government could provide input on specific methods and law/regulations governing environmental management; and that Local Government could provide input on best practices with regards to the effective implementation of projects as well as methods to coordinate regional, social and economic development.

Quantitative Analysis – Active Partnership

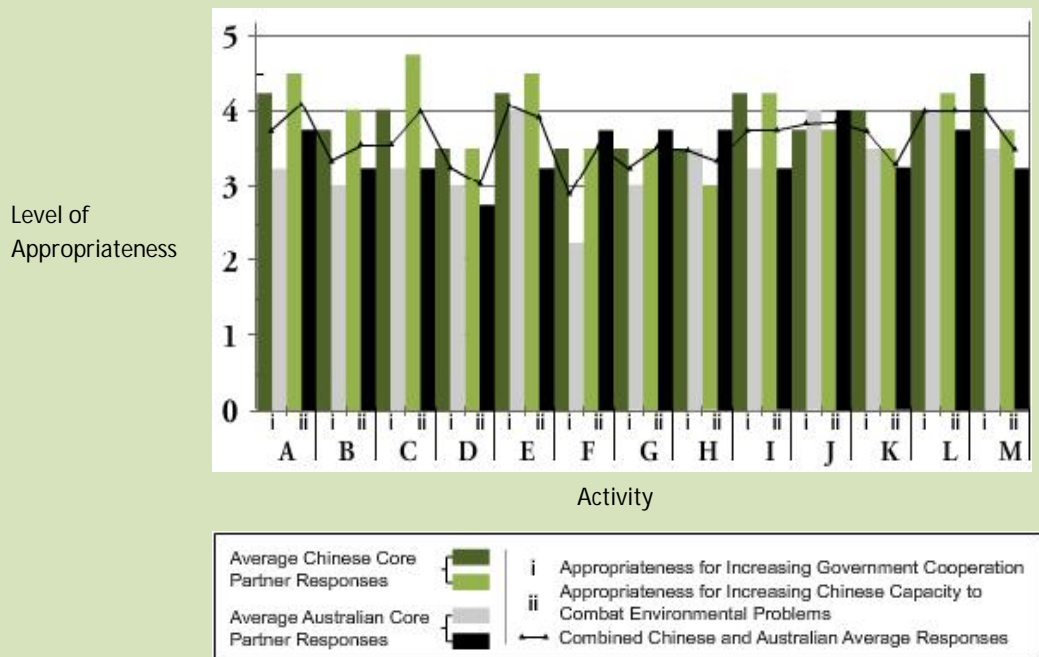
Figure 1 (below) shows the average Chinese and Australian ratings given on a scale of 1-5 (where one = inappropriate and five = appropriate) for the effectiveness of thirteen different activities for creating active government-to-government cooperation and for facilitating Chinese know-how and legislative capacity. Figure 1 also displays the mean score of the Australian and Chinese responses for each activity represented by the line chart illustration on top of the bar graph.



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Figure 1 – Appropriateness of Activities for:

- i.) Increasing Active Government-to-Government Cooperation
- ii.) Increasing Chinese Government Know-how and Legislative Capacity to Combat Environment Problem



- A. Training for Chinese/Australian Officials
- B. Workshops in China/Australia
- C. Short-term internships for Chinese officials in Australian Government Departments
- D. Conferences/seminars
- E. Study visits to China/Australia
- F. Translations of key Chinese/Australian legislation
- G. Translations of key environmental guidance documents
- H. Organisation of 'working groups' on ACEDP related environmental issues
- I. Site visits to complementary environmental programs in China/Australia
- J. Science cooperation
- K. Creation of guidance booklets
- L. High-level roundtable meetings
- M. Working together with the Chinese Government on regional environmental projects



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Active Cooperation

The activities that the Chinese Ministries deemed most appropriate for increasing active cooperation with the Australian Government were: training for Officials; study visits to Australia; site visits to complementary environmental programs in Australia; and working together with the Australian Government on regional environmental programs. Conversely, the Chinese Ministries deemed conferences/seminars; translations of key environmental legislation and guidance documents; and the organisation of workshops to be the least appropriate activities.

The Australian Core Partner Departments also deemed study visits to be highly appropriate. The Australian Departments also considered science cooperation and high-level roundtable meetings to be highly appropriate for increasing active cooperation between the two Governments. Activities deemed inappropriate by Australian Departments, similar to the Chinese Ministries, also included conferences/seminars and translations of key environmental legislation and guidance documents. Additionally, the Australian Departments also rated workshops to be inappropriate.

Know-how and Legislative Capacity of Chinese Government Ministries

Activities which Chinese Ministries deemed most appropriate for increasing their own know-how and legislative capacity; similar to activities deemed appropriate for increasing active cooperation; included training for officials, site visits to complementary environmental programs in Australia and study visits to Australia. In addition, they also rated short-term internships for Chinese Officials in Australian Government Departments and high-level roundtable meetings to be highly appropriate for increasing Chinese Government know-how and legislative capacity. The Chinese Ministries again deemed conferences/seminars and translations of key environmental legislation and guidance documents to be less appropriate. In addition, the organisation of working groups on ACEDP related environmental issues was also considered to be one of the least appropriate activities.

The Australian Government Departments deemed science cooperation, translations of key environmental legislation and guidance documents, and the organisation of working groups on ACEDP related environmental issues to be the most appropriate activities to increase the know-how and legislative capacity of Chinese Ministries. Conversely, they deem conferences/seminars and site visits to complementary environmental programs in Australia to be inappropriate for this aim.

Engagement Activities

An important point stressed by the Key Informants of all partners was that different activities are best suited to different levels of Government and that cooperation in most cases should be horizontal in nature. In general terms, this would involve Central and Federal Government agencies cooperating mainly in the area of policy initiatives; that Provincial or State Level Government agencies would cooperate on specific methods and on laws or regulations governing environmental management; and that Local Government would be best suited to providing input on best practices in relation to the implementation of specific projects as well as methods to coordinate social and economic development. Of additional note is the importance that Key Informants gave to involving other stakeholders. The Key Informants of the Australian Departments tended to emphasise the importance of involving the cooperation of Chinese and Australian scientists and researchers; whereas the Chinese Ministry Key Informants stressed the importance of raising the awareness of the Chinese public and the media.



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In terms of proposal management, it is important that the program encourages activities from a wide range of partners and at the same time not be overburdened by requests that have limited chance of funding. The current proposal management strategy at the PCO resulted in an exceptional response of 57 proposals (17-Australian, 40-China). This Communications and Engagement strategy believes that proposal management is already being successfully managed by the PCO and recommends that practices should continue as already planned.

As propositioned in the August Strategy, it is still recommended that partners connected to the program should be divided into three categories:

- Core Partners – main participants in preparation and implementation of program activities, including the Chinese Ministries and Australian Departments
- Program Partners – create knowledge and act as intermediaries for program activities and research and policy development
- Program Network – supports wider community interest in the program, including international organisations, scientists and researchers, NGOs, etc

Study Visits

Study tours to Australia was the activity that was most frequently mentioned as being of most use for increasing active and long-lasting ties of partnership. As illustrated by the line chart within Figure 1 (above), study visits received the highest average score for appropriateness amongst all activities. The multiple functions of study tours were repeatedly emphasised. From the various past experiences of the core partners, study tours were said to be of great use for policy dialogue and capacity building at the policy level, as well as for increasing stronger ties of partnership and for reaching an understanding of mutual interest. CSIRO mentioned that they hoped that ACEDP would “provide a platform whereby study tours could be arranged to study policies and strategies of irrigation water management and water saving agriculture in Australia”. Additionally, Key Informants stressed that study tours are useful for not only all levels of Government but also for environmental scientists and researchers. SEPA mentioned that a useful exercise would be for a group of Chinese journalists working in the environmental field to travel to Australia to increase understanding of how best to report environmental news.

The Key Informant from SEPA mentioned that reporters from the national environmental newspaper, *China Environment News*, which has been affiliated to SEPA since 1983 “would be ideal participants for a journalists tour to Australia, as the environment is a hot topic and journalists are keen to know more about the situation in other countries”.

As set forward in the August Strategy, ACEDP should commence a project to identify China’s leading environment journalists. The Communications Coordinator should lead this project and a workshop and needs assessment should be held with these journalists. A program should be developed to invite these journalists to Australia to participate in the Distinguished Speaker Dialogue and an environment research tour, as suggested by SEPA. The same journalists should be invited to the major program activities that will occur in China.



