

Environmental Conservation Department
Communication and Awareness
(C&A) Strategy 2001-2003

Final

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1 Introduction

Environmental problems are primarily caused by human activities. Thus, the aim of an environmental protection agency like ECD is to end, change or limit the behavioural patterns that cause pressures to the environment.

Part of ECD's work is to provide manuals and guidelines, as well as developing laws and regulations. But this does not do the job alone. Using a broad range of means most effectively targets changing or limiting certain human activities that damage the environment.

Communication and awareness (C&A) is by the ECD seen as one of several complimentary means to deal with the environmental problems of Sabah. This includes raising communication and awareness of environmental problems and environmental protection among the public and within governmental departments.

This paper describes ECD's overall C&A strategy. It further briefly outlines different C&A tools, C&A activities already implemented by ECD and ideas for possible future C&A activities.

The nature and surroundings of ECD's work are dynamic and complex. New opportunities and tasks arise on a frequent and unpredictable basis. For this reason it is believed that is it not appropriate for the department to operate according to rigid and specified long term action plans. Thus, this strategy is intended to serve as a guiding framework for ECD's C&A activities and the implementation of the strategy will be specified and carried out on an ongoing basis.

It also has to be noticed that ECD only holds limited resources for C&A administration and operations. The strategy presented in this paper, attempts to provide a realistic and operational C&A framework for ECD.

2 C&A Strategy

The Environmental Conservation Department has identified two C&A key areas or aims for the departments C&A Section. Together these two key areas constitute ECD's C&A strategy.

The two key C & A areas are:

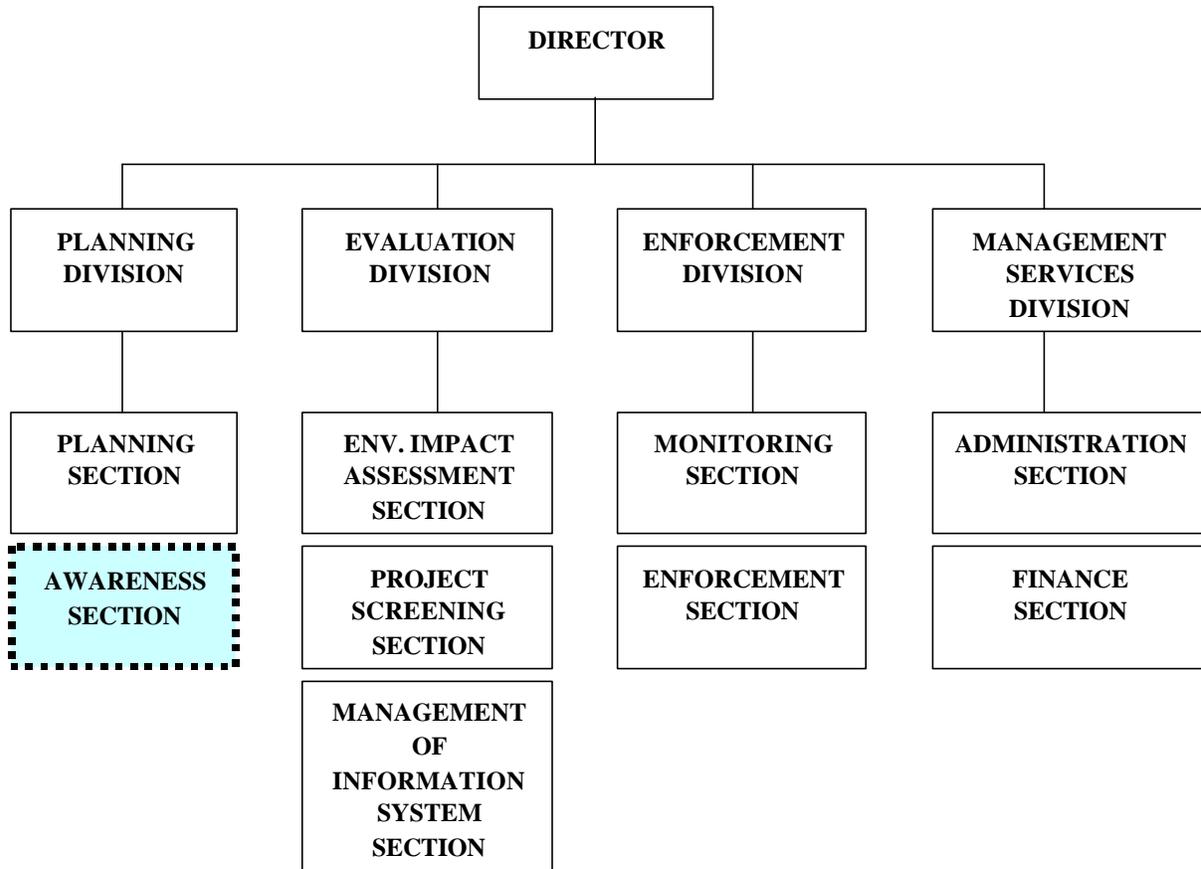
- C & A support to core ECD activities
- C & A support to raise general environmental awareness.

Apart from the two above mentioned key areas, the strategy also include additional C & A support to enhance the governmental and public knowledge of ECD's work and mandate.

In the following, the C&A key areas are described separately. In real terms, however, many of the planned and implemented activities will overlap and compliment the different aims. One example is the Environmental Indicator Report. The Indicator Report is mentioned as C&A support to core ECD activities; namely as information for decision making used by the Planning Division. Though, the Indicator Report will further contribute to support the aim of creating general environmental awareness among the public and decision-makers outside ECD. And it is likely even to serve the purpose of promoting ECD as an agency.

