

Workshop on Online Media Literacy and Grant Application for Small Island Developing States and Low Forest Cover Countries

United Nations Headquarters, New York, 8-12 September 2014

Workshop Report

The UNFF Facilitative Process (FP) Online Media Literacy and Grant Application workshop was held at the United Nations Headquarters in New York City, United States, from 8 to 12 September 2014. The workshop is a part of the FP communication strategy output funded by the GEF to enable Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and Low Forest Cover Countries (LFCCs) to provide training to use the FP website and how to apply to grant applications to increase forest financing. The activities held during the five-day workshop helped to build and strengthen awareness and capacity of SIDS and LFCCs to address Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) funding gaps.

Background

The UNFF Facilitative Process (FP) was created with the adoption of the UN Resolution on the Means of Implementation of Sustainable Forest Management in October 2009 with the aim of assisting Member States mobilize funds for forests. The FP is managed by the UNFF Secretariat in New York and was kick-started with a project funded by DFID and the GEF to identify gaps, obstacles and opportunities for forest financing in Small Island Developing States and Low Forest Cover Countries (the SIDS/LFCC Project).

The SIDS-LFCC Project has completed its first two phases or “components”: (i) a series of 11 papers on forest financing in SIDS and LFCCs, including four thematic papers and 7 country case-studies, and (ii) four inter-regional workshops on forest financing in SIDS and LFCCs that had two objectives (receive feedback from key stakeholders on the 11 papers produced in Component I, and share ownership of the findings and encourage appropriation of the results with key stakeholders in SIDS and LFCCs).

The third and last component revolves around two pillars: (i) elaborating, consolidating and validating a common forest financing strategy for SIDS and LFCCs, but also for Africa and LDCs (as part of a sister project funded by the Government of Germany), and (ii) setting up and implementing a communication strategy enabling to disseminate the findings emerging from the first two components of the project.

General outline of Communication Strategy objectives

- Exchange information, experiences, obstacles, challenges and opportunities on how to access resources of new and existing financial mechanisms. Enable taking advantage of existing forest financing initiatives and proposals;
- Increase knowledge about the significance of SFM and forest financing among people and decision-making officials;
- Increase attention to the needs and concerns of forest financing in SIDS and LFCCs at national and international levels;
- Strengthen and maintain the network of forest financing stakeholders initiated by this project, thereby laying the basis for project sustainability and the implementation of its

- findings;
- Transfer of success stories from country to country as an example of North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation.

Communication products

The communication strategy is composed of a portfolio of different activities and deliverables which together will provide a comprehensive means of contributing to the objectives listed above. The target audience are forest finance stakeholders including: central and local governments, private individuals, forest and forest-related industries, bilateral and multilateral partners, NGOs, civil society and academia.

The principal deliverables are as follows:

1. A Facilitative Process (FP) website
2. A range of communication documents for the FP website
3. A video documentary package
4. Organising a workshop on building online media literacy

WORKSHOP OBJECTIVES

The general principal of the Facilitative Process is to access the many skills from all members and exchange experiences, success stories and best practices to work together to increase forest financing across SIDS, LFCCs and beyond. As the website represents and communicates the collective work done by the group during Components I & II, it reflects this core concept through its interactive component. In this light, the 5-day training workshop held in New York helped stakeholders (i) to use and create user pages and use the website as vehicle for communication while building useful online media skills, and (ii) to prepare grant proposals.

The UNFF Facilitative Process Website draws on data and feedback from participants during Components I and II of the project (background papers and workshops) to increase financing opportunities for SFM, improved communication and a centralized hub to share between the forest finance stakeholders. Features of the website include: (i) Project background and overview (ii) Document Library with access to project research and additional research by partners (iii) Collaborative Partners section to post and share information on events and news. The website is designed to exchange of information on how to gain access to resources of the existing financial mechanisms and create new opportunities through the collaborative efforts of the users.

In addition to building skills, the workshop was an opportunity to build and foster relationships. The workshop was designed for a workgroup of 15-20 people to engage the participants to be creative, making the process enjoyable and non-formal.

Some of the skills taught include:

- How to use the website (Overview of the website, covering basic administration issues and instructions for user pages, basic HTML coding, linking internally and externally, how to write effectively online)
- Photography and video (visual literacy, basic editing, optimizing skills, uploading photographs and videos)

- Social networking sites (overview for Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Flickr, and other available tools)
- Overview of grant proposals and online resources for accessing grants.