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For Local Government it was suggested study tour participants should be 'at a working level', whereby officials could meet with horizontal level officials who are responsible for overseeing projects of a similar nature. This should be followed within ACEDP. Indeed, SEPA highlighted that "all study tours should be specific to the needs of the project and should, where possible, aim to establish good working relationships, including with the commercial enterprises involved".

As was proposed in the August Strategy, initial inbound familiarisation tours proposed could include the following visits and workshops to connect core partners in both countries in policy dialogue:

- DSE, River Health Division, Vic, for presentations on Integrated Catchment Planning and River Health Strategies, including environmental flows methods;
- MDBC, Cap & Water Allocation, Salinity, Living Murray initiatives, Canberra;
- NWC, National Water Initiative, Canberra;
- DEW, National Plan for Water Security, Canberra;
- Colleambally Irrigation Limited, Griffith NSW, field tour on total channel control and water efficiency; and
- Goulburn Broken CMA, Shepparton, Vic, field visit, Catchment Planning.

Site visits

The SFA noted during the Key Informant interview that from their previous experiences cooperating with Australian Departments, coordination on specific technical projects as well as on-site cooperation were the most effective tools for developing active partnerships. SEPA also expressed their desire to visit sites in Australia where similar environmental issues could be learnt. They noted that a demonstration site should be selected and that communication should run separately through three levels, i.e., the national, state and local levels and that cooperation should be carried out horizontally and communication should be carried out vertically. SEPA further stated that "the Federal Government should focus on legislation, standard systems and research on economic policy and the Local Government should focus on test demonstrations which must involve site visits to learn lessons firsthand". The Chinese Ministries were unanimous in their estimation of the appropriateness of site visits, all considering them to be of requisite importance for the successful implementation of ACEDP. However, site visits was the one activity that most clearly divided the Australian and Chinese core partners. This is clearly illustrated within Figure 1. For the aims of increasing Chinese capacity to combat environmental problems in China and for increasing active Government-to-Government cooperation, the ratings given to the appropriateness of site visits were clearly demarked. The Chinese Ministries on average rated site visits 4.25 for both aims, whereas Australian Departments gave an average score of 3.25 for both aims. The Chinese consider site visits to be of more use than their Australian counterparts. Requests for site visits under ACEDP should be analysed by the PCO and additional efforts should be made to consult both the Australian and Chinese core partners in order to confirm that the specific site visit request is of mutual interest to both parties.



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Conferences/seminars

Conferences and seminars are a tried and tested development facilitation tool; however, as is clearly shown in Figure 1, the Key Informants responded very negatively to the appropriateness of this activity towards achieving the aims of both increasing active cooperation between the Chinese and Australian Governments and increasing the know-how and legislative capacity of the Chinese government to combat environmental issues in China. It is advisable to sparingly utilise conferences and seminars within ACEDP. However, it was worth noting that during the Key Informant Interviews some strengths of conferences and seminars were expressed. Generally, the strengths were said to lie in two areas: for policy dialogue and for engaging wider stakeholders. In terms of policy dialogue, it was proposed by the NDRC that conferences provide the perfect arena for lectures focusing on policy issues to be given by Australian officials and experts. One of the reasons for this was articulated by many of the Core Partners, i.e., that a major strength of conferences lies in their ability to efficiently, and with high impact, 'reach out' to a large group of targeted people. The strength of conferences and seminars for engaging wider stakeholders was also often raised. Conferences and seminars were said to be very suitable for spreading news of ACEDP events and projects as well as for introducing new legislation. In addition, the core partners regard seminars and conferences as the most appropriate method for bringing together and providing networking opportunities for a large group of stakeholders such as NGOs and international donor institutions. SEPA mentioned that they believe an annual 'international cooperation conference' could be arranged in addition to more specifically target regional conferences. These should be encouraged within the ACEDP framework.

The August Strategy recommended the establishment of a regular Distinguished Speaker Dialogue to facilitate ongoing engagement and high level dialogue. Considering core partners responses that various specific topics tackling environmental issues covered within the ACEDP framework be explored, the Distinguished Speaker Dialogue (DSD) should be based on specific of mutual interest such as the Management for Large Irrigation Districts and Integrated River Basin Management. This Dialogue is recommended as an important outreach event and policy exchange platform. An example of a Distinguished Speaker Dialogue is included in Appendix B. Speakers should ideally come from the Core Partners and attendees from the Program Partners and Program Network. As such, the DSD will also form the basis for knowledge management for policy dialogue in the program. There are many advantages of Distinguished Speaker Dialogues. Firstly, they provide a platform for high-level Government contacts within the core partners to meet on a regular basis to develop strong ties of partnership. Secondly, they provide outreach to the public as a high-visibility activity and provide a platform to promote the program. Finally, they would contribute to the knowledge database created under this program. The Distinguished Speaker Dialogues should occur every six months and should alternate between Beijing and Canberra. The annual international cooperation conference in Beijing would provide the perfect arena for the Distinguished Speakers Dialogue. In addition, an established DSD has the benefit of establishing a structure that can be easily mobilised to capitalise on a major event. As such, the program should consider DSD involvement with international speaking events to raise awareness of the program's role and the lessons learnt from the projects funded under the program. The PCO should monitor potential conference opportunities and propose the mobilisation of DSD speakers to promote ACEDP activities and raise awareness.



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Training

Training is an activity that was generally well regarded by the core partners. This is especially highlighted for increasing the know-how and legislative capacity of the Chinese Government to combat environmental problems. Concerning the average scores of the Chinese and Australian core partners, which are illustrated in the form of a line chart in Figure 1, 'training for Officials' received the highest average score for appropriateness. Training is also suitable for all levels of government and environmental engineers. Training can cover the entire gamut of aims for this program, such as policy dialogue, capacity building and scientific and technical support on specific environmental projects. CSIRO noted that they consider training to be of great importance for this program and recommended "hands-on professional trainings in the customisation of remote sensing based models for the Yellow River Basin". The MWR also interestingly noted that they consider "the process of capacity building [to be just] as important as the output" as working together with responsible agents from Australia on these issues will create important linkages for future cooperation.

Working Groups

The organisation of working groups proved to be very divisive. CSIRO stated that they thought that this activity would be extremely helpful for increasing Chinese capacity to combat environmental problems whereas SFA considered the organisation of working groups to be inappropriate. The connected idea of Joint Steering Implementation Groups on funded projects was more favoured. The MWR noted that in their previous cooperation programs with the Netherlands and the UK, the creation of Joint Steering Implementation Committees proved to be highly successful for facilitating ongoing dialogue on related environmental issues.

The Key Informant from the MWR stated that Joint Steering Implementation Committees "meet once a year at a working level with the International Development Centre at MWR. The Committee meetings provide information at the higher and lower levels, whereas the PCO [of ACEDP] are not accessing the program in the same way and the information from them is not enough to achieve this".

Regional Collaboration

Whereas CSIRO thought that the establishment of working groups on ACEDP related environmental issues would be most suitable for increasing Chinese Government capacity to combat environmental problems, they consider that "the best strategy to create lasting Australia-China government policy partnerships would be mutual engagement in improving regional collaboration by facilitating dialogue, high level consultations and participation in international discussion on environmental issues".



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Regional collaboration was less well received amongst other Australian Departments; however, in terms of its ability to promote cooperation between the respective Governments, the Chinese Ministries rated this activity to be the most suitable out of all the activities, with an average score of 4.5. Cooperation on regional environmental projects would not only work towards the improvement of the environment, but would also serve the two major objectives of ACEDP: to promote Government to Government engagement and to improve Chinese capacity to implement environmental projects in China. Although it does not fall directly under the scope of ACEDP, it should be supported and facilitated by ACEDP. To this end, the PCO should work with the core partners to track environmental trends in the region and to identify appropriate regional projects that would support the intended aims within the framework of ACEDP. If a project is unanimously regarded to be of particular importance by the core partners the ACEDP should develop a framework within which the Chinese and Australian Governments can cooperate closely together on a regional initiative.

