

# Communication Guide for linking Consumption with Biodiversity

## Let's talk about the Nature of your Products



**One planet**  
inform with care



Federal Ministry  
for the Environment, Nature Conservation,  
Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection



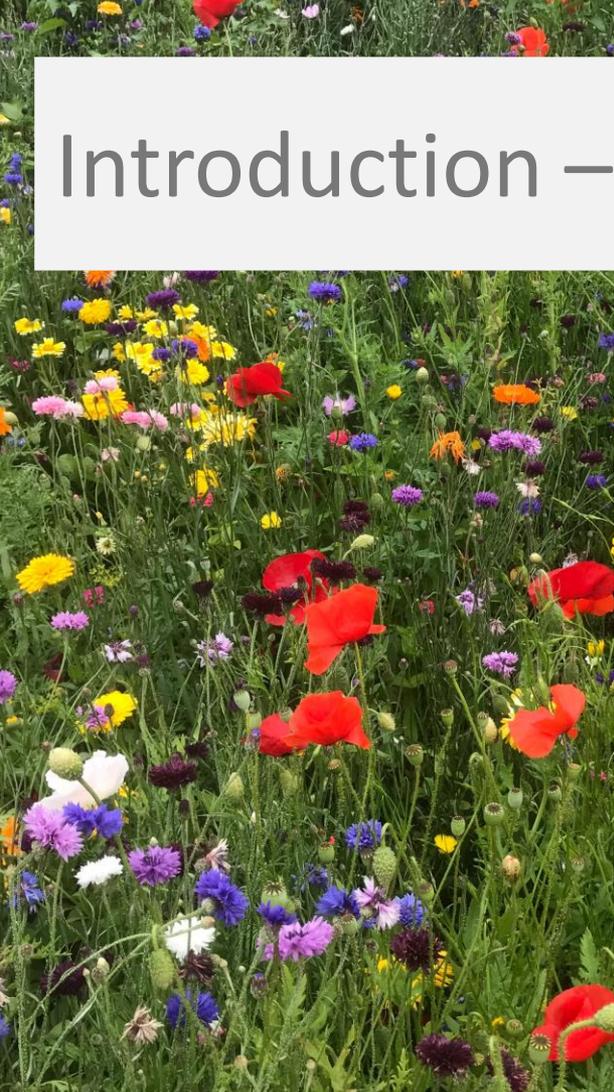
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inform with care



# Introduction – What is it all about?

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The Communication Guide illustrates relevant findings on **effective communication** with regards to biodiversity and consumption.

The Communication Guide is part of the **Communication Toolkit – Linking Consumption and Biodiversity** developed within the Working Group Biodiversity Communication of the One Planet network.

Find the toolkit here:

<https://www.oneplanetnetwork.org/programmes/consumer-information-scp/biodiversity>

# Introduction – Who is it for?

The Communication Guide provides guidance to

- policymakers
- businesses
- NGOs

in developing communication strategies, formulating key messages to raise awareness of the protection of biodiversity and ecosystem services resulting from sustainable consumption.

## The Journey ahead...

### CONTENT

- Overall structure

Define your audience

Send effective messages

Avoid common mistakes

Learn from good practices



## DEFINE YOUR AUDIENCE

•  
And what  
they care  
about...

# Define who your target group is and what they think about biodiversity!

What value does your target group attribute to nature and biodiversity? Is it equal to the value of humans and has a value in itself (biocentrics)? Or is nature perceived as valuable because it provides ecosystem services to humans (humanists) or to the individual (egoists)?



Biocentrics

„Nature is valuable  
for what it is“



Humanists

„Nature is valuable because it is  
important to us humans“



Egoists

„Nature is valuable  
because it is  
important to me“

“TRADITIONAL MESSAGES ON BIODIVERSITY FROM GOVERNMENTS AND NGOS URGING THE PUBLIC AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS TO CHANGE THEIR DAILY PRACTICES NEED TO BE REVIEWED.

OFTEN THESE MESSAGES USE TOO MUCH JARGON, ARE NEGATIVE, TOO DIDACTIC, ABSTRACT OR FILLED WITH DOOM. INSTEAD OF TURNING PEOPLE ON, THEY RISK SWITCHING THEM OFF.”

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Hesselink, F.J. e.a., Communication, Education and Public Awareness, a toolkit for the Convention on Biological Convention, Montreal 2007.



Bring it closer to the people!

## SEND EFFECTIVE MESSAGES

- Make it personal

### CONTEXTUALISE

Create personalized messages fitting to one's background, geography and lifestyle.



→ Choose local plants and species in your messaging

### HUMANISE

Choose a human lead character/testimonials or lead species that people can identify and emphasize with. Talk in a human timescale.



### PERSONALISE

Use individualistic messages and language and make people feel good about themselves and the positive impact they can have.



Make it the new normal!

SEND  
EFFECTIVE  
MESSAGES

- Tap into norms

### POWER OF PEERS

Showcase what others already do and encourage to follow social groups. Peer pressure can promote sustainable consumption and change behavior patterns.



