

STANDARDISE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROTOCOL FOR WCS PNG.



Written by John Tagai Kuange
Edited by Richard J Cuthbert

BASIC COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT GUIDE FOR FIELD STAFF
WCS Papua New Guinea program – Project Manual

WILDLIFE CONSERVATION SOCIETY

The Wildlife Conservation Society saves wildlife and wild places worldwide. We do so through science, global conservation, education and the management of the world's largest system of urban wildlife parks, led by the flagship Bronx Zoo. Together these activities change attitudes towards nature and help people imagine wildlife and humans living in harmony. WCS is committed to this mission because it is essential to the integrity of life on Earth.

WILDLIFE CONSERVATION SOCIETY PNG PROGRAMME

The Wildlife Conservation Society Papua New Guinea programme (WCS PNG) is the longest established international conservation NGO within PNG. WCS PNG works with local communities, local and international NGOs, and with local, provincial and national governments on a wide range of conservation issues and across a range of landscapes from the country's coral islands to its forested highlands.

The vision of WCS PNG is “*Gutpela solwara, gutpela bus, gutpela sindaun*” which translates to “*Empowered people with healthy forests and seas*”

Front Cover Photo: FPIC Proces, Andra Island, Manus Province, Papua New Guinea, by John Kuange

Recommended Citation:

For further information contact John Kuange jkuange@wcs.org or wcspng@wcs.org



PNG Programme, PO Box 277
Goroka, Eastern Highlands Province
Papua New Guinea

Phone: (+675) 532-3494; Fax: (+675) 532-3180

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Summary

Papua New Guinea (PNG) is the most linguistically and culturally diverse nation on earth with over 800 different and distinct cultures and languages. One standardized community engagement approach does not necessarily fit all communities. This makes community engagement an ongoing challenge for WCS in PNG.

This document is a result of many years of the WCS's experience of using different approaches for community engagement. The paragraphs below summarized the four stages that WCS has been following when engaging with local communities in different parts of PNG.

Stage 1 discusses the key aspects for field team planning and preparation. This is the crucial stage in any community engagement process. Field teams must invest time and effort into planning. This planning stage looks at understanding the overall project and the task at hand, reviewing of surveys and presentations, delegation of tasks including budgeting and shopping, drafting of notices or letters of intended trips and delivering them. For first time field team members, a cultural orientation is also required to be undertaken. If there are any identified training needs then time should be set aside for this prior to visits.

Stage 2 is the actual engagement with the community. Key steps in this stage include community entry meetings which clarify and set out the goal of the field visit, duration of the activity, who will be involved, payments for services rendered and identification of special groups like the elderly. This stage also looks at how the team members should be updating themselves every day in field and protecting data collected during the day. This stage also discusses community exit meetings where team members debrief the people on their work and lay out the next plans.

Stage 3 looks at tasks that need to be completed when field team return to the office or base. It discusses team debriefings, equipment cleaning and checks, trip reports, acquittals, data analysis, report writing and finally the plan on returning and repatriating information back to the community.

Stage 4 is repatriation (see below)

The three stages listed above highlight some of the basic steps that WCS staff in PNG have to follow to making sure community engagement is done correctly. In reality, not all steps will be followed in the order presented or not all will be checked. Whichever way the steps are followed depends very much on these factors; if it is an old site or new site, duration of the activity, number of community members that will be involved in the field activity, or if this project activity is a new concept or not. Nonetheless, the above three stages and steps will provide a solid basis for engaging with communities in PNG and elsewhere in Melanesia.

The document also highlights some additional key elements when undertaking community engagement in any WCS PNG field site. These include child protection policy, medical kits and emergency plans, use of field equipment, data protection and confidentiality of data collected. All these documents can be found in the WCS PNG Human Resources Manual.

What is community engagement?

Community engagement is an extremely important process for WCS PNG by which it connects and interacts with community members to address issues of mutual interest affecting their well-being and their natural resources. Community engagement can take many forms like, awareness, consultations, surveys, community projects or empowering communities to make informed decisions.

The ensuing paragraphs discuss some basic stages in community engagement. They are not necessarily the only method but are a guide to some of the key elements that can be followed by WCS PNG staff, as well as by consultants and students. These steps are only a guide and they do not necessarily have to be followed in the order they are presented. On the other hand, certain steps can be included or omitted depending on the site, duration of the activity and nature of the activity.

Some basic step to Successful Community Engagement

It is possible that your own circumstances or sites mean that some steps (or parts thereof) are not applicable. Nonetheless, the closer you can stick to these suggestions, the more likely you will be to achieve satisfactory engagement.

