



LIFE with VULTURES

Creating the LIFE with Vultures project communication plan: A simple how-to toolkit

*LIFE WITH VULTURES: SAVING GRIFFON VULTURES IN CYPRUS
THROUGH CONCRETE CONSERVATION ACTIONS
(LIFE18 NAT/CY/001018)*

Prepared by: BirdLife Cyprus

Project Partners:



Funded by:



About the project

LIFE with Vultures is a targeted conservation project for the protection of the Griffon Vulture in Cyprus. In this four-year endeavor (2019-2023), BirdLife Cyprus, the Game and Fauna Service, Terra Cypria – The Cyprus Conservation Foundation and the Vulture Conservation Foundation have joined forces to tackle the main threats facing the Griffon Vulture and prevent Cyprus' most threatened bird of prey from going extinct. The project has a €1,375,861 budget and is co-funded (60%) by the EU's LIFE programme. Find out more at: www.lifewithvultures.eu

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Creating the LIFE with Vultures project communication plan: A simple how-to toolkit

Communication is an important element of any conservation project, since it has the potential to influence behaviors, attitudes, feelings or mindsets. The LIFE with Vultures project communication plan was created following eight simple steps and we hope this simple how-to guide will be of use to other LIFE projects to develop their communication plan.

1. Identify the issue

2. Set goal and objectives (establishing the role of communication)

3. Identify target audiences (primary and secondary audiences)

4. Create key messages

5. Plan implementation

6. Associate communication actions (tools) with specific audiences

7. Monitor and evaluate

8. Set guidelines on project communication and branding for all project partners

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1. Identify the issue

Before developing a communication plan, you must fully understand the conservation issue at hand. This means understanding its extent, its urgency, the main causes, the consequences if no action is taken, which groups of people are responsible and which groups have interest in it. It may be the case that most aspects of a conservation issue are already well known, but it is important to make sure that the communication plan is open to revisions and reviews in case more information becomes known during project implementation.

For this reason, the LIFE with Vultures communication plan is a live document, which will be reviewed and revisited frequently especially because some aspects of the conservation issue in question are not yet very well understood. As more information comes to light, especially from preparatory actions, some aspects of the communication plan (especially in relation to target audiences and key messages) may be adjusted accordingly.

2. Set goal and objectives

The goal and objectives of every communication plan should be guided by the overall objectives of the project. Consider what you want to achieve through this communication, or in other words, what you want people to think, feel, know or do about the specific conservation issue.

For the LIFE with Vultures project, the main goal is to inform and raise awareness on the importance of the Griffon Vulture and the threats it is facing, and at the same time, change attitudes and behaviors to address one of the main threats facing the Griffon Vulture, that of the placement of poison bait in the countryside.

3. Identify target audiences

Target audiences include the people whose behavior needs to be changed, the people who are affected by this behavior, the people or agencies with formal responsibility towards the conservation problem and the people who influence

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the opinions and behavior of those involved. Try to be as specific as possible when identifying your target audiences (i.e. not general public).

For the LIFE with Vultures communication plan, target audiences were divided into two categories: Primary and secondary target audiences. Primary target audiences are the people who have the power to effect the changes the project calls for. They need to be influenced in order to reach the goal. If the primary target audiences cannot be reached directly, or if communicating with the primary target alone is not sufficient to bring about change, people with influence on the primary target need to be mobilized, i.e. the secondary target audiences. These are typically organizations/individuals who have the power and ability to influence large numbers of people, as well as those who are in a position to make change.

4. Create key messages

What are the key messages that you want to deliver with this communication plan? There may be a range of messages addressed to different audiences, so it is important that the messages are tailored to and are relevant for each audience when implementing your communication actions.

In the case of the LIFE with Vultures project, we identified four key themes to base key messages on (the Griffon Vulture, the poison problem, the Anti-Poison Dog Units and the Natura 2000 network) and created a 'bank' of messages for each theme.

5. Plan implementation

List all project communication actions with an associated timeline.

In the case of the LIFE with Vultures project, the communication plan also includes a list of all proposed communication actions assigned to relevant project partners with a relevant timeline to help project partners keep track of communication actions to be implemented year by year.

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6. Associate communication actions (tools) with specific audiences

Not all communication actions apply to all audiences. The tools you choose to communicate your message(s) should depend on the target audience and its characteristics. The message and the way it is delivered should be readily accessible to each target audience.

7. Monitor and Evaluate

Evaluation is an important element for measuring the success and effectiveness of your communication actions. To assess the outcomes of each action you must identify your objectives, set targets for each one (it may be more than one) and the indicators by which you will check whether you have met those targets.

The LIFE with Vultures project team also created an internal document (excel sheet) for tracking communication impact, in order to enable the project team to collect all key specific output indicators related to communication actions in one document.

8. Set guidelines for project communication and branding for all project partners

To ensure consistency in communication actions between project partners, the LIFE with Vultures communication plan also includes guidelines for project communication and branding as well as guidelines for acknowledging the support by the LIFE programme. In addition, and to help project partners when talking to the media, the communication plan also identified five key messages when communicating the project through interviews either on radio or TV.

Useful online resources to help you develop your project's communication plan:

- [Designing a communication strategy](#)
- [Communicating the value of biodiversity](#) (Learning for Nature e-course)
- [A Biodiversity Communications Handbook](#)

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