



# Communicating Biodiversity

Bringing science to life through Communication,  
Education and Public Awareness



Communication, Education and Public Awareness (CEPA) has the potential to unlock global action on biodiversity conservation. To be successful, communicators must use science and policy wisely, to develop messages that inspire people around the world about life on earth.

CEPA is a specialty group in CEC, the International Union for Conservation of Nature's Commission on Education and Communication.



OLIVIER HAMERLYNCK, RUFJI ENVIRONMENT MANAGEMENT PROJECT WORKSHOP, IKWIRIRI, TANZANIA



# Our opportunity

## The science of communications

Sound science is fundamental to our understanding of the consequences of biodiversity loss. It also has the potential to be a powerful incentive for conservation action. But only if you understand what it says. And only if you care about what it means.

The challenge for biodiversity communicators across the world is to ‘translate’ complex science into compelling messages that will inspire the action required to conserve biodiversity.

Success lies in understanding the communications formula that turns science into action.

## Bringing science to life

Communication, Education and Public Awareness is fundamental to persuading decision makers and the global public to take action on conservation. Biodiversity science provides the foundations of our understanding, and is an essential provision for policy making. However it rarely succeeds in inspiring public action on its own.

In part this is because it is a complex topic, and is simply hard to understand for many people.

It also comes down to human nature. Most people are not rational, and don’t make daily decisions based on logical scientific analysis. Instead they are motivated by a mixture of emotion, habit and social norms. It is how biodiversity makes them feel, not think, that leads them to act.

Biodiversity is the world’s most elaborate scientific concept, but also, potentially, its greatest story. Love of nature for most people is about awe, wonder and joy; not habitats, ecosystem services or extinction.

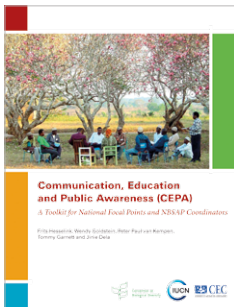
By using these powerful emotions to bring science to life over the next decade, CEPA will inspire conservation action around the world.

# About CEPA

The IUCN Commission on Education and Communication actively promotes CEPA, having lobbied since 1990 for its official inclusion in global environmental conventions.

In the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the CEPA programme of work is designed to motivate and mobilize individual and collective action for conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. Its main components are communications networks, exchange of knowledge and expertise, and building professional capacity to market biodiversity. Media relations and programmes within educational systems are key areas of activity.

## CEPA toolkit



The Commission developed the CEPA Toolkit for the CBD Secretariat. The toolkit is a practical resource to heighten the impact of national biodiversity strategies and action plans.

Fact sheets, checklists and examples introduce users to the practical side of CEPA. Tools and methods include information exchange, dialogue, education and social marketing.

In a recent survey, CBD focal points, communications professionals in academia, the private sector, government and NGOs expressed their appreciation for the toolkit as a useful and credible source of information.

Access the CEPA Toolkit on the CEPA page at [www.iucn.org/cec](http://www.iucn.org/cec)

CEC members help to develop CEPA capacity around the world by conducting workshops focused on practical tactics for engaging communities and other stakeholders in conservation activities.



STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS IN BANGLADESH: LEARNING HOW TO ESTABLISH RELATIONSHIPS WITH LOCAL COMMUNITIES, PHOTO: WILDLIFE TRUST OF BANGLADESH



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# IUCN support for CEPA

The IUCN Commission on Education and Communication advises on the use of CEPA and provides capacity-building programmes for natural resource managers and policy makers.

More than 700 CEC members from every region volunteer to help advance the goals of IUCN and the wider conservation community, and CEPA is a major area of action.

“If we seek to facilitate change, to bring about a more sustainable way, part of it is learning to communicate a new vision, learning also to be open to the perspectives of others and to other stories. That is really what CEPA is about.”

David Ainsworth, CEC Specialty Group Leader for CEPA and Programme Officer, Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, Canada

“Driving action on biodiversity management requires us to connect environmental analysis, scientific inquiry, economics and policy-making with people around the world. CEPA is our tool for making this happen.”

Marta Andelman CEC Specialty Group Leader for CEPA, Argentina

“It used to be that CEC was approached late in the game for a little PR. Scientists are recognizing the benefits of thinking differently about communication, education and public awareness. We know how to listen and how to set the stage for positive change.”

Frits Hesselink, CEC Special Advisor and lead author of the CEPA Toolkit, Netherlands



#### CONTACT

To contact Commission members in your region, send an e-mail to the CEC Regional Vice-Chair. Visit the CEC website for contact details.

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Convention on  
Biological Diversity