The training team included a general facilitator, a web designer/developer, a web and grant proposal writer, and photography experts.

STRUCTURE, VENUE AND DATES

The workshop was held at the United Nations Headquarters in New York from 8 to 12 September 2014. The workshop consisted of presentations of the FP website, web writing, writing and applying for grants, visual storytelling, creating a media page; individual and group work and discussions. Each participants brought their own or their organization's laptop on the Microsoft Windows operating system.

PARTICIPANTS

The workshop had a total of 16 representatives from 13 countries plus UNFF staff members and consultants. The full list of participants and affiliations can be found in Annex 1.

Pre-workshop survey findings

A pre-workshop survey was sent to each participant to grasp the basic level and skills of the overall group. The trainers used the survey results to develop the lesson and to understand the skills participants were most interested in acquiring through the course.

Highlights of skills include general writing, grant writing, and online media experience the results are as follows, self-described by the 16 participants.

Given the survey results and the length of the workshop, the trainers adjusted the material to focus on skills needed by the majority of the participants from writing skills including:

- Basic web writing to build skills to reach a larger general audience
- Beginners overview for grant application skills from researching opportunities
- Grant writing outline
- Grant budgets an introduction

And a beginner's overview of online media skills from standard applications available to basic web production skills such as:

- Adding text with a link
- Uploading a photograph
- Embedding a photo slideshow or video.

General writing skills. The group's overall writing skills prior to the workshop ranged from moderate to high with the lowest results in writing for the general public. The pre-workshop survey indicated that the most common writing experience among participants was technical writing. Some participants were competent in general and specific writing skills and others were significantly less so creating a disparity of skills to adjust the course.

	High	Moderate	Low	Never
Writing in English	7	7	2	
Writing technical reports	6	9	1	
Writing for the general public	3	10	3	
Writing executive summaries and/or project abstracts	4	11		1

Writing or applying for grants skills. Applying and writing grant proposals had the highest disparity of skills from the group. The proposal writing workshop in particular suffered from the large quantity of information covered, crossed with a wide range of experience and skill. While some participants clearly hoped for a walk-through of all steps from identification through submission and final report, others were looking for refreshers or tips for one or several portions of the process.

About half the participants have never applied for a grant, while the other half have at least worked on one or more grant applications. Given the different skills sets for applying for grants, this was the only area where post workshop evaluation forms demonstrated extreme levels for both excitement and frustration in reaching the groups' expectations.

	Many	One or more	Never
Have researched grant opportunities	1	9	6
Have authored all or part of a grant application	4	4	8
Have managed or worked on a team to create a grant application	2	7	7
Have received grants	2	7	7

Online media skills. The overall level of skills using media was generally low. For the large majority of participants this workshop was their first experience adding content to an online platform.

	High	Moderate	Low	Never
Adding written content online	0	6	4	6
Adding multimedia content online	0	4	8	4
Using visual storytelling	0	5	4	7
Processing digital photographs	0	6	4	6

All participants had experience using Microsoft Word and Powerpoint. However, only 12 people identified having experience using Adobe Acrobat Reader. Less than half (7) had experience using Windows Photo Gallery, which is the standard photo organizing and editing software that is native with the Microsoft operating software. Experience and skills using online applications and software was even lower with most users having some experience using Facebook or YouTube and the majority with no prior experience using Wordpress (12) or HTML (10).

	Use often	Sometimes	Never	No answer
Wordpress	0	4	12	

HTML	3	1	10	2
Facebook	4	8	4	
Twitter	1	4	11	
YouTube	5	7	4	
Flickr	1	2	12	1
Instagram	0	3	12	1
SlideShare	0	1	15	
Dropbox	3	4	7	2

SUMMARY OF WORKSHOP PROCEEDINGS

Day 1: Monday 8 September –Introduction to the FP Website

Opening

The workshop was officially opened by Mr. Benjamin Singer to welcome participants to this workshop along with a presentation of the SIDS-LFCCs Project and the Africa-LDCs project. The presentation summarized the discussions and efforts to identify a common forest financing strategy, laying the groundwork for regional and national forest financing strategies, and increasing financing for sustainable forest management that came out of the six workshops on forest financing that were organized as part of the two projects on forest financing for SIDS and LFCCs, and Africa and LDCs.