As shown below, the C&A Section is located within the Planning Division. The C&A Section, however, are intended to work across the Planning, EIA and Evaluating divisions of the department.

ECD Structure



3 Key Area 1: C & A support to core ECD activities

This C&A key area are characterised by being targeted and proactive. It is intended to forge close and direct links between C&A activities and specific ECD activities and objectives.

Targeting specific ECD objectives, ECD should always walk on two legs. One is the production of hard core environmental management services, provisions and activities such as guidelines, manuals, rules and regulations, law making and enforcement. Though, to mitigate environmental problems with most efficiency and least coercion, it is vital that complimentary awareness activities are planned and implemented to support the specific issues targeted by the Planning, EIA and M&E departments of ECD.

It is the intention of ECD already from the planning of a targeted environmental management activity always to consider and integrate C&A as one component of a targeted activity

Thus, the intention is that public awareness needs are integrated into the preparation of any larger programme in order to capture the publics or a specific target groups attention while at the same time promoting ECD targeted objectives. E.g. when targeting environmental problems created by pig farming, C&A activities should be considered to promote the issue and/or support the effect of a manual, a guideline, a regulation etc.

Possible C&A tools and activities for this key area could include exhibitions, brochures, workshops or seminars with the relevant stakeholders, road shows, newspaper publications, environmental indicator reports as well as distribution, presentation and promotion of guidelines and manuals.

At present ECD has completed e.g. following activities in this area:

- Distribution and presentation of the EIA Handbook
- Distribution and presentation of the Guideline for River Sand & Stone Mining
- Brochure on River Sand & Stone Mining
- Distribution and presentation of the Construction on Hill Slope Guideline
- Brochure on the Construction on Hill Slope Guideline
- ECD Homepage

Following future activities might be considered:

- Additional C&A on EIA, River Sand & Stone Mining and Construction on Hill Slope
- C&A on Forestry, which might include dissemination of results of EIA compliance, of pilot projects concerning on the ground demarcation of river reserves etc.
- C&A on oil palm plantations, which might include information meetings, brochures and posters targeting oil palm plantation associations
- C&A on Pig Farm Regulation, which might include news coverage of the survey, of the new regulations etc.
- C&A on Aqua Culture
- C&A on agriculture, which might include targeted information to the main agricultural land owners
- C&A on Landfill, which might include seminar for local authorities on location and construction of landfills
- 'Years Theme 2002', which will be an attempt of 1-3 divisions of the ECD divisions to launch a co-ordinated effort within one specific area (topic or area wise).

4 Key Area 2: C&A support to raise general environmental awareness

The second C&A key area is the aim of creating general environmental awareness among decision-makers, the productive sectors and the public. Though, creating general environmental awareness is a major task and working towards this objective, ECD is only to be seen as one of many key players.

Thus, due to the limited C&A resources available to the ECD, it is believed that ECD can (and shall) not launch major awareness activities regarding all environmental issues. The ECD support to general awareness raising should therefore to a large extent attempt to support or supplement activities implemented by other government departments and NGO's.

One aim is to encourage inter-community exchanges as well as the strengthening of the capacity of communities to work together, negotiate and work with external agencies. C&A is directed at providing a support structure, which will play a facilitative role in respect of public environmental initiatives.

In addition to this, other C&A tools can also include expert advice, talks/lectures, participating in seminars, workshops and meetings or the production of videos, brochures, exhibitions, calendars and posters.

Within this area, ECD has e.g. provided support to following activities:

- Funding for and support to the promotion and promotion of "Love Moyog River Project" undertaken by Penampang Junior Chamber in co-operation with 27 JKKK's (CBO's)
- Funding for and participating in meetings for "Recycling My Green School Project" – a joint venture with SMK Tamparuli
- Support to Environmental Awareness Camps for secondary school student
- Participation in SITE Network (Sabah Inter-agency Tropical Ecosystems) including the recent preparation of the SITE Research Seminar

- Video (and CD Rom) on Environmental Management in Sabah prepared and distributed to +100 stakeholders

Some of the planned activities within this key area are:

- Sabah Environment Calendar
- Sabah Environment Poster
- Photo book on environmental change in Sabah

As outlined, this key area is more ad hoc and reactive. Thus regarding future activities, ECD will respond to and support strategically important environmental initiatives as they evolve.

5 Additional: C&A of ECD's Work and Mandate

Apart from the above key C&A areas activities promoting awareness of ECD generally as well as of its specific responsibilities will also be undertaken by the C&A Section. General knowledge to be communicated regarding ECD will include its Terms of Reference, its area of jurisdiction, its objectives as well as its relation with regard to other state and federal departments.

In its work the ECD to a large extent depend on its reputation and the acknowledgement of the important role of ECD in the public as well as with other government agencies. This includes the need to attract government budgets for ongoing activities and expansion of the department's activities. At the same time, a good image with both the public and other government agencies will in various ways support ECD in its general work to accomplish its objectives.

The tools used for this kind of C&A are both formal and informal. Formal tools can be briefing of ECD's ongoing work to the minister, brochures on ECD and interdepartmental meetings. Apart from this, the aim of this key area is also served through most activities in the other key areas.

Other important tools to promote the work and mandate of ECD have a more informal character. Participating in meetings and study tours with NGO's and other government agencies constitute important networking activities that can promote the ECD.

Within this key area the ECD has at present performed following activities:

- Brochure on ECD
- Participation in workshops, seminars and study tours

Possible future activities within this key area could be:

- Briefing to the Minister and key stakeholders through a quarterly bulletin
- 'Newspaper coverage objective' – a target of 12 newspaper articles pr year that contributes to provide ECD with a positive and proactive reputation