

Working with the Media

Turning Your Project into News

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Introduction

- Communication professional.
- Enthusiastic about communication that fosters relationships, motivates stakeholder involvement and promotes sustainable change leading to improved lives.
- More than 20 yrs experience, working for national and regional organisations as well as global partners including the EU, World Bank, and GIZ.

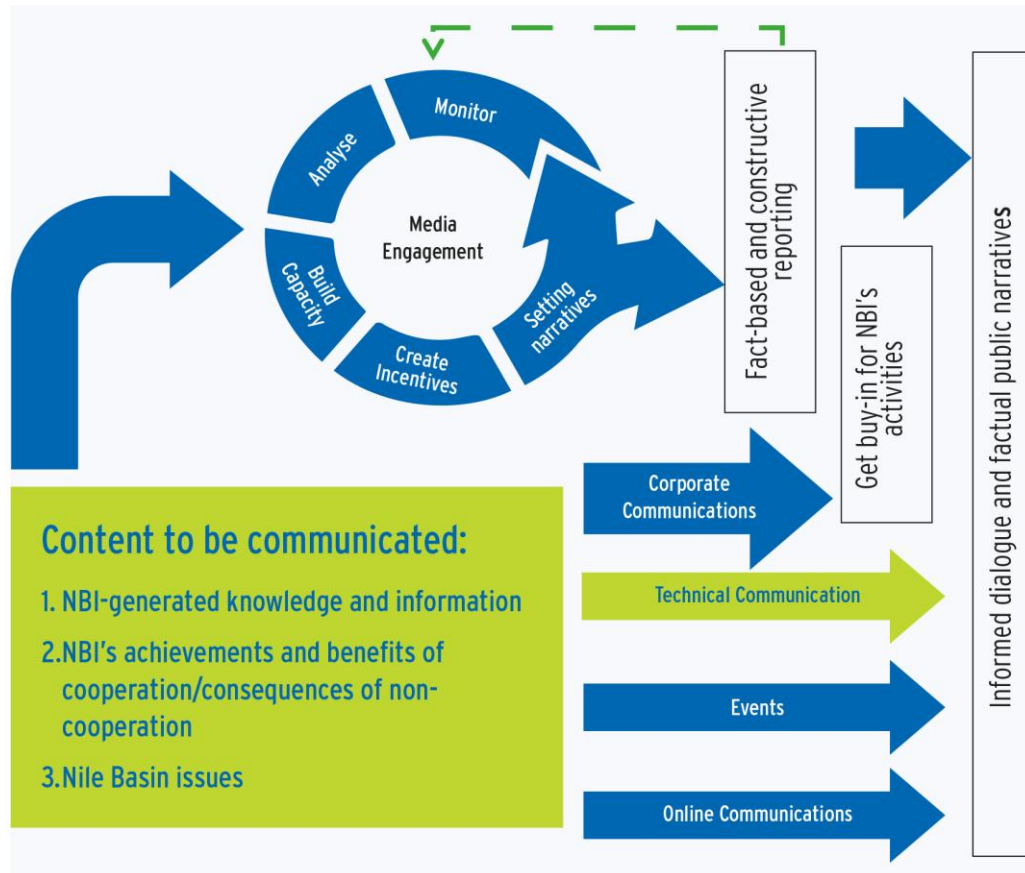
My Project/Experience



Nile Basin Initiative (NBI)

- Intergovernmental organization (10 Member States).
- Established in 1999.
- Seeks to promote cooperative management and development of the common Nile Basin water resources for win-win benefits and to promote regional peace and security.

My Project/Experience



- 12 years with the **Nile Basin Initiative**: Telling the Nile story — from shared challenges to shared benefits.
- Media engagement.

The story



80 MW Regional Rusumo Falls Hydroelectric Project.

- NBI's flagship investment project, jointly identified, owned implemented and financed by Burundi, Rwanda and Tanzania.

The story



- Had been on the drawing board since 1970s
- March 2017 - Groundbreaking ceremony; fully operational in the first half of 2024. (sharing in the benefits: 26.6 MW, jobs, etc).
- **Who was involved?** NBI technical team, communication officers, GIZ, MiCT

The story



How was story pitched to the media?

- Media training & visit to project site (Dec 2016); equip participants with **facts** about the project, exposure to **real benefits** of Nile cooperation and opportunity to develop **human interest** stories with testimonials from the community.
- Collaborated with local and regional outlets, as well as international water power and dam construction magazine

Media Experience



- **How did journalists respond?** Write stories from different angles, interest, follow up.
- **What worked well** –(i) visit to project site: real benefits of Nile cooperation, collect testimonials from the community, (ii) visit to key media houses;(iii) published stories shared via NBI's social media platforms.
- **Challenges:** language (accuracy)
- **Final result** – great coverage; raised interest in the Rusumo project (media inquiries)

Lessons Learned

What would I do differently next time?

Invest more resources in analyzing content of lead media...

- To develop a media training program to address identified gap
- Develop corrective/constructive narratives that promote Nile cooperation and place these in lead media

Practical Tips

- **Media engagement package/year-round activities:**
 - Media training - equip journalists with facts about specific issues.
 - Press work related to events.
 - Media awards to recognize journalists.
 - Media monitoring, track coverage (daily/inhouse).
 - Media content analysis (outsourced).

Practical Tips

- Maintain a Media database – share knowledge and information on a regular basis; help set up interviews with officials.
- Partnerships with media networks e.g. Water Journalists Africa/Infonile.
- Understand the subject matter - identify the gaps in the reporting and inform training to bridge the knowledge gap for future reporting.
- Appreciate journalists for good coverage – e.g. phone call, email, text.
- Casually check in (show you care).



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