General introductions

Participants were asked to team up with each other to discover three interesting facts about the other person. Each person presented their partner to the group. This exercise was used to begin the workshop by initiating group interaction that would be followed throughout the entire workshop.

FP website presentation

FP website and workshop consultants Ms. Jan Mun and Mr. Ka Pang gave a short presentation of the FP website to the participants. They covered the principle of collectively creating content on forest financing for the target countries that currently lack enough data based on previously FP workshop reports. Basic features and functions were covered, highlighting the documents and background materials available on the website. The News and Events sections that will compile and house additional user generated content created by the participants were reviewed. They demonstrated the user interface and basic steps needed to add new content from text to multimedia assets with location maps and dates in the events calendar. They also showed expanded features including: an overview of html tools; viewing and sorting the News and Events by the user's member categories from CPF, Member States, and Other Partners; by country on the interactive map; and by keywords and tags. Ending with an overview of the most popular and commonly used third party social media tools that may be used with the FP website or independently.

Going online, creating user accounts and News/Events pages

Once everyone was online, participants were assisted by Ms. Jan Mun and Mr. Ka Pang to create a new FP website user account. The users were then instructed on how to use their profile to create posts in the News and Events section. Each participant had hands-on practice entering content to write a short biography of themselves into the News or

Events section of the website. During this lesson the web consultants were able to better to gauge technical web abilities by working with each person. This exercise served a second purpose for Ms. Sarah Lowengard, the writing instructor not present on the first day, to learn more about each participant and their writing skills.

Workshop files: [FP Workshop OnlineResources](#), [UNFFFP-Adding-and-Editing-Events](#), [UNFFFP-Adding-and-Editing-News](#), and [UNFFFP-Signing-up-for-an-account](#)

Day 2: Tuesday 9 September –Web Writing

Ms. Sarah Lowengard, UNFF consultant, covered the basic technical skills needed for basic web writing in contrast to other writing formats. Emphasis was made for simplicity in the writing style to reach a wider audience with consideration of the behaviours and habits of users when reading on websites.

- *Overview and Introduction*, starting with expectations and material of what would be covered throughout the day moved quickly to an introduction to each participant by using the biography entry lesson the previous day.
- *Writing for the Web—Is It Really So Different?* Eye tracking research was used to explain the habits of web user to demonstrate that the most significant message in the content must be presented immediately as a reverse pyramid of data. Unlike reading a book or hardcopy text, web readers often scan text more than read entire text from left to right and top to bottom.
- *Writing Basics*, for similar reasons as above, the importance of simple language without jargon was stressed. As well as the use of keywords that are used for Search Engine Optimization (SEO) for other user to better find the content.
- *Reviewing and Editing Your Writing*, fun Internet tools were used to test the readability of writing samples by the participants. Hiring editors when available otherwise have colleagues' review the text before publishing was highly recommended.
- *Practice*, hands-on writing exercise to either expand on biography or to write new text with individual assistance was provided. Participants were further taught to enter content within the News and Events sections with individual assistance as needed or requested.

Workshop files: [FPWeb-Writing-Workshop](#)

Additional resources included:

-The Hemingway App: <http://www.hemingwayapp.com/>

-The Fleisch-Kincaid system (the readability statistics built into MS Word) appears to work only when US spelling and grammar are selected. Here are two alternatives. An internet search will, no doubt, turn up others.

-SMOG (Simplified Measure of Gobbledygook) –Here is a calculator on the University of Nottingham website: <http://www.niace.org.uk/misc/SMOG-calculator/smogcalc.php#>

-David Simpson's Readability Test Tool :<http://read-able.com/>

Day 3: Wednesday 10 September – Grant Proposal Writing

After having summarised the main points of the previous day, Ms. Sarah Lowengard reviewed key writing elements that were different when writing a grant proposal to focus

on goals and objectives of the proposed project while using an active voice. Given the large disparity of skills among the participants other grant proposal aspects from how to research appropriate funding opportunities to developing a clear project plan, needs statement, timeline, and budgeting in addition to writing skills needed to be included in the lesson plan, which lead to dedicating more time toward lectures than a hands-on experience to practice skills. More advanced participants were offered personal assistance and encouraged to ask for specific training needs, use an upcoming proposal they were preparing, or follow along with the group.