→ e.g. peer groups like friends family

### POWER OF VALUES

Address intrinsic values and personal norms. They can be promoted through a wide range of experience and communication.



→ e.g. altruistic, biospheric, etc.

Back it up!

## SEND EFFECTIVE MESSAGES

- Address the rational



### LOGICAL

Logical messages and statistical evidence are important to gain trust and to verify your messages: using facts helps to avoid greenwashing.

### SPECIFIC

Use specific details that make it easier for consumers to understand the problem and the desired action.

Trigger emotions and inspire!

## SEND EFFECTIVE MESSAGES

- Emotional and memorable

### EMOTIONAL

Create emotional and positive messages to activate your audience.

Spark pride, hope, optimism and love.

Avoid negative emotions.



## Set the scene and tell a story!

### SEND EFFECTIVE MESSAGES

### • Storytelling



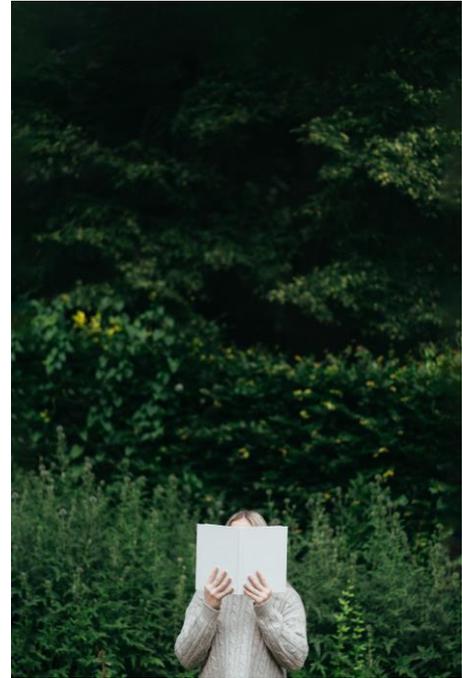
Create a storyline that engages the audience on an emotional level

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Describe the situation – express the problem – pose the solution – encourage change – reinforce!

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Focus on relevant consumption areas with a high impact on biodiversity!

SEND  
EFFECTIVE  
MESSAGES

•  
Highlight  
relevant  
issues

## RELEVANT

Communicate on consumption areas that have a high impact on biodiversity. Focus on the key points.\*

Also, make sure the message is relevant to your audience – highlight the individual benefit of consumption changes.



\* For more information, please take a look at this publication: “SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION FOR BIODIVERSITY AND ECOSYSTEM SERVICES – Current state and future requirements in information, communication and international cooperation“ (Teufel et al. 2021)

Make sure to include a call to action to your communication message!

How should the consumption behaviour change to be more biodiversity-friendly?

Showcase how the proposed action will benefit the consumer!

## SEND EFFECTIVE MESSAGES

- Include a call to action



→ eat more plant-based meals to protect biodiversity, it's healthy and delicious.



→ integrate a wildflower meadow into your garden and enjoy watching animals return



→ respect the local biodiversity on your travels and you can return next year to enjoy nature.

## Make your message known!

Go  
PUBLIC  
•  
Spread  
your  
message  
well



Define your target audience and the right channels accordingly.

“Where, when and how should the messages be shared?”

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Be mindful regarding the amount of information and the rapidly changing preferences. Information overload is not appealing to media users.

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Use a variety of tool and channels, creative and even unexpected ways of campaigning are recommended.

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Use these recommendations when communicating about consumption and biodiversity!

## SEND EFFECTIVE MESSAGES

•  
Make use  
of best  
practices



### PERSONALIZE

Use personalized messages and talk in a human timescale.



### NORMS

Use peer pressure and address intrinsic values or personal norms.



### RELEVANCE

Make sure the message is relevant. Highlight their benefits and impact.



### EMOTIONAL

Create emotional and positive messages to activate your audience.



### RATIONAL

Gain trust through evidence-based and logical messages, and avoid greenwashing.



### CALL TO ACTION

Include a precise call to action and steps to take for the consumer.

# Avoid common mistakes when communicating about consumption and biodiversity!

## AVOID COMMON MISTAKES

Navigate around the usual pitfalls



### MORALISING

Don't make consumers feel guilty by sending out moralizing messages.



### COMMANDING

Don't patronize consumers with your messages and leave them their freedom of choice.



### REACTANCE

Don't forbid the desires of consumers, instead promote alternatives.



### DOOM & GLOOM

Don't make consumers feel powerless in face of biodiversity loss and species extinction. Tell them what actions they can take.