Internships

Internships, like site visits, divided the opinions of the Chinese Ministries and Australian Departments. Again, the Chinese Ministries considered this exercise to be of much greater value than the Australian Departments. Indeed the highest average score given for any of the activities was for internships for Chinese Officials in Australian Departments. This activity received an average rating of 4.75 from the Chinese core partners for its appropriateness to increase Chinese Government capacity to combat environmental problems in China. The Chinese also rated its appropriateness relatively highly for its ability to increase active Government-to-Government cooperation. The Australian Departments rated this activity to be relatively inappropriate for both aims, giving a score of 3.25 for each. However, the Australian Departments indicated that internships, if appropriately selected, could be of great use. Indeed, DAFF noted that “internships are a good way to build capacity, but they must be selected on a case-by-case basis and they must last for at least one to two months”. DEWHA also acknowledged that they would be happy to accept internships from Chinese Ministries, but noted that they believe the real worth of internships would be to “agencies with hands-on management of water, such as state departments and the Murray Darling Basin Commission”. CSIRO is also willing to accept short-term internships, but emphasised that internships must be focused on specific projects or topics. They specified various suggestions for the particular focus of internships, including: “policy dialogues on ground water; remote sensing applications for better irrigation water management; and effluent water reuse for food production”, amongst others. There is much scope for the utilisation of internships within ACEDP as they have the possibility to serve focused and useful purposes. However, the NWC and DAFF stated that their Departments were unable to accept Chinese officials for Internships. Furthermore, it must be noted that, as the Chinese Ministry of Water Resources stated:

“There is not much use in Australian interns coming to China as the Chinese system is unlikely to be changed in this manner, [but] there is value in Chinese undertaking internships in Australia.”



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High-level Roundtable Meetings

High-level roundtable meetings was the only other activity apart from Science Cooperation which the Chinese Ministries and the Australian Departments consistently rated highly appropriate. This is clearly illustrated in the bar chart within Figure 1. The lowest average rating for high-level roundtable meetings was given by the Australian Departments in terms of its appropriateness for increasing know-how and legislative capacity to combat environmental problems in China. In terms of the combined average rating of both the Chinese and Australian core partners, this activity was rated the second most appropriate for increasing active cooperation, with only study visits being rated more highly. Within the consultations, all of the representatives noted that meetings between horizontal agencies would be very effective for creating lasting partnerships because meetings would allow for direct and clear exchange of experiences. Most core partner Key Informants understood that it cannot be over-used as an activity, but all agreed that as an annual event its value is high, not only for increasing Chinese capacity and Australia-China Government-to-Government ties, but also for providing a spectacle which would be useful to raise the visibility of ACEDP and its aims to a wider audience through the media. It is advisable to schedule an annual high-level roundtable meeting/workshop in Beijing to be attended by Government Officials from all of the core partners to the program to facilitate policy dialogue and project planning, and this could be scheduled prior to the Annual Work Plan preparations. The meeting or workshop focus will change to incorporate ongoing consultation and engagement with Core Partners and Program Partners.

Science co-operation

Science co-operation was the activity rated most appropriate by the Australian Departments. Indeed, DEWHA stated that one of the major opportunities which they desired to gain from the program was for promoting Australian education and research institutions. CSIRO noted that “developing a common scientific project within the ACEDP framework between scientists or researchers of China and Australia where scientists are committed for the work” would allow the countries to overcome many constraints and help to forge deep ties within the environmental field. The Chinese Ministries also echoed this view with the NDRC stating that “joint research could be conducted by the two countries in areas of mutual interest.” ACEDP is perfectly suited towards science co-operation and should be conducted “on topics on top of both sides’ agendas” as the Key Informant from the MWR stated. Science co-operation is an activity which should be wholly encouraged under ACEDP and a mechanism should be established whereby submissions for joint research projects should be submitted regularly to the PCO. The PCO should then work with all of the core partners to identify areas of mutual interest and to identify suitable methods for facilitating joint research and scientific cooperation in these chosen fields.

ACEDP should endeavour to promote science cooperation and all aspects of knowledge management as it is a key component of the program. As previously recommended in the August Strategy, a project should be commenced to establish an annual academic circle of education and research institutions in China and Australia relating to Integrated River Basin Management. This engagement activity will bring together potential Program Partners in a symposium to be held in China. The production of research papers and dialogue exchange will be a key area of knowledge management at an academic level. The academic circle should build on already established linkages between China and Australia research bodies.



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Translations of Key Legislation and Guidance Booklets

In broad terms, translations of key Australian legislation and environmental guidance booklets as a potential activity under ACEDP was poorly received by the core partners. This is clearly reflected within Figure 1. Indeed, the lowest average appropriateness rating generated by analysing the quantitative data within the questionnaires was for the translation of key Chinese legislation, which received an average score of just 2.25 from the Australian core partner Departments. Therefore, unless there are repeated calls from the core partners to translate documents under the ACEDP, this activity should not be considered as a potential activity.

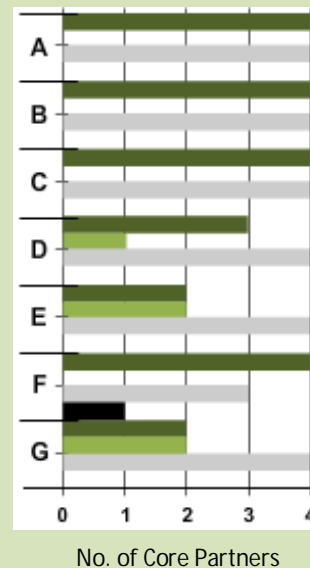
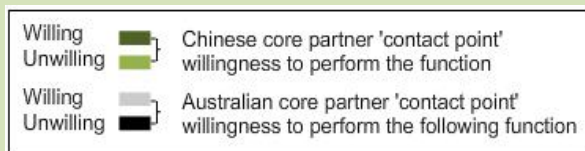
Contact Points

All eight of the core partners who completed the questionnaire affirmed that they are willing to designate official ACEDP contact points within their agency. Furthermore, the core partners all indicated that the contact point would be able to fulfill most of the tasks which were suggested to be assigned to the respective contact points. These include: liaising with other core partners; acting as the first point of contact between the PCO and their Ministry; staying updated of all progress made within ACEDP; assembling and submitting all the proposed projects for funding within their Ministry to the PCO; attending all major events held within Beijing; and attending update meetings to be attended by representatives from each of their national core partners. This clear willingness to designate an official contact point and appoint upon him/her various ACEDP related activities is illustrated in Figure 2 below. Contact points are essential for the smooth running of a program with the size, scope and ambition of ACEDP. Therefore, as the core partners are clearly willing to assign their contact point with various responsibilities under ACEDP, the PCO should take full advantage of this opportunity to ensure that the contact points are kept updated of all progress within ACEDP and are given every opportunity to be involved in the future and current work within the framework of the program.

Figure 2 – Core Partner ACEDP Representative Willingness to Perform ACEDP-Related Functions

- A - To liaise with other 'core partners'
- B - To act as the first point of contact between ACEDP and your Department
- C - To stay updated of all progress made within ACEDP
- D - To assemble and submit all the proposed projects within your Department to ACEDP
- E - To attend major ACEDP events
- F - To attend update meetings in Australia to be attended by representatives from each of the Australian 'core partners'
- G - To attend seminars/workshops in China to assist Chinese Government policy-making

Function





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Joint Steering Implementation Committees

Correspondence undertaken with the core partner Key Informants also highlighted the necessity of establishing a Joint Steering Implementation Committee mechanism with well defined topics for all cooperative projects. SEPA noted that this mechanism lends itself perfectly to the creation of close-knit linkages and as a tool to ensure sustained communication.

The MWR echoed this sentiment, stating that “a joint steering committee for the selected projects would prove to be the most successful communication tool for an effective, focused and lasting partnership.”

Furthermore, Joint Steering Implementation Committees ensure project efficiency and environmental technique sharing at the highest levels of Government as well as at regional and local levels.

Dialogues which can be supported

ACEDP is the largest cooperation program between Australia and China in this field. Moreover, for many of the core partners, it is the first time that formal cooperation partnerships have been signed with Government Institutions within the respective partner country.

SEPA noted that ACEDP “is the first Australia-China project in which [they] have been involved and it is also the first contact with [their] counterpart Australian Government agencies and so there is a lot to learn from working with each other.”

DEWHA noted that they are involved in cooperation projects with Chinese Government agencies in the field of wetlands and within climate change adaptation and the MWR noted that they have signed Memorandums of Understanding with two Australian counterparts. However, most of the core partners have never worked with their counterpart agencies. Therefore, ACEDP is especially important for creating a sustainable framework for continued Government-to-Government cooperation in the environmental field. CSIRO noted that “the IC WATER at CSU has already completed a few ACIAR projects with various Chinese Universities on sustainable water management in the Yellow River Basin of China within the last 4 years... but [ACEDP] will provide an entry point to CSU for dialogues and discussion with the Chinese Ministries to address China’s current and future environmental challenges.” As such, CSIRO hopes that ACEDP will facilitate the exchange of visits to study policies and strategies of irrigation water management and water saving agriculture in Australia. However, despite the embryonic nature of these Government-to-Government linkages within the environmental field, there are opportunities to build future synergies.



