

10. PROMOTION AND MARKETING

This is a very important component of your RHP which can be easily overlooked, while attending to day-to-day practicalities. For your RHP to gain acceptance in your area, promoting it to the wider community who have an interest in water quality is essential. Achieving “stakeholder buy-in” will make successful implementation of your RHP that much easier. Promotion and marketing aimed at attracting funding for your programme is another important aspect to consider. The “what”, “how”, “why”, “when” and to “who” questions are useful starting points to formulate your RHP liaison, promotion and marketing strategy.

Your RHPs promotion and marketing strategy should aim to:

- \$ promote acceptance of your RHP amongst key clients and stakeholders
- \$ convince these groups of the value and benefits of the RHP
- \$ promote the use of information generated by the RHP in water resource management decisions
- \$ attract participation and/or funding for your programme
- \$ nurture a sense of responsibility and ownership of the RHP amongst these groups
- \$ promote the role that the RHP and biomonitoring can play in maintaining and monitoring the state of river systems
- \$ promote awareness and need for conserving aquatic ecosystems.

10.1 IDENTIFICATION OF CLIENTS AND STAKEHOLDERS

It is essential to know who the clients and stakeholders are so that your promotion reaches your intended target audience. This target audience will probably consist of a wide variety of people and organisations from equally diverse backgrounds. They will probably have one thing in common: an interest or stake in the rivers of your RHP. Manyaka Greyling Meiring (1998) have divided the potential target audience into different levels: political, implementation, stakeholder and information levels.

10.1.2 Your potential target audience should include

- \$ Government department officials (provincial and national departments.)
- \$ Municipal and district councils
- \$ Representatives from Industry (particularly mining, forestry and agriculture)
- \$ Potential funders or contributors to your RHP (including the above sectors)
- \$ Universities - several departments (eg biology or geography depts.) may be interested in participating in research relevant to the RHP
- \$ Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs) - existing structures in the community, which may serve as useful conduits to get the RHP message to people.
- \$ Conservation and conservancy groups (eg Wildlife and Environment Society of SA)
- \$ Local Communities with an interest in the river
- \$ Schools and youth groups such as Eco- and Conservation Clubs
- \$ River Fora and Water Users Associations are the building blocks for the Water Management Areas - which are scheduled to be run by Catchment Management Agencies. Depending on how developed these are in the area concerned, these are useful springboards for launching the RHP in your area.

10.2 CONTENT AND STYLE OF PROMOTIONAL AND MARKETING INITIATIVES

The content and style of your promotion and marketing initiatives will depend on what you intend promoting and to whom these are aimed at. It is important to include pertinent information in a way that is readily understood by your target audience in an interesting and appealing format.

The content should include the basic facts of the RHP such as:

- \$ background and origins of the RHP
- \$ objectives of the programme
- \$ description of the various biomonitoring indices and how they work
- \$ advantages of the RHP both provincially and nationally and why the programme is important
- \$ potential role players and how to get involved
- \$ key points from your implementation plan.

The style of presentation is also important and should be tailored to suite the intended audience. School groups will require a different level of information and presentation style to a corporate or government audience. Remember to use the corporate image of the RHP where possible (particularly the logo). This will help entrench the identity of the RHP with your audience.

To attract financial investment, the contribution of resources or skills and to encourage direct participation in the programme, requires advertising to “sell” your programme.

NOTE:

The level of detail, style of presentation and medium for which particular audience will ultimately be left to you to decide.

10.3 CHOOSING THE MEDIUM FOR PROMOTION AND MARKETING

The next challenging step is to choose the most effective method to get the RHP message across. Generally, one of the most effective ways to “penetrate the market” is by means of talks and practical demonstrations, preferably in the field. Demonstrating either SASS and FAI sampling techniques may be useful to garner support for your programme. Environmental Festivals and EcoForum meetings are useful events at which to introduce your programme. Including an environmental education component in your promotion strategy would be effective in reaching school and youth groups.

Other media options include:

- \$ RHP fact sheets (available from the RHP Communication Office of Manyaka Greyling (Pty) Ltd)
- \$ RHP newsletters and posters
- \$ local newspaper press-releases and magazine articles
- \$ word of mouth
- \$ radio and television coverage
- \$ press conferences have the potential to reach a wide audience
- \$ corporate RHP video would also be a valuable promotional and educational tool
- \$ RHP website (www.csir.co.za/RHP) - provincial initiatives and progress can be posted regularly on the website which has the potential to reach the global audience.

NOTE:

Manyaka Greyling Meiring (1998) have produced a draft of a Strategic External Communication Programme manual for the RHP. This document addresses the communication, promotion and liaison for the RHP. It also covers identifying key target audiences and how to arrange workshops, field demonstrations and open days and a range of other relevant topics. See section on organisations offering support to the RHP for more information.

