

## The Brief in brief

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This brief provides some basic guidelines on how to improve your skills of communicating biodiversity and evidence-based information to wider audiences. Particularly, it highlights techniques relevant to biodiversity protection argumentation aimed at policy/decision-makers and other stakeholder audiences, reflecting the insights gained from the FP7 project BESAFE.

## Intended audience

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The brief is targeted at those with an active interest in the practicalities of biodiversity science and policy communication.

## Communicating scientific arguments

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BESAFE aims to improve our understanding of the alternative ways in which concepts for the 'value of biodiversity' can be used as arguments to improve biodiversity protection policy.

The effective communication of scientific and evidence-based information to non-scientific audience thus lies in the core of the project.

Below we present a short checklist that should help to improve effective communication when presenting evidence based arguments for biodiversity protection to decision makers and other stakeholders.

**1) Be prepared:** A clear and comprehensive communication strategy is a must. To create a good working strategy you need to keep in mind the following 5 key questions to answer:

What are your aim, scope and objectives?

- Which are your target stakeholders, and what are their needs? Think about your stakeholders and their different perceptions of the values of nature. (See also the brief on "Classification of values of biodiversity").
- What messages are you trying to convey to your stakeholders? Framing arguments in a positive way can increase support and participation, as opposed to negative framing. (See also the brief on "Selecting the right frame for your goal").
- Which are the most suitable communication channels? Think about setting up of a communication platform if necessary to manage multiple stakeholders and/or decision makers.
- How can these elements be combined in the best way to convey the right message to your stakeholders through the most suitable channels?

**2) Implementation:** Set up an implementation plan that places the principles defined in your strategy within the context and timeframe of the argument process. Remember that the entire process may be iterative and that the real timeline may be dictated by external factors. Also, bear in mind the different stages of the policy cycle and choose the appropriate messages and communication channels that can be used at each stage. (See also the brief on “Selecting arguments through the policy cycle”).

**3) Choose the right tools:** make sure you use available means of communication to their full. Here are some ideas:

- Think about setting up of a communication platform if necessary to manage multiple stakeholders and/or decision makers.
- Other possible communication means: brochures, posters, press releases, policy briefs, factsheets, workshops and meetings;

**4) Dress the content to match the occasion** by presenting the necessary information in an appropriate style. Scientific and other forms of specialised information are often difficult to present in a form that is easily digestible by non-scientific/non-academic audiences, so it is important to:

- Simplify: Avoid scientific jargon and style where possible. Translate the terms so the target audience doesn't struggle to grasp the meaning of the text.
- Keep it short: Do not go into extensive descriptions or background information, your communication should be focused and quickly convey the most important points of your argumentation.
- Make it relevant: Think about your audience and their specific needs for information about the argument and how this can be presented in the best possible way.
- Stay positive where possible: Framing can be construed in either positive or negative terms. Positive argumentation is often the more profitable and more sustainable. (See the brief on “Selecting the right frame for your goal”).

## Usefulness and Transferability

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This thematic brief provides an easy to follow guidance for anyone who wish to communicate the necessity of biodiversity protection with policy/decision makers and other stakeholders.

## Lessons learned

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- Develop a clear and comprehensive communication strategy at the beginning.
- Implement the communication strategy according to the realistic timeline, taking account of the policy cycle and possible iterations.
- Choose appropriate communication tools to ensure maximum efficiency in delivering the information.

- Keep the content of messages simple, short and relevant. Think about positive ways to present your arguments.
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## Looking for more information on effective arguments for biodiversity?

For more BESAFE results, including separate briefs focusing on other case studies and various aspects of argumentation, see <http://www.besafe-project.net> and BESAFE toolkit <http://tool.besafe-project.net>.

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