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Connecting with Business

As was recommended previously in the August Strategy, the program should also consider reaching out to corporations to establish policy dialogue with business and explore options for corporate sponsorship. The program should become a member and involved with the Australian Chamber of Commerce in Beijing (there are also chambers in Shanghai and Guangzhou) to build a network with Australian companies operating in China. In Australia, networking opportunities with the Australia China Business Council should also be explored.

It is recommended that once membership and networking has been established with the Australian Chamber of Commerce in Beijing, the program should consider hosting an annual reception for businesses interested in involvement with the program. Engaging business in a development program is difficult but this recommended engagement activity is a preliminary step to ascertain interest and explore connection possibilities. The event will also assist in the marketing of the program.

Community Participation

Once the program is established with the completion of some strategic project activities between core partners, consideration should be given to the introduction of a community activity to achieve the program's expected outcomes of community ownership and increasing community participation. Introducing community activities too early into the program will jeopardise the reputation of ACDEP as a high-level strategic China-Australia linkage. The main target audience for community outreach activities is the Program Network.

As stated in the previous August Strategy, a community activity recommended for the program is a photographic exchange. A proposed model for this program is provided in Appendix C. Other community outreach projects to be considered once the program is well established include environment awards and small grants. Both these activities will encompass a process of nominations from the Program Network.

It was recommended in the August Strategy that the program should consider involvement with China's participation in the following UN Water events: World Water Day (annually on 22 March), World Water Week and activities associated with the International Decade Water for Life 2005-2015, (the Millennium Development Goals has pledged to reduce by half the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation). These suggestions were also given by MWR who proposed that there should be celebratory events for major events such as UN World Water Day. The UN General Assembly has assigned 2008 as the International Year for Sanitation, and the program may be able to find synergy with activities undertaken in China during 2008.



Communications and Engagement Strategy

Part II: Communications

Current Communication Levels with ACEDP

The core partners were invited to describe communication/information levels between their agency and ACEDP. Of the eight core partners that completed the questionnaire, seven described current communication levels as appropriate. This clearly demonstrates that the PCO is currently updating and involving the core partners. The only core partner to respond to this question negatively was the MWR, who adjudged current communication/information levels to be lacking.

The Key Informant from the MWR stated that “communication has an essential role in implementing the program, but frustration is being felt by MWR as it is the lead organisation for environmental flow. [The MWR has] finalised the feasibility study but [they] are yet to find out the status. There is an important need for the PCO to develop status update reports”.

Internal communication and information dissemination is crucial for the program. As such, a system is recommended for implementation whereby status update reports should be prepared quarterly for each of the core partners. Furthermore, it is imperative that each partner remains updated of general progress made within ACEDP in order to continually reinforce the importance of the program. CSIRO suggested that from their previous experiences “dissemination about ACEDP activities through the publication of a monthly newsletter” would be a simple and efficient way of providing this information. The contact points within each core partner should be asked to provide a list of email addresses of stakeholders with a vested interest in the program so that they can be included in the PCO circulation of an email newsletter. However, an ‘unsubscribe’ option must be included on the newsletter. Furthermore, this ‘unsubscribe’ link should be made easily visible.

As iterated in the August Strategy, a monthly newsletter provides a platform for sharing information and partners’ experiences. It should be emailed to the Program Network database. To comply with legal requirements, members of the Program Network should give consent to receiving the newsletter via email at the time of providing their contact details. The newsletter should direct people to upcoming events as well as recent outcomes. It should feature an article on at least one project/activity in some detail in each edition with testimonials from Core Partners and project teams. The emailed version of the newsletter should be in summary format and direct people to the website for links to the text of main documents. The current and past editions of the newsletter should be available on the website as an ongoing part of the knowledge management system.

As also mentioned in the August Strategy, each program activity should have its own series of fact sheets. The fact sheets should be prepared once the project has commenced, at milestone intervals through the activity and at the conclusion of the activity. It is expected that information from the fact sheets will be used in the newsletter. The fact sheets should also be placed on the program website.

This strategy maintains, as the August Strategy proposed, to implement a series of ongoing consultations with Core Partners and Program Partners throughout various stages of the program. Formal consultation with key stakeholders not only keeps the program ‘on track’ with partners but provides an ongoing engagement process. The consultation is best done face-to-face.



Communications and Engagement Strategy

Efficient communication is not only necessary between the core partners and ACEDP, but also necessary between the core partners themselves. During the Key Informant interviews a common internal constraint which was highlighted was that inter-ministerial cooperation is limited in China.

The MWR iterated a feeling that was commonly expressed by the Chinese Ministries, that “interagency cooperation is a difficult issue in China and environmental issues are often not dealt with effectively owing to a lack of cooperation between the responsible Ministries... The specific functions and responsibilities of each Ministry are also often blurred and this causes severe delays because it is not clear which Ministry”.

Therefore, in addition to the status update reports, and newsletters which are designed to inform all core partners of progress made within ACEDP, it is also necessary to establish - as was recommended in the August strategy - an interagency consultancy group that would meet bi-monthly. This group would be coordinated by the Program Manager of the PCO to establish roles and responsibilities to be assigned to each of the Chinese core partners to the program and to provide an arena whereby Chinese interagency cooperation can be discussed to prevent any bureaucratic overlap and enhance coordination and cooperation.

Core Partner Dissemination Activities

With the only exception of DAFF and the NWC, all other core partners iterated their ability and willingness to assist with dissemination activities. Amongst the Chinese Ministries, all Ministries expressed their ability to undertake many important and useful dissemination activities under ACEDP. The only exception to this is the MWR who acknowledged that their media unit “has only four staff members and significant resource limitations.” SEPA identified *China Environment News* which operates under SEPA as a useful tool for information dissemination. *China Environment News* is very interested in ACEDP and is able to report project activities. SFA and NDRC also expressed their willingness to help the PCO with information-dissemination activities. In addition to both agencies being able to help with disseminating information about project activities on their respective websites, the SFA would be able to assist with contacting experts and scholars to join discussions on projects and conferences. The NDRC expressed that they can make media available for projects through radio, newsletters, international conferences and fora, and through television shows. The NDRC is also willing to make available each Department’s internal monthly newsletter according to need. These include the *International Comparison Newsletter* which is distributed to all NDRC departments, research institutes and local government as well as the *Reform Information Newsletter* which is a very accurate brief released to higher policy levels, including the State Council and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. NDRC’s internal newsletters are very valuable resources to communicate ACEDP activities to other Chinese Central Government agencies and the utilisation of these communication tools should be encouraged, especially following significant ACEDP events.

The Key Informant from the NDRC stated that “if provided with inputs, the NDRC can facilitate environmental discussion including through local TV shows. Of particular interest would be projects highlighting Australian experiences and information.”



Communications and Engagement Strategy

The Chinese Ministries should be invited whenever appropriate to assist with dissemination and visibility exercises. A workshop which involves the media departments of the core partner ministries should be organised early in the program in order to establish a starting point for cooperation. These agencies should be consulted on a case-by-case basis to identify areas in which cooperation can be built.

DEWHA and CSIRO are also willing and able to assist with information dissemination activities through the utilisation of their websites as well as through newsletters. Indeed, DEWHA has already created a link to ACEDP on their website. Although information dissemination activities will be of more interest to the Chinese audience, DEWHA and CSIRO should be contacted whenever necessary to assist with information circulation and for the organisation of scientific fora and project activities within Australia.

The August Strategy recommended the program employ a communications coordinator to be responsible for event management, liaison and communications (including press, website and newsletters). This recommendation will ensure that engagement with core partners is continued and communication of specific projects and the wider objectives of the program are optimised. The role of the communications coordinator will also address the specific requirement of core partners for status updates and the priority to produce program newsletters / factsheets. The program should consider utilising the Australia Youth Ambassador for Development program for the role of communications coordinator should program resources be limited.