The ensuing paragraphs discuss in detail the main stages of community engagement. The three stages depict three different settings in a community engagements process. The first stage concerns office preparations and planning, stage 2 is the actual engagement with the community and stage 3 is data analysis and finally stage 4 is repatriation of data collected.

Stage 1 – Field team preparation.

This is the critical point in any community engagement. WCS Field team members need to understand that community engagement itself is a planned process with a specific purpose of working with identified groups of people. These people are the community members we are engaging with in the field. Thus it is imperative that field teams spend proper time in careful planning and preparations. Most community engagement fails when field teams are poorly prepared and rush into a community only to realise that they have missed some crucial component of the project.

In this stage, there are 5 basic steps to follow.

- 1) Team leaders looking to put a team together for the field trip should consider;
 - a. WCS project offices which have community facilitators must always have a Community Facilitator (CF) in the team all the time.
 - b. In case where no CF is available a PNG national staff member should be in the team to accompany an expatriate only team.
 - c. Scientific expeditions must always have a community engagement officer in their team.
 - d. Small scale field trips or those that involve experienced science, policy or other staff members may not always require a community engagement officer or CF, although this is recommended.
- 2) Understanding the project and the purpose of the field trip

- a. Team leaders must hold a meeting to discuss the purpose or objective of the trip and making sure it is understood by all members of the field team.
- b. Provides an avenue for members of the field team to make suggestions and contribute towards how the planned activities will be executed.
- c. New concepts are explained and if necessary a training session can be conducted by the team leader before the actual field trip.

3) Review survey questionnaires and presentations

- a. Field teams should test survey questionnaires in the office and trouble shoot any ambiguous questions. Thus it is imperative that the interviewer understands the questions and the kinds of responses they want to get.
- b. If necessary, questionnaires can be translated into tok pisin. But it must not lose the original meaning from the English version.
- c. Power point or other presentations are also reviewed and changes are incorporated to make sure the information is in its most simplified form for the locals to digest and understand it. Use bullet points, a few but relevant pictures, and produce simple graphs in talks. The presenter should be in front and face the community. Translate PowerPoint or other presentations into tok pisin where appropriate. Remember; presentations are not lectures: make it as interesting as possible and interactive.

4) Task delegation

- a. Task delegation includes budgeting and shopping which is a daunting task on its own. Budgeting should include field food, fuel, medicine, and cash for field expenses. Avoid carrying large sums of cash and don't flash large amount of cash in the village. It might create the wrong impression. When shopping for supplies try to not end up buying too much or too little. The community you are visiting do have food, however you don't want to come back with lots of leftovers or run short in the middle of your field trip.
- b. Draw up a list of equipment (Appendix 3) that is needed in the field and submit this to the inventory officer or organize within your team. Check all equipment and make sure they are all working. If unsure, consult someone who knows how to use it. Make sure you are familiar with the equipment. Buy enough dry cell batteries for battery powered equipment, enough phone credits for satellite phone and cell phones. YOU are responsible for the kit you take in the field, and check everything is working before you head off.

5) Writing notices or letters and getting them out into the field.

- a. The appropriate medium of communication should be selected and the nature and content of notices are discussed and how it will be sent out and to whom.
- b. It is important to identify who will receive the notice. This should include organisations, groups and individuals who you think are important to engage with.
- c. The content of the notice should have: 1) date of arrival, 2) program outline, 3) objectives for the trip, and 4) delegated tasks for the counselor or project committee to prepare before the team arrives.
- d. For new sites the letter should include details of rates of payments like cooking duties, accommodation, field assistants and such, so that the people are well versed and prepare for team to arrive. It lowers unrealistic expectations. These costs must be agreed before or at the start of your visit.

- e. The field team need to send out notices through effective and appropriate medium to the community.
- f. It is important to take note of the response from the community. Such response would include the approval for the team to visit the community, or any special activity planned by the community which clashes with the planned activity and so forth. At this stage adjustments to the field work plan can be made if necessary.
- g. If you don't hear back from the community, it the discretion of the team leader to delay the trip or proceed as planned after consultation with the team.

Stage 2 – Actual engagement

Upon arrival the actual community engagement begins, thus plans are moved into actions. The 4 steps below are guides to help field teams engage with the community.

