Access to Information
and Strategic Communications
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Access to Information and Strategic Communications
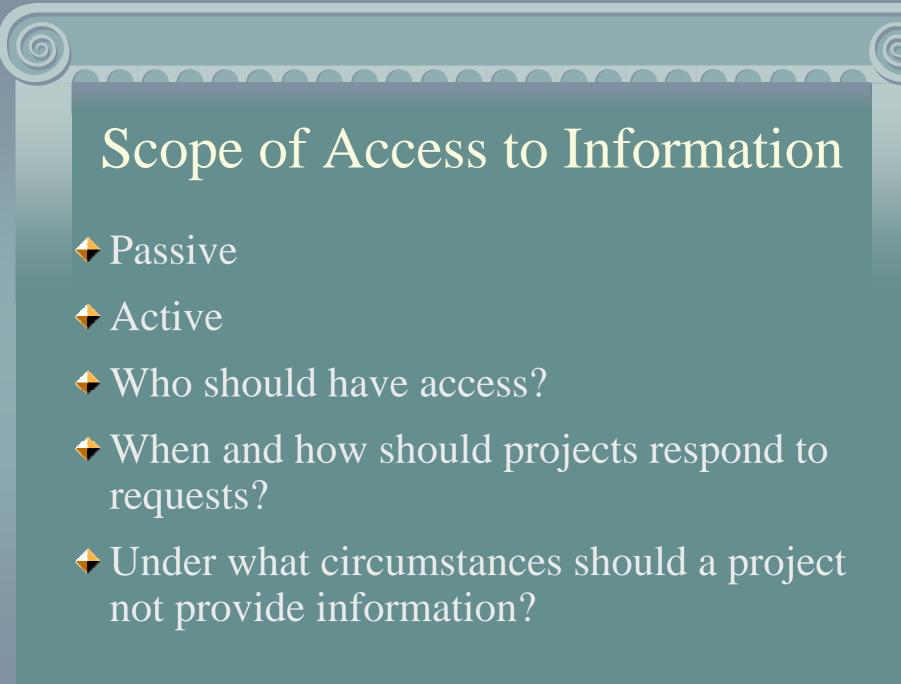
- Significance
  - Public access to information is essential to effective public participation
    - For stakeholders and the public
    - To projects
  - Strategic communication enables projects to shape perceptions and behaviors
    - Goes beyond awareness raising

What Information?

- Project-related information

- Information related to water governance

- Information about relevant water resources

- Cultural and historical information

- Information on factors that could affect water resources

- Stakeholder-held information

Scope of Access to Information

- Passive

- Active

- Who should have access?

- When and how should projects respond to requests?

- Under what circumstances should a project not provide information?
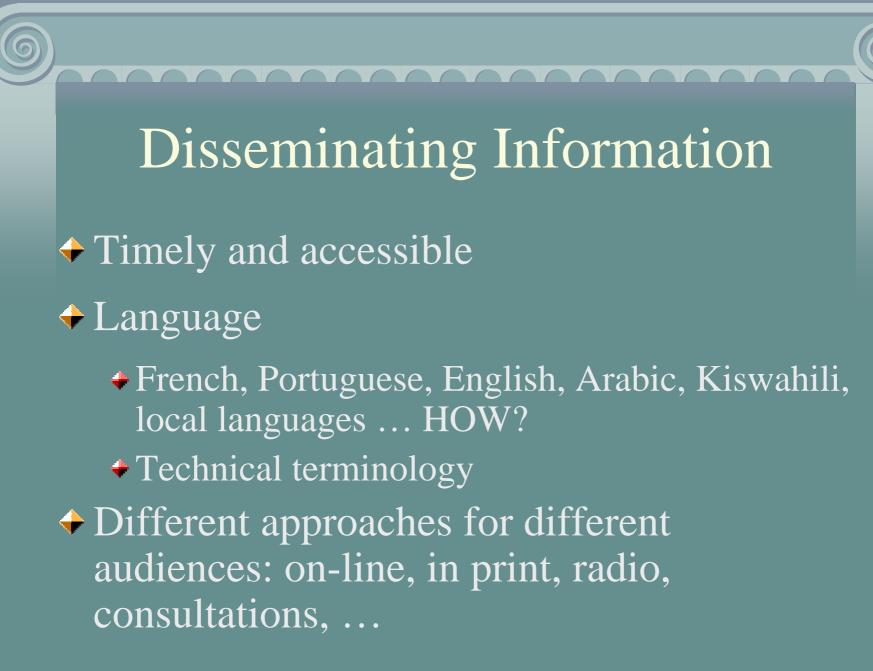
Legal Norms

- International
  - International law strongly encourages access
  - International institutions frequently require for projects that they support
- National
  - Mandatory (FOI laws, PRTR, EIA, permitting and land use)
  - Gaps
- Local/Provincial

Information Management

- Collecting
- Generating
- Organizing
- Updating
- Retrieving
- Disseminating

Disseminating Information

- Timely and accessible

- Language
  - French, Portuguese, English, Arabic, Kiswahili, local languages … HOW?
  - Technical terminology

- Different approaches for different audiences: on-line, in print, radio, consultations, …

Disseminating Information

- Mail
  - Documents
  - Newsletters
- Exhibits (permanent and temporary)
- Project events, including public meetings
- Information centers

Disseminating Information

- Media
  - Press releases
  - Press conferences
  - Public Service Announcement (PSAs)
  - Community radio
  - Develop radio and/or television programs
  - Invite media to project events

Disseminating Information

- Internet
    - Websites
    - Email listservs
    - Electronic fora
    - Digital divide

Strategic Communications

- Purposes
  - Encourage people to change behavior
  - Build support for project activities
  - Improve public and stakeholder awareness
- Craft message for particular audience
- Choice of tool
  - Consider desired result with stakeholders
- CAUTION: need to be careful about manipulation (and perception of manipulation)

GEF Methodology

for planning and implementing Strategic Communications

- Assessment

- Planning

- Designing

- Pre-testing

- Implementing

- Monitoring and Evaluation

Assessment

◆ Assess (gathering & analyzing information)

　◆ Problem (need)

　◆ Situation (context)

　◆ Support and resources needed

　◆ Audience(s)

Planning

- Long-term goals
  - Project water-related goals
- Short-term, measurable objectives
  - Communication-related
  - Changes in knowledge, attitudes, skills, and behaviors
  - Clear, specific, and realistic
- Implementation schedule

Designing

- What will you say?

- How will you say it?

- Develop draft for pre-testing

Pre-testing

- Try it with a small sample of the audience
  - Selected individuals
  - Focus group
- Does it work as expected?

Implementation

◆ Available communication tools

◆ Partners for distributing

◆ Materials for media (and other communication outlets)

◆ Numbers of copies needed

◆ Account for what is sent out

◆ Staff know how to distribute

◆ Monitor and adjust

Evaluation

- Measure the effects of the communication strategy
  - Knowledge, attitudes, awareness, and skills of audience
  - Behavior of target audiences (and secondary audience(s))
  - On the environment