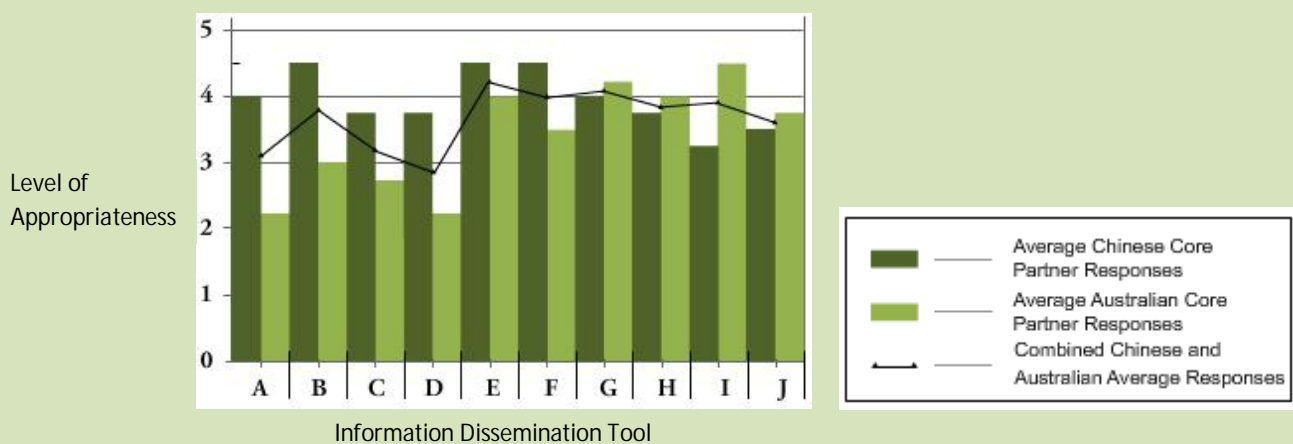
Quantitative Analysis – the most appropriate dissemination tools

Choosing suitable information-dissemination tools is of requisite importance for maximising communication and information-dissemination results. All core partners rated the tools they believe to be most appropriate within ACEDP on a scale of one to five, where one = inappropriate and five = highly appropriate. The quantitative analysis of the results of this question is illustrated below in Figure 3. This figure highlights the average scores of the Chinese Departments and Australian Ministries separately as a bar chart; whereas the line chart within the same figure illustrates the combined averages of the Chinese and Australian agencies.



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Figure 3 – Appropriateness of Information Dissemination Tools for use in ACEDP



A – National Television; B – International Newspapers; C – National Newspapers; D – Scientific/Environmental Journals; E – ACEDP website; F – Ministry websites; G – Local/provincial television; H – Related magazines; I – Targeted newsletters
J – Bi-monthly e-zines.

Figure 3 clearly shows that the opinions of which tools are most appropriate differ between the Chinese and Australian core partners. The Chinese Ministries indicated that their preference would be for information to be circulated via the medium of international newspapers and websites of both ACEDP and the core partners, whereas the Australian Departments designated local/provincial television and targeted newsletters as the tools most appropriate. This shows that different tools should be used for different circumstances. The target audience for each activity should be evaluated and identified and a suitable tool chosen on a case-by-case basis. This must be outlined by means of drawing up a communication action plan, as outlined below. It also shows that the visibility aims of the Chinese Ministries and Australian Departments differ. As such, different tools should be chosen for information-dissemination activities within each country. However, as all of the tools received average scores of three and above, all of the various activities must be considered appropriate for usage within ACEDP as a score of three corresponds to an 'appropriate' rating.

In addition to the tools analysed within the questionnaire, the core partners identified other useful tools during the Key Informant interviews and in their qualitative responses on the questionnaire.

The MWR believes that “promotional activities could include ceremonies, Global Water Day and brochures, however the priorities is *not* wider public participation, but targeting government officials.”



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This aim is reflected within the quantitative analysis of the questionnaire ratings whereby all of the tools which received the highest average ratings lend themselves to high-level government awareness. The PCO should hold this sentiment foremost when selecting dissemination tools. However, as the MWR astutely stated “dissemination which provides governance output to the public ensures increased sustainability of the program and its broader aims.” For example, the MWR identified the Lake Taihu Water Project as an area in which the public should be involved. The MWR even identified the introduction of awareness activities into classrooms “as pupils can affect parents and cause a positive impact on the family and society”. DEWHA noted that dissemination must also strive to “target national peak industry groups and education institutions that have expertise on ACEDP themes, such as Griffith University in Australia by articles within their publications”. However, it is important to keep in mind the ACEDP overarching aim of promoting Government-to-Government cooperation. Therefore, the balance of information dissemination must be weighted in favour of increasing Governmental awareness of the program and its activities. It would be useful, therefore, to encourage the NDRC to utilise its newsletters to communicate with different Chinese Government agencies when significant project activities are undertaken or completed.

As stated in the August Strategy, it was proposed that each project activity should have a communication action plan. The action plan must communicate the nature and extent of the activity. The communication action plan should not be viewed as separate to the activity but an integral part. Media opportunities need to be crafted with an understanding of program activities. The Communications Coordinator should prepare the communication action plan immediately following approval of a program activity. The Program Manager will manage the approval process in consultation with AusAID, Beijing.

Core Partners and Program Partners, particularly government departments, will have their own communications strategy. The communication action plans must be flexible to accommodate linkages with the activities of key partners, and concrete enough to ensure the program's profile and communication objectives are achieved. This is further outlined in the media protocol in Appendix D.

It is necessary for staff developing communication action plans to be provided with the necessary communication skills training. It is recommended that the Communications and Engagement Specialist facilitate a one-day media seminar with the two project officers, activity manager and communication coordinator. This seminar would include:

- Identifying media opportunities and designing key messages
- Media release writing skills
- Interaction with the media, including response mechanisms
- Approach to dealing with opposing views and contentious issue management
- Presentation skills
- Media protocols



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Internet based Dissemination Tools

Figure 3 clearly shows that two of three highest rated information-dissemination tools by the Chinese Ministries were the websites of ACEDP and the websites of the core partners to the program. The figure also reveals that the tool rated most appropriate by the Australian Departments was targeted newsletters. The advantage of these tools for information-dissemination is that they are narrowly targeted to a select audience. Internet based dissemination tools can be aimed directly at those institutions deemed most appropriate. In this case, these tools are targeted mainly to Government institutions and, to a lesser extent, to other interested stakeholders who have been identified by the Government institutions and interested wider stakeholders who choose to search for and sign-up for information about the program. As such, these Internet-based tools must be utilised as the principal method for disseminating ACEDP information. These tools are the most focused on increasing information and communication sharing between Government agencies. They also exhibit the additional advantage of creating a shared consciousness between the agencies and a sustained awareness of the program, which is necessary for the development of the program and for establishing a direct working relationship between the core partners.

It is of crucial importance that the PCO sets up a framework whereby information on the program developments and project activities can be disseminated on a quarterly basis via email newsletter to the project partners and to other stakeholders identified. There should also be a link included on the program website for wider interested stakeholders to sign-up for this quarterly newsletter. In addition to this, status update reports should be prepared quarterly and be specifically targeted to each of the core partners to the program and predominantly highlight progress made within projects in which they are involved. This would ensure sustained interest and ownership of the program. An additional idea which should be implemented, as outlined by three of the core partners: the MWR, the NDRC and DEWHA, involves the creation of a shared core partner section on the website for the core partners and the PCO to log-in to communicate recent developments. This suggestion was based on previous lessons learnt from international programs by the agencies and its implementation is strongly encouraged.



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Program Website

The August Strategy outlined the suggested design, content and operating criteria for the program website. The website has now been established and is operational at www.acedp-partnership.org, a web domain which successfully reinforces the program emphasis on an Australia-China partnership. The website design and content successfully reaches the target audience outlined in the August Strategy by raising program confidence and by broadly following the design suggestions detailed in the August Strategy. These include appropriate outlines of the program guidelines and the latest program developments, as well as sections for the people involved in the program and for the program studies and publications. The news section of the website is up-to-date, it attracts interest and directs stakeholders to the ongoing work of the program; however the 'people and program' section of the website needs to be further developed. Currently this section of the website consists of the reports from the three program specialists (monitoring and evaluation; communication and engagement; and social impact). The August Strategy suggested this section of the website should feature "the people and communities involved in the program activities" and that it should be further developed to feature beneficiary communities and individuals as the program activities are delivered. The program specialist studies are better placed in the 'studies and publications' section of the website. Other general suggestions for website content include: the need to urgently add activity photos to the website, other than the three 'planning meeting' pictures currently used; the need to develop and promote a program newsletter; and a link on the title bar back to the homepage for pages that open in a separate browser to ensure ease of navigation. The importance of website user testing outlined in the August Strategy is re-emphasised. Prior to the next Annual Plan preparation stage, it is recommended that a 'sample of users' be tested on how well they remember the website's main messages and how easily they can locate key information and services. It is important that the program owners' aims for the website are met and that software is used to track the number of page impressions in order to evaluate which parts of the website are most frequently accessed. This would ensure ongoing and relevant website development.