1. Entry meeting.
 - a. Upon arrival at the site, it is of paramount importance to hold a brief meeting with the available clan leaders and lay out your work plans. This is an obligatory meeting between the field team leader and community leader/s. This effort alone recognises the local leaders' authority in the community and it is a sign of respect. In this meeting work plans are made known to the leaders and adjusted if necessary. Field assistants are identified, rates for services provided are negotiated and agreed, accommodations and cooks are sorted, and time for a formal community entry meeting is set.
 - b. The second community meeting should be with a larger audience and is a crucial one and needs the full team to participate. At this meeting objective of the field activity is explained to the whole community, including what and who will be involved and for how long. Thus, the overall work plan is discussed with the community. It also provides an opportunity to report on any previous activities with the community.
 - c. After all presentations the field team must allow members of the community to ask questions if there are any, and must be given the opportunity to ask on any topics or issues.
 - d. The language we use should be used to educate, inform, and assist in building up the people in the community to fully understand our purpose, our mission and our core business before we do anything else. The challenge staff face is interpreting scientific or other technical language in to Tok Pisin.
 - e. Meetings are important events in any community engagement and it needs to be recorded. A member of the team should be tasked to take notes and compile a meeting report (Appendix 1). A standardise attendance form (Appendix 2) should be passed around for participants to sign.
2. Field work

It is important to get local field assistants involved in field activities. Where possible and practical, let them undertake the task. This is a way of making them feel useful, understand the reasons behind the activity and take ownership of the project. Key points in relation to this are listed below:

- a. Always involve a local field assistant. It is a way of getting people involved in trying to address their own issues and taking ownership in the long term. Involving locals will also minimise suspicions and lower any unrealistic expectations.

- b. WCS staff should always be on time and the first to be at the field site. Don't expect local people to wait for you.
- c. Be strict with time. Start on time and finish on time. If tasks are not completed don't push beyond finishing time. People need to attend to other household duties too.
- d. If locals are capable of carrying out a tasks, let them take the lead, you can provide a supervisory role.
- e. Try explaining what you are doing to the field assistants and locals at every opportunity you get.
- f. Respect all norms and practices of the community. For instance, don't work on Saturday or smoke or chew betelnut if it is a strong Seventh Day Adventist stronghold.

3. Field briefing.

A daily afternoon/evening debriefing should take place while the notes are still fresh. This is crucial for the team to update notes, evaluate the day's events and plan for the next day. The debriefing will also allow the team to address issues that needs addressing.

The team leader should conduct a quality check on all survey forms and correct any discrepancies while they have time and it is fresh. Field trips are wasted when data are collected in the wrong format.

Team leaders should back up all data collected. There are many ways to backup up field data like taking pictures of survey forms and butchers papers, or storing all papers in a dry container like an action packer.

4. Exit meetings

This exit meeting is as important as the entry meeting. Include time in your work plan for this meeting to occur. In many cases field teams rush into a community and go about with their activities and then leave without a brief meeting with the community at the end. This creates the wrong impression of our work and can raise suspicions about activities.

- a. Present any exciting preliminary findings
- b. The next plans should be discussed here.
- c. Allow time for their thoughts and suggestions.
- d. Thank everyone for their support and contributions towards the success of this trip.

Step 3 – Field team back in office

After a long field trip everyone would love a break but this is not the end of the community engagement process. There is still work to be done and as a field team we need to undertake the tasks outlined below;

- a. Team debrief should be held by the team leader to thank the team and discuss any lessons learned and areas that need improvement.
- b. Equipment are cleaned and stored away. If any equipment is broken or faulty it should be reported to the inventory officer which is checked against the inventory checklist (appendix 3).
- c. Trips reports (appendix 4) are a responsibility of the team leader but team members must also provide notes and should contribute to this.

- d. WCS depends on donor funding and it's important that field staff report field expenses accordingly. Staff who are responsible for field funds should acquittal all funds used in the field within the first week of their return. Refer to WCS PNG HR Manual.
- e. Data entry and analysis is a core step in community engagement where surveys have been conducted. Staff are identified for data entry whilst team leaders prepare reports for edits.

Step 4 – Repatriation

WCS values the communities as equal partners in achieving its overall objectives. In order to maintain that level of trust and partnership WCS must repatriate information from all trips to communities it engages with;

1. Simplify the report so local people can understand
2. This could include video, images, reports and oral presentation of findings and in a simplified form that can easily be translated into tok pisin.
3. Community members who contributed heavily in the activity should be named in the report
4. The translated version should be trialed in the office before taking it back to the communities.
5. Make copies available to schools, leaders, LLG officials and the provincial administration.

This is the role and duty of every community engagement officer and it is our duty to our own people.

Other important things CE teams need to considered

The things listed below do not fall into any of the stages discussed above. However, they are very essential elements for a successful community engagement.

Vulnerable and disadvantaged groups

1. People with Disabilities –

Put the person first, not their disability. Describe 'a person with a disability' rather than 'a disabled person'. Remember that you are engaging with the person, not with the disability they may have.