- *Elements of every grant proposal*, an overview of the five basic parts an applicant must prepare including: abstract, qualification of the organization, statement of need, project description (including a timeline and narrative), and budget.
- *Introduction to the model grant* in addition to preparing the grant proposal the overall grant cycle from identifying funders, submitting the proposal, receiving a grant, carrying out the project, and finally reporting to funding agency was illustrated. Using the Darwin Initiative as a sample funding agency, participants were asked to begin by gathering the funding requirements and identify the purpose of the grant program, eligibility, application requirements, and deadlines. Participants worked together to develop a fundable project and proposal components to write a proposal.
- *Drafting a project plan & narrative* started by testing project ideas by thinking, talking and writing with others and used the five elements of the grant proposal, covered above, to help articulate a comprehensive project description. Different sample project plans and narratives were discussed for strength and weaknesses. Again the use of simple language and clear writing without jargon was emphasized.
- *Budgets and Budgeting* a crucial proposal component was examined by using examples for structure and organization. The individual sections for direct to indirect cost was explained and to ensure that the budget matched the narrative as well as tell the same story alone was stressed.
- *Reviewing and filing the proposal* was discussed. The importance of outside editors and readers along with a checklist to confirm all the requirements are accurately met.

Workshop files: [FP web Grant Slide-handout](#)

Day 4: Thursday 11 September – Visual Storytelling and Creating a Photo Essay

Ms. Jan Mun, UNFF consultant, led the group on visual storytelling, an overview of composition principles: line, shape, texture, and colour along with the five W's plus how (who, what, where, when, why, and how) to create stories. The participants used these concepts to edit and create a sample photo essay using flickr.com. The Flickr slideshow was embedded onto the FP website to present to the group.

- *Visual storytelling presentation* covered composition and visual elements to tell a story. Composition tools from lines, shapes, textures, and colours to direct the eye to the subject and main content was reviewed. How these elements lead readers to better define the photographs to describe who, what, where, when, why, and how. How to write captions that further supports the story such as: location, names, event title and other critical information.
- *Group edit a photo essay using flickr.com* lesson used a large select of donated photographs from Mara Catalan taken during a trip to install solar panels in the forest of Panama. Participants learned to use the third party photography software Flickr to edit

a photo essay that told different stories from the same larger pool of photographs. Working in groups allowed an open discussion to articulate the many aspects of the photographs selected among the participants. The photo essays were converted into slideshows.

- Add a photo essay to the website covered how to embed the flickr slideshow to a web story. Technical skills to use html between Flickr and the FP website to add embedded links was practiced. Using the slideshows now embedded on the FP web pages, participants were able to present their photo essay to the group.
- Field trip to the United Nations Secretariat Building Tour led by Mr Benjamin Singer participants were guided through the building given a history of the architecture and the UN, the Security Council, General Assembly, and donated artwork. In addition, the field trip offered an opportunity for participants to practice visual storytelling skills by taking photographs.

Workshop files: [FP Workshop VisualStory Part1](#), [FP Workshop VisualStory Part2](#), [FP Workshop VisualStory Part3](#), and [FPweb flickr](#)

Day 5: Friday 12 September- Create a Media Page

- *A Trinidad Turtles video* created for the UNFF Facilitative Process was watched by the participants to introduce videos as another communication option for the FP website. Leading to a discussion of how to successfully combine visual elements with words to create a full story.
- *The Online Resources Presentation* reviewed more in depth a subject covered on the first day of the workshop, informing participants of what third party social media software is available to use independently or in combination with the FP website. Software and tools from Facebook, YouTube, Dropbox, and many others was discussed with additional resources such as Lyndia.com for extended training as needed.

Trainer Mr. Ka Pang reviewed the steps to create a media page with a focus on working between third party software as an often useful resource. Online tools such as Pixlr used to edit, crop, and optimized photographs and how to upload and embed YouTube videos was demonstrated. He also showed how to prepare the multiple assets before building a media page from editing final text copy, optimizing and resizing photographs, and uploading assets into the FP media library and from third party software to have links readily available. Using these skills to create hyperlinks to access the multimedia content.