Program Flyer

There is an urgent requirement to update the program flyer that is featured on the project website. The flyer remains a text heavy introduction that must be adapted to feature program activities and images. The new flyer need only provide an introductory overview of program information to direct the audience to the program website. Furthermore, the Australia and China country maps used on the flyer and business cards for the program would be better replaced with project activities or images of areas of environmental work. This would better complement the 'people and program' and 'partnership' themes. The theme of 'sustainable partnership' in the program flyer commendably summarises the overarching objectives of the program and should be replicated more prominently on the program website.

Printed and Televisual Media

It is necessary to provide outreach to the public and, as such, printed and televisual media must play a major role in the program. This includes international media. The results of the Key Informant interviews and questionnaires demonstrate that media should be focused within the national boundaries of Australia and China apart from at the outset and completion of major projects, or where the project has led to the formulation of legislation and regulation in China. Scientific and environmental journal/magazine publications should be utilised when the program has led to new research or when novel environmental management techniques have been introduced into China.

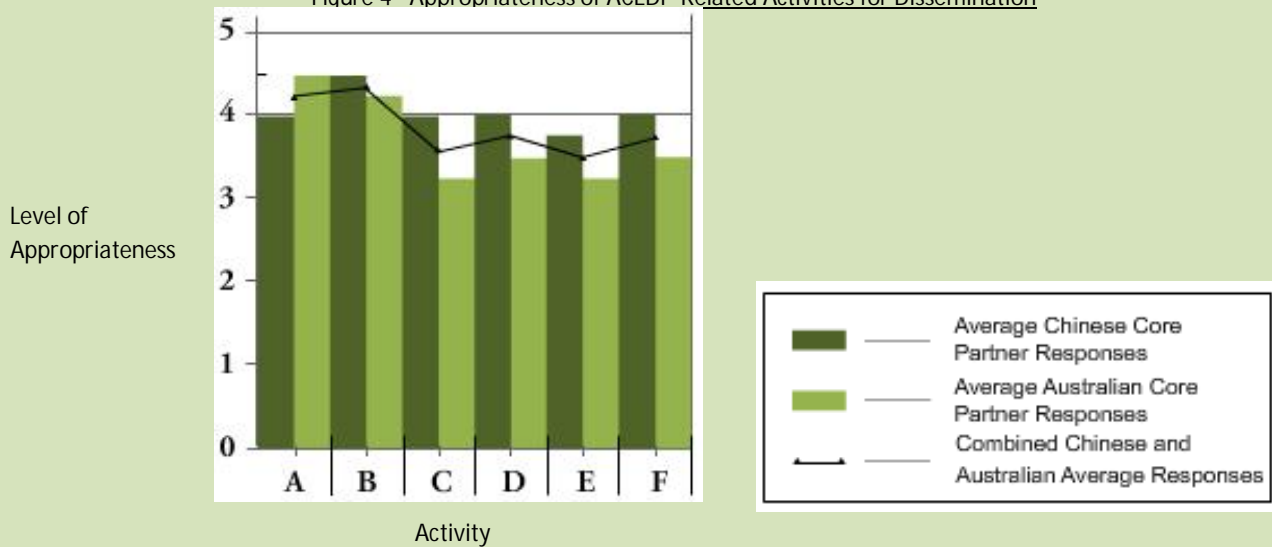


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Quantitative Analysis – Activities most appropriate to disseminate

The Chinese Ministries and Australian Departments were invited to rate on a scale of one to five which activities they believe to be the most appropriate to disseminate information about. The results of this question are illustrated in Diagram 4 below. All core partners rated the activities most appropriate to disseminate within ACEDP on a scale of one to five, where one = inappropriate and five = highly appropriate.

Figure 4 - Appropriateness of ACEDP-Related Activities for Dissemination



A – Information about new projects

B – Information about completed projects

C – High-level meetings

D – Information about ACEDP's contribution to new Chinese legislation

E – Information about ACEDP's contribution to Chinese Government announcements/statements

F – Media coverage (to partners and stakeholders)



Communications and Engagement Strategy

As can be seen in the bar chart of the figure, none of the core partners responded with a score of less than three for any of the activities which can be disseminated, thereby demonstrating their willingness and desire to raise awareness of ACEDP activities. The activities which were rated most appropriate to disseminate by the Chinese Ministries and the Australian Departments are, respectively, information about completed projects and information about new projects. Indeed, the average scores of both the Chinese and Australian core partners showed that these are the two activities about which information is most suitable for dissemination. This is illustrated by means of a line graph within Figure 4. As a result, when new projects are initiated or whenever projects are completed, awareness-raising activities delivered to Government institutions at the National, Regional and Local levels, as well as to interested stakeholders and to the wider public at large, are necessary. CSIRO stated that these interested stakeholders should include international donor institutions and NGOs in China in order to create a network of stakeholders. In the event that the projects are large, strategic, or of particular interest, internet based dissemination tools targeting Government and other invested stakeholders must be accompanied by other information-dissemination tools.

Awareness raising may include conferences or, as SFA recommended, “celebratory activities at the site of the project which may include shows and other such activities designed to grab the public attention, to raise public awareness and to teach the public about environmental issues.”

For projects of particular interest, it would be advisable for the PCO to contact the lead core partner Institutions to invite their opinion as to what information-dissemination activities are necessary. The core partners should also be asked to help prepare participant lists for conferences and seminars in order to ensure that the audience is as targeted as possible to suit its aims. Furthermore, in the event of conferences and seminars, all participants should receive a conference pack containing information about the program, as well as ACEDP visibility-enhancing tools such as stationary clearly showing the ACEDP program logo. These items should be practical, daily-use items such as pens and notebooks. During the Key Informant interviews, all core partners stated that USB memory sticks that clearly display the program logo would be a perfect accompaniment. They are neat, highly useful and exhibit a large potential for visibility sustainability in that they are durable and oft-used. All of these items should be colour coordinated in alignment with all other visibility methods such as consistent PowerPoint presentation formats. The information contained in the conference pack about the program and the projects should include documents providing information about the Australian and Chinese agencies involved in ACEDP activities as well as a description of how interested stakeholders, such as Chinese NGOs, international donor institutions and environmental experts can sign up for the quarterly newsletter. Media representatives should receive special packs with information guiding how the event could be best portrayed in the media. The NDRC even noted that special press meetings and events could be organised before the conference where presentations about the on-going activities and success stories of various ACEDP projects could be presented. The August Strategy outlined a plan for contacting the media. This should be referred to and should be adopted where appropriate.



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Audience, Branding and Messages

It is very important that the target audience and key brand message is considered for all releases and deliverables made under the program to ensure a consistent message is portrayed.

As was put forward in the August Strategy, a list of key recommendations should be considered whenever promotional documents and activities are delivered. These are:

The program's target audiences are:

- Primary target audience: Policy makers at the National level, Decision Makers at the provincial level and informed people and groups with interest in China's environment.
- Second target audience: institutions and people and groups interested in Australia's role in supporting improvements in China's environment.
- Third target audience: key stakeholders, including Chinese and Australian government departments, statutory bodies, international donor community, non-government organisations and the wider network of interested parties connected to the program.

The key brand message (which has been adopted) is: Partners for a better environment.

Key messages should be incorporated into all program wide communication and all program activity communication action plans. Successful key messages need to be constantly repeated. Key messages will need to be refined as the program develops and priorities change

The initial key messages of the program are:

- China and Australia working together for a better environment
- Australia supporting China's sustainable development
- Healthy River Basin – Healthy People (communities)
- Working together in our River Basin

All forms of program communication should stimulate behaviour in the target audience. Suggested behaviour changes include:

- Engagement with the program as a Core Partner, Program Partner or the Program Network
- Engagement with the program through program activities
- Requests for information
- Increased political support



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The Chinese Ministries rated high-level meetings to be the least appropriate activity to disseminate, whereas the Australian core partners suggested that information about how ACEDP activities contributed to Chinese Government announcements and statements was the activity least appropriate. As clearly illustrated in Figure 4, this activity also received the lowest average rating of the Chinese and Australian core partners put together. It is therefore obvious that unless a Government statement is particularly important, no work should be done to try to disseminate information about how ACEDP activities contributed to Chinese Government announcements and statements. Likewise, high-level meetings - unless they are extraordinary for the particularly high-level of the officials participating - should also not be disseminated to the wider public. Instead, these are the types of activities that should be disseminated within newsletters to the core partners and to other stakeholders who have signed up to receive such information. Two further activities were also rated. These were information about how ACEDP's activities have contributed to new Chinese legislation/regulation and media coverage which the program has received. Links to additional media coverage should only be highlighted on the ACEDP website and within references in the newsletters as this information would only be of interest to vested stakeholders. On the other hand, it *may* be appropriate to disseminate information to the wider public about how ACEDP's activities have contributed to new Chinese legislation/regulation. This must be done on a case-by-case basis and the efforts and resources that go towards disseminating the information should be relative to the importance of the legislation or to the amount of impact actual ACEDP activities contributed towards the formulation of the legislation.