2. Young People –

Young people have valuable contributions to make if enabled to participate. Long-term sustainability of the project depends on their enthusiasm and interest in the project.

3. Elderly –

Melanesian societies are known for keeping oral histories and it is at all times the elderly members of the communities who hold these. They have a wealth and diversity of skills, knowledge and life experiences that can enrich our work. It is important to respect their wisdom and to think about their needs in planning any engagement.

4. Gender –

It is important to create opportunities for both men and women to be engaged in your engagement process. Allow women to decide time and venue for their meetings. Where appropriate, try to involve a balance of men and women in your engagement to ensure that participation reflects community diversity in terms of age, religion, education and experiences.

Child protection

Signing and understanding WCS's Child Protection Policy is mandatory for anyone who is going in to the field and working with communities. The team leader should ensure all staff, volunteers, interns, consultants travelling with a team or on their own to any field site must sign the Child Protection Policy.

Use of field equipment

WCS always depends on donor money to carry out its work, and so we have a duty to the donors. WCS invests money in buying field equipment and it is the duty of all staff, including the community engagement team, to ensure the field equipment are well maintained, used wisely, packed properly, and only used when needed.

First aid kits and emergency plan

At all times be stocked with basic medicine, emergency first aid kits based on the standard list. Fieldwork in PNG always involves some degree of risk and in areas where emergency and medical facilities are often not easily assessable at short notice. We therefore have to be vigilant and responsible, and our first aid kit is our first line of defense. While travelling to field sites, and staying in the communities our first aid kit must be kept in a place where it is easily assessable.

An emergency plan should be written out and laminated and stored inside the medical kit. This plan should include such details like what to do and what to say, names and contact persons, phone credits etc.

Data Protection and Video footages and still images

There are processes that allow individuals to have rights over their personal information. You must therefore make it clear, why you are gathering the information and what it will be used for. This could include capturing socio-economic data to obtaining photos or videos of community members. If you intend to publish any of the information you must contact each individual concerned to get their consent. Do not use this information for any other purpose other than what you have stated without firstly getting permission.

Appendices

[Appendix 1 – Meeting report](#)

[Appendix 2 – Participants list](#)

[Appendix 3 – Inventory checklist](#)

[Appendix 4 – Filed trip report](#)



WCS Programme Meeting Report

Appendix 1

Subject:	[Click here and type]	Date:	[Click here and type]
Author:	[Click here and type]	WCS staff:	[Click here and type]
Meeting location:	[Click here and type]	Meeting dates:	[Click here and type]
Meeting/WS title:	[Click here and type]		

SAVE AS: "[surname] [date] MEET" (e.g. "Sinclair 08NOV08 MEET")

Summary (< 200 words)

Was this meeting/workshop worthwhile? (1 = very to 3 = not):	1	2	3
Should WCSPNG attend follow-up workshops (if applicable):	YES	NO	

Introduction (< 200 words)

Purpose of meeting workshop (<50 words)

Meeting/Workshop activity summary (< 1000 words)

Key people met (List names, job title, organisation, email addresses, comments)

Follow-up Action (< 100 words; list dates follow-up meetings)

Conclusions (< 100 words)

Appendices (List of participants and/or activities if electronic version available)

Appendix 2



Wildlife Conservation Society sign in sheets					
Venue					
Date					
Hours					
Title of meeting/workshop/training:					
No.	Name	From	Position	Signature	Sex
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
9					
10					
11					
12					
18					
Name of WCS Staff lead:			Name of community rep.:		
Signature:			Signature:		
Date.....			Date.....		



WCS

P O Box 277
Goroka, EHP

Appendix 3

Equipment Check List

Name: _____ Date: _____ Team Leader: _____

Org; _____ Project: _____

Qty	Equipment	Item Code	Condition	Check out	Check in

Date Return: _____ Staff Sign: _____

Inventory Controller Sign: _____



WCS

PNG Programme Trip Report

Subject:	[Click here and type]	Date:	[Click here and type]	Appendix 4
Author:	[Click here and type]	Project:	[Click here and type]	
Trip location:	[Click here and type]	Trip dates:	[Click here and type]	
WCS sta	[Click here and type]	Others	[Click here and type]	
present:		present:		

SAVE AS: “[surname] [date] TRIP” (e.g. “Sinclair 08NOV08 TRIP”)

Summary (< 200 words)

Introduction (< 200 words)

Purpose and objectives of Trip (<50 words)

Travel and activity summary (< 500 words)

Journal of field activities and observations (< 1000 words)

Data Collected (list with files names and location stored)

Constraints (< 100 words)

Follow-up Action (< 100 words)

Conclusions (< 100 words)

Appendices (Species lists, data summaries, etc.)