### MORAL LICENSING

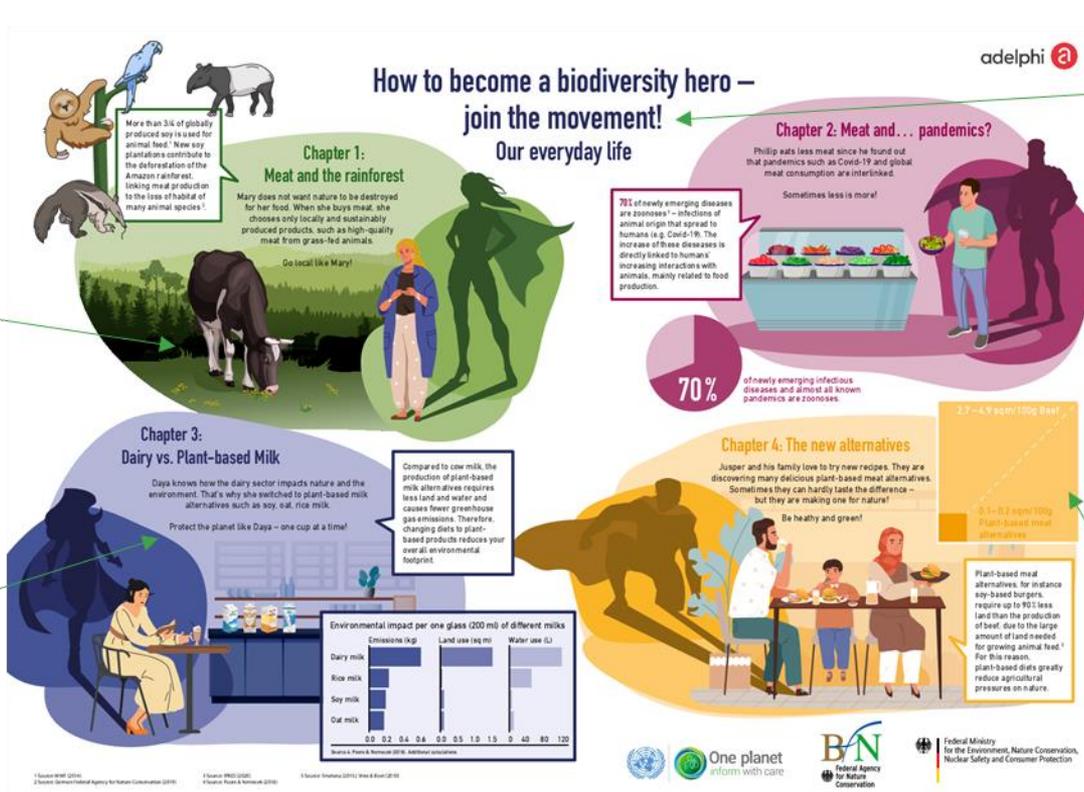
Don't give consumers an excuse for being content with convenient, low-impact actions – communicate on relevant topics only.



### JARGON

Make sure that consumers understand the terms of the message to avoid misunderstandings and uncertainties.

# “How to become a biodiversity hero” - Infographics explained



Use messages with emotional appeal to trigger emotions

Include a call to action

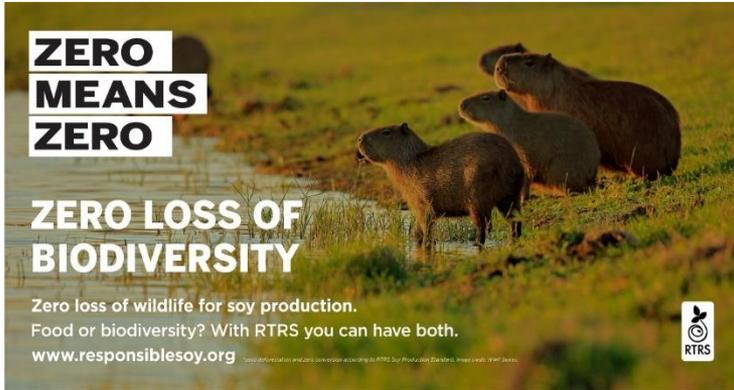
Use an emotional and consistent storyline

Back-up your message with scientific evidence

Find the infographics here:

<https://www.oneplanetnetwork.org/programmes/consumer-information-scp/biodiversity>

# Analysing what others have done right helps to build your own good practice!



Zero Means Zero – Campaign by Round Table on Responsible Soy Association (RTRS)

The campaign focuses on the solutions and on positive messages, with the main objective of giving straightforward and clear messages on the existing possibilities and impacts when choosing RTRS certification. They hereby show that it is possible to change the way we grow and consume our food. Across the world, across sectors and across the entire supply chain, the challenge is great, and many tools exist to mitigate the negative impacts of soy production and benefit environment and people at the same time. RTRS offers, not the silver bullet, but a concrete tool ensuring the transparent implementation of this objective.

Picture Credit: © RTRS



Our Planet: Our Business – Campaign by WWF

The film Our Planet: Our Business builds on the highly successful Netflix series Our Planet and explicitly addresses business leaders. It highlights the importance of functioning ecosystem services to business, with the economic value of nature's services more than doubling global GDP. While making clear that in the Anthropocene mankind has become the driving force on global change it postulates that this also implies the ability to fix negative impacts that have been caused by unsustainable consumption and production patterns. It also argues that growing consumer segments expect businesses to become sustainable with a low impact on biodiversity and ecosystem services.

Picture Credit: © Sophie Lanfear / Silverback / Netflix

What are you waiting for?

DEVELOP  
GOOD  
PRACTICES

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Get started!



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