Part III: Monitoring and Evaluation

It is necessary to ensure that the Communications and Engagement strategy is well-implemented and that its effectiveness is gauged. For this, focused monitoring and evaluation on the communications and engagement aspects of the program is needed. This should complement the monitoring and evaluation strategy which has been developed separately.

As was posited in the August Strategy, monitoring and evaluation at this stage should include:

- Whether the strategy is being implemented as planned.
- Detect possible deviations.
- Identify difficulties encountered, noting constraints and opportunities.
- Verify resources and results.
- Note risks and assumptions.

Success measures for this strategy need to be implemented on an ongoing basis. The following research methods will assist in evaluating the success of the strategy:

- Concept testing: refining of creative concepts.
- Benchmarking and tracking: reporting on engagement and communication quality, usage and coverage.
- Outcomes: changes in the target audiences attitudes, knowledge and behaviour.



Communications and Engagement Strategy

Next Steps

The Communications and Engagement strategy has been produced in two segments. The first involved a 10 day mission in mid 2007 and established target audience, branding, key messages, website design, launch-based activities and awareness raising for implementation at the early stage of the program. The second 10 day mission in early 2008 involved consultation with Australian and Chinese core partners to recommend the precise communication and engagement activities and objectives that the core partners envisaged for the delivery of the program. The second mission also aimed to objectively inform the PCO and the program owners of the core partners' assessment of the program's communications and engagement to date. The strategy has concentrated on recommending practical suggestions for engagement to promote policy dialogue and communications that facilitate cooperation, awareness raising and visibility for the program and program owners. The additional actions to be undertaken should include an evaluation of this strategy in relation to its implementation and effectiveness. This strategy should be reviewed annually by the specialist. It is also recommended that knowledge management methodology be developed by the Communications and Engagement Specialist to ensure the ongoing documentation of policy and lessons learnt from the program. This has not been possible in the two missions to date. It is also recommended that the Communications and Engagement Specialist undertake the media training of PCO staff as mentioned to ensure that media opportunities are enhanced for project activities.



Communications and Engagement Strategy

APPENDIX A

List of Recommendations

ACEDP Program Communication and Engagement

- Cooperation activities should be horizontal in most cases
- The PCO should work with core partners to track environmental trends in the region and to identify appropriate regional projects that would support the intended aims within the framework of ACEDP. If a project is unanimously regarded to be of particular importance by the core partners, the ACEDP should develop a framework within which the Chinese and Australian Governments can closely cooperate
- A Joint Steering Committee mechanism with well defined topics should be established for all cooperative projects
- Proposal management practices should continue as already planned and implemented
- Requests for site visits under ACEDP should be analysed by the PCO with additional consultation of both the Australian and Chinese core partners in order to confirm that the specific site visit request is of mutual interest to both parties
- A mechanism should be established whereby submissions for scientific cooperation joint research projects should be submitted regularly to the PCO. The PCO should then work with all core partners to identify areas of mutual interest and to identify suitable methods for facilitating joint research and scientific cooperation in these chosen fields
- For study tours, local government based tours should be 'at a working level', whereby officials should meet with horizontal level officials who are responsible for overseeing projects of a similar nature
- The translation of documents should not be considered as a potential activity under ACEDP
- Research into related programs should be undertaken and meetings arranged with partners of these programs to establish synergies with other related projects in China
- Internships of Chinese officials to Australia within ACEDP should be encouraged as they have the possibility to serve focused and useful purposes
- The organisation of working groups should be avoided
- Schedule annual high-level roundtable meetings or workshops in Beijing to be attended by Government Officials from all of core partners to the program. This should be scheduled prior to the Annual Work Plan preparations. The meeting or workshop focus should change to incorporate ongoing consultation and engagement with Core Partners and Program Partners
- Conferences and seminars should be sparingly utilised within ACEDP
- An annual 'international cooperation conference' should be arranged to include important international stakeholders
- A project should be commenced to establish an annual academic circle of education and research institutions in China and Australia relating to Integrated River Basin Management. This engagement activity will bring together potential Program Partners in a symposium to be held in China
- Regional conferences should be initiated to involve interested regional stakeholders in the program
- The PCO should ensure that contact points are kept updated of all progress within ACEDP and are given every opportunity to be involved in the future and current work within the framework of the program
- A regular Distinguished Speaker Dialogue to facilitate ongoing engagement, high level dialogue and program visibility should be established to take place every six months alternating between Beijing and Canberra. The speakers should ideally come from the Core Partners and attendees from the Program Partners and Program Network.



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- The PCO should monitor potential international conference opportunities and propose the mobilisation of Distinguished Speaker Dialogue members to speak at these events to raise awareness and promote ACEDP activities
- The establishment of an interagency consultancy group chaired by the Program Manager of the PCO that would meet bi-monthly to provide a format whereby horizontal Chinese interagency cooperation can be discussed to prevent any bureaucratic overlap and facilitate policy and project cooperation
- The implementation of a series of ongoing consultations with Core Partners and Program Partners throughout various stages of the program
- The program should become a member and involved with the Australian Chamber of Commerce in Beijing to build a network with Australian companies operating in China. In Australia, networking opportunities with the Australia China Business Council should also be explored
- The program should consider hosting an annual reception for businesses interested in involvement with the program
- A community activity recommended for the program is a photographic exchange
- The program should consider involvement with China's participation in UN Water events

ACEDP Project: Communication and Engagement

- The target audience for each project activity should be evaluated and identified and suitable information-dissemination tools chosen on a case-by-case basis
- Each project activity should have a communication action plan to ensure deliverables of program visibility, fact sheets, newsletter articles and media coverage. The Communications Coordinator should prepare the communication action plan immediately following approval of a program activity. The Program Manager will manage the approval process in consultation with AusAID, Beijing
- Staff developing communication action plans must receive necessary communication skills training
- The Chinese Ministries should be invited whenever appropriate to assist with dissemination and visibility exercises
- For projects of particular interest, the PCO should contact the lead core partners to invite their cooperation as to what information-dissemination activities are necessary
- Status update reports should be prepared quarterly and be specifically targeted to each of the core partners to the program and predominantly highlight progress made within projects in which they are involved
- When new projects are initiated or whenever projects are completed, it is necessary to carry out awareness-raising activities delivered to Government institutions at the National, Regional and Local levels, as well as to interested stakeholders and to the wider public at large. Interested stakeholders should be brought into the program and a network of stakeholders established. These include international donor institutions and NGOs in China
- The PCO should set up a framework whereby information on program developments and project activities can be disseminated on a quarterly basis via email newsletter to the project partners and to other stakeholders
- The focal points within each core partner should be requested to provide a list of email addresses of stakeholders with a vested interest in the program so that they can be included in the PCO circulation of an email newsletter
- The core partners should also be requested to prepare participant lists for conferences and seminars in order to ensure that the audience is as targeted as possible
- The program employ a communications coordinator to be responsible for event management, liaison and communications
- There should be a link included on the program website for wider interested stakeholders to sign-up for the quarterly newsletter