- Adding content to the FP website was reviewed with an expanded lesson on how to upload media assets into the FP website and to use html coding in the text field when needed.
- Optimize and resizing photographs using a free online photo editing software called [pixlr.com](#). Technical skills included: to crop, resize, optimize the levels, and how to add text to a photograph. Also discussed was the 72dpi screen resolution in comparison to 300 dpi print resolution. Participants practiced skills with personal assistance as necessary.
- Create hyperlinks to internal pages and external websites covered using the prepared media assets into the FP web platform. Participants practiced how to upload photographs, PDFs, and embed YouTube videos in combination with text to create a web page within the FP website with a range of different media assets.

Workshop files: [FPweb pixlr](#), [FP Web AddYouTubeVideo](#), and [FP Workshop OnlineResources](#)

POST WORKSHOP EVALUATION

Participant Post Workshop Evaluation Results

Out of the 14 evaluation results the overall response was positive:

- 11 participants felt the online literacy either advanced their thinking beyond expectation (1) or significantly (10), while others were (3) sufficiently advanced.
- 12 participants felt the grant application advanced their thinking significantly (7) or sufficiently (5) with one person who felt it was insignificant and no one felt that it did not advance their thinking at all.

The parts of the workshop most enjoyed were mixed: all (2), creating media pages (5), photography (4), web writing (2) and grant proposal writing (2). Some noted multiple items. While the least enjoyed was no response/nothing in particular (7), grant proposal writing (2) and creating media page (1).

The parts of the workshop found most useful was also mixed, except this time grant proposal writing was found to be the most useful (6), all (3), photography and multimedia (3) media and web navigation (2), and no response (2). Once again multiple choices were listed. The parts found least useful are almost exactly the same to the ones enjoyed, no response (8), grant proposal writing (2), and creating media page (1)

Participants wanted more of all the parts: media literacy (6), grant proposal writing (4), and web writing (1) components. While almost everyone did not answer the question what they wanted to see less of with the exception of grant proposal writing (2).

Everyone was in agreement that there was a good balance of presentations and discussion/exercises (14); that the field visit was important (5) or fairly important (3) with several no responses (5) and one person felt it hindered the workshop; and that the facilitators were extremely effective (1) significantly effective (9) or sufficiently effective (3) and no one felt they were either insufficiently effective or not effective.

The overall written comments suggested a job well done given the amount of material to cover and time. With some written notes were on a more comfortable space and others to conduct the workshop more often.

Recommendations and Suggestions for Improvement

Given that this was the first workshop of its kind to be organised by the UNFF Secretariat, and in light of the request by other Member States for the workshop to be replicated, the following recommendations were put forward:

1. Secure a larger workshop space with 4-5 smaller tables to enable more interaction between participants and trainers.

2. Allow more time to cover the proposal writing component. One day is not sufficient given the large disparity of skills in the group and the amount of material to cover. Alternatively, break the group into separate beginner and advanced groups.
3. Have participants come with a specific grant proposal in mind prior to attending the workshop. For those without experience, a facilitator could work with the participant to help identify an appropriate funding opportunity.
4. Break down all the lessons into half days, spread over more days, rather than covering one topic per day. This would allow more opportunity for participants to absorb the material and able to bring new questions at later sessions.

Annex 1. Participant List

	Country/Organization	Name
1	Afghanistan	Mr. Sayed Ali Hossaini
2	Dominica	Ms. Vindrani Shillingford
3	Fiji	Mr. Timoci Lagataki
4	Fiji	Mr. Tomasi Kubuabola
5	Grenada	Mr. Aden Forteau
6	Jamaica	Ms. Marilyn Headley
7	Kenya	Mr. Patrick Mungai Kariuki
8	Kenya	Mr. Emilio Ndwiga Mugo
9	Papua New Guinea	Ms. Fay Duega
10	Papua New Guinea	Mr. Guduru Rome
11	Niger	Mr. Ibro Adamou
12	Samoa	Ms. Elizabeth Kerstin-Yoshida
13	South Africa	Ms. Goodness Sindiswa Boqo
14	South Africa	Mr. Naledzani Mulaudzi
15	Trinidad and Tobago	Mr. John Radgman
16	Uzbekistan	Mr. Jamshid Shakarov
17	UNFF/DESA	Ms. Njeri Kariuki
18	UNFF/DESA	Mr. Ryo Nakamura
19	UNFF/DESA	Mr. Benjamin Singer
20	UNFF/DESA	Mr. Ka Pang
21	UNFF/DESA	Ms. Jan Mun
22	UNFF/DESA	Ms. Sarah Lowengard