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- Interested stakeholders should be brought into the program and a network of stakeholders established. These include
- Each program activity should have its own series of fact sheets and this should be included on the project website
- A workshop which involves the media departments of the core partner ministries and departments should be organised early in the program in order to enhance communications cooperation. These agencies should be consulted on a case-by-case basis to identify areas in which cooperation can be built
- It is important to prioritise ACEDP's overarching aim of promoting Government-to-Government cooperation. The balance of information dissemination must be weighted in favour of increasing governmental awareness of the program and its activities
- Internet-based tools must be utilised as the principal method for disseminating ACEDP information
- In the event that the projects are large, strategic, or of particular interest, internet based dissemination tools targeting government and other invested stakeholders must be accompanied by other information-dissemination tools
- The utilisation of NDRC's internal newsletters should be encouraged to communicate program activities to other Chinese Government agencies
- Printed and televisual media must play a major role in the program to engage and provide outreach to the public
- Media should be focused within the national boundaries of Australia and China apart from at the outset and completion of major projects, or where the project has led to the formulation of legislation and regulation in China
- Scientific and environmental journal/magazine publications should be utilised when the program has led to new research or when novel environmental management techniques have been introduced into China
- Limited work should be undertaken in disseminating information about how ACEDP activities contributed to Chinese Government announcements and statements. Instead, this information should be included in newsletters, on the program website and in status update reports
- Information should be disseminated to the wider public about ACEDP's activities which have contributed to new Chinese legislation/regulation. This must be done on a case-by-case basis and the efforts and resources that go towards disseminating the information should be relative to the importance of the legislation or to the amount of impact actual ACEDP activities contributed towards the formulation of the legislation
- Links to additional media coverage should be highlighted on the ACEDP website and within newsletters as this information is of interest to wider stakeholders
- The 'People and Program' section of the website should feature the people and communities involved in the program activities and should be further developed to feature beneficiary communities and individuals as the program activities are delivered
- The program specialist studies should be placed in the 'Studies and Publications' section of the website
- Activity photos should be added to the website
- A link on the title bar back to the homepage for pages that open in a separate browser should be installed to ensure ease of navigation
- Prior to the next Annual Plan preparation stage, a sample of users should be tested on how well they recall the website's main messages and how easily they can locate key information and services
- It is important that the program owners' aims for the website are met and that software is used to track the number of page impressions in order to evaluate which parts of the website are most frequently accessed
- The program flyer must be adapted to feature program activities and images



Communications and Engagement Strategy

- The Australia and China country maps used on the flyer and business cards for the program would be better replaced with project activities or images of areas of environmental work
- The theme of 'sustainable partnership' in the program flyer summarising the overarching objectives of the program should be replicated more prominently on the program website
- For conferences and seminars all participants should receive a conference pack containing information about the program
- The conference and seminar packs should include visibility-enhancing items such as stationary clearly showing the ACEDP program logo. These items should be practical, daily-use items such as pens and notebooks
- The list of key recommendations provided in this strategy for 'audience, branding and messages' should be considered whenever promotional documents and activities are delivered
- Key messages should be incorporated into all program wide communication and all program activity communication action plans
- USB memory sticks that clearly display the program logo should be designed as a gift for interested stakeholders because they are highly useful and exhibit a large potential for visibility sustainability and uploading of program key documents, flyers, fact sheets and newsletters
- All visibility-enhancing items should be colour coordinated in alignment with all other visibility methods such as consistent PowerPoint presentation formats
- The information contained in the conference pack about the program and the projects should include documents providing information about the Australian and Chinese agencies involved in ACEDP activities as well as a description of how interested stakeholders, such as Chinese NGOs, international donor institutions and environmental experts can sign up for the quarterly newsletter
- Media representatives should receive special packs with information guiding how the event could be best portrayed in the media
- A project should commence to identify China's leading environment journalists for a project briefing and needs assessment evaluation of a Chinese environmental journalist study tour to Australia. This should be led by the Communications Coordinator
- For major conferences and project activities, special press meetings and events should be organised before the commencement where presentations about the on-going activities and success stories of various ACEDP projects are presented
- Monitoring and evaluation on the communications and engagement aspects of the program is needed. The broad scope of this monitoring and evaluation is mentioned in this strategy and the markers and success measures mentioned in it should be followed



Communications and Engagement Strategy

APPENDIX B

Distinguished Speaker Dialogue

The Chinese Academy of Sciences released a recent study on the impact of climate change on the reduction of wetlands and a resulting reduction in water volume at the source of China's two largest rivers, the Yangtze River and Yellow River. The Australian Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) is leading the development of modelling technology for natural resource management in Australia that measures the effects of climate scenarios. Modelling scenarios digitally can save millions of dollars in development and lead to improved environmental, economic and social outcomes. The Catchment Modelling Toolkit (CMT) developed for the land and water management industry assists in predicting the multiple impacts of land and water management decisions at a whole-of-catchment scale. The toolkit enables land and water managers to manage catchments better. In June 2007, both institutions signed a two-year funding agreement for collaboration to investigate climate and rainfall linkages between China and Australia. A DSD proposal to invite a leading director from the Chinese Academy of Sciences and the CSIRO Catchment Modelling Toolkit provides the following advantages:

- Building relations between two Program Partners
- Providing information and networking opportunities to the program's wider network
- Marketing both institutions in China and Australia
- Publicising the program
- Adding to the information knowledge network.



Communications and Engagement Strategy

APPENDIX C

Community Participation: Photographic Exchange

Both China and Australia have a history of increased community environmental awareness through photography. In China, Colorful Hot Springs by Luo Jinhui won the inaugural United Nations Environment Program's International Photographic Competition in 1991. This competition held every four years has collected tens of thousands of photos from over 160 countries, with Chinese photos counting for one-fifth of entries. In Australia, Rock Island Bend, Franklin River, South West Tasmania by Peter Dombrovski captured the Australian public's imagination to preserve a wilderness area now listed on the World Heritage List.

A photographic exchange should focus on strengthening existing partnerships between regional government (China) and local government (Australia). There are in excess of 50 sister-city relationships between Chinese and Australian cities. This level of government is increasingly a valuable partner in water resource management, and importantly the most effective level of government for partnerships for community activities such as civic, cultural, education and youth exchanges.

Positive regional media coverage of an international photographic exchange is highly likely in both China and Australia. The national governments of China and Australia both actively encourage programs in regional areas.

The City of Kunming, Yunnan and the City of Wagga Wagga, NSW entered into a sister city relationship in 1988. Several programs and exchange visits have taken place. Both cities have significant water resource issues. In Kunming, Dianchi Lake is the sixth largest fresh water lake in China and has an area of 340 square kilometres. Wagga Wagga is located on the Murrumbidgee River, an important river in the Murray Darling river system. A potential Program Partner, the Institute for Land Water and Society at Charles Sturt University, is also located in Wagga Wagga. The Institute is working with Wagga Wagga City Council to establish the town as an urban demonstration site for the United Nations major water initiative HELP (Hydrology for the Environment, Life and Policy).

On the invitation of the Program Manager, it is recommended both cities be invited to participate and assist with the in-kind organisation of a photographic exchange to enhance their existing relationship. Encouraging local students (at junior and senior level) in both cities to participate in a photographic competition of their local environment provides opportunities to foster increased mutual understanding and strengthen an existing China-Australia partnership. A selection of photographs from each city should form an exhibition to be exchanged between Kunming and Wagga Wagga. Ideally the Chinese and Australian photos would be exhibited together in a public space such as a shopping precinct. The main sponsor of the photographic exchange should be ACDEP. The regional governments should be invited as co-sponsors for their in-kind assistance in organising the event. The regional governments should be requested to explore any local sponsorships opportunities. The cost to the program is likely to be in the vicinity of \$AUS 25,000



Communications and Engagement Strategy

APPENDIX D

Media Protocol for Program Staff

Objectives

- 1) To encourage effective relationships with the media and ensure accurate, timely and consistent information about ACEDP to the media.
- 2) To provide program staff with clear directions on how to respond if contacted by the media.

Background

This protocol does not limit media relations by the Program Owners and Core Partners regarding the ACEDP. This protocol is a guideline for program staff.

It is vital that information provided to the media by program staff presents an organisational view that is consistent and accurate.

While the program will seek to provide good news stories to the media, it is equally important that inquiries from the media be responded to in an appropriate and timely manner.

As the media works to tight deadlines, it is important all media inquiries are treated with high priority. Where reasonable, information relating to media inquiries will be provided within the deadline required by the media outlet.

Directions for Program Staff

- 1) The only staff member from the program that can provide comment to the media regarding the operation of the program is the Program Manager.
- 2) The Program Manager must only comment on matters of fact and must not enter political debate or discussion.
- 3) All media inquiries received should be directed in the first instance to the Communications Coordinator. The Communications Coordinator will determine the nature and priority of the inquiry and discuss with the Program Manager the appropriate response.
- 4) The Communications Coordinator is responsible for arranging positive media opportunities.
- 5) In some circumstances, following a specific request from the media, program staff may appear in photographs and media articles or interviews, upon receiving prior approval from the Program Manager.
- 6) All media inquiries are to be treated with a high priority.
- 7) The Communications Coordinator, in providing information to the media, should seek agreement from the media that information is provided on the basis that any story will make mention of both AusAID and the program.