

The TEC's Communications Strategy

This Document

This document sets out the communications strategy that has been adopted by the Tsunami Evaluation Coalition (TEC) to achieve its aims. The document is supported by a detailed plan of action. While the strategy will remain relatively fixed, the plan of action will remain in draft form as it will change in response to new communications opportunities.

The Aims of the TEC and the Communications Strategy

The TEC has three aims, all of which require some form of communication to the broader aid community or the general public. The three aims are:

1. To improve policy and practice in the relief and recovery / rehabilitation sector.
2. To provide some accountability to both the donor and recipient public.
3. To improve evaluation in the relief and recovery / rehabilitation sector by learning from the TEC process itself.

This communications strategy is focused on the first two of these aims, with most of the emphasis going on aim 1: improving policy and practice.

ADDRESSING LEARNING

The primary aim of the TEC is that of improving policy and practice in the humanitarian sector by learning lessons from the response to the Asian earthquake and tsunamis of December 26th, 2004. Clearly the TEC can only promote improved policy and practice by making the lessons from the tsunami response known to the whole humanitarian community in a way that facilitates such improvement.

The overall strategy here will be to insert TEC findings into existing initiatives within the humanitarian sector as well as promoting the widespread dissemination of the findings. Where appropriate, this will also target the recovery / rehabilitation sector.

ACCOUNTABILITY

At the start of the TEC process it was intended to provide significant accountability to the donor public. Three factors limit the ability of the TEC to meet this need:

- The TEC joint thematic evaluations are themselves targeted more at learning than at accountability.
- The different TEC joint thematic evaluations concentrate on relatively narrow questions, and even taken together they do not provide a complete picture of the most effective approach.
- The delays in carrying out the Impact study means that very little information on the overall impact of the assistance, a vital area for accountability to the donor public, is available to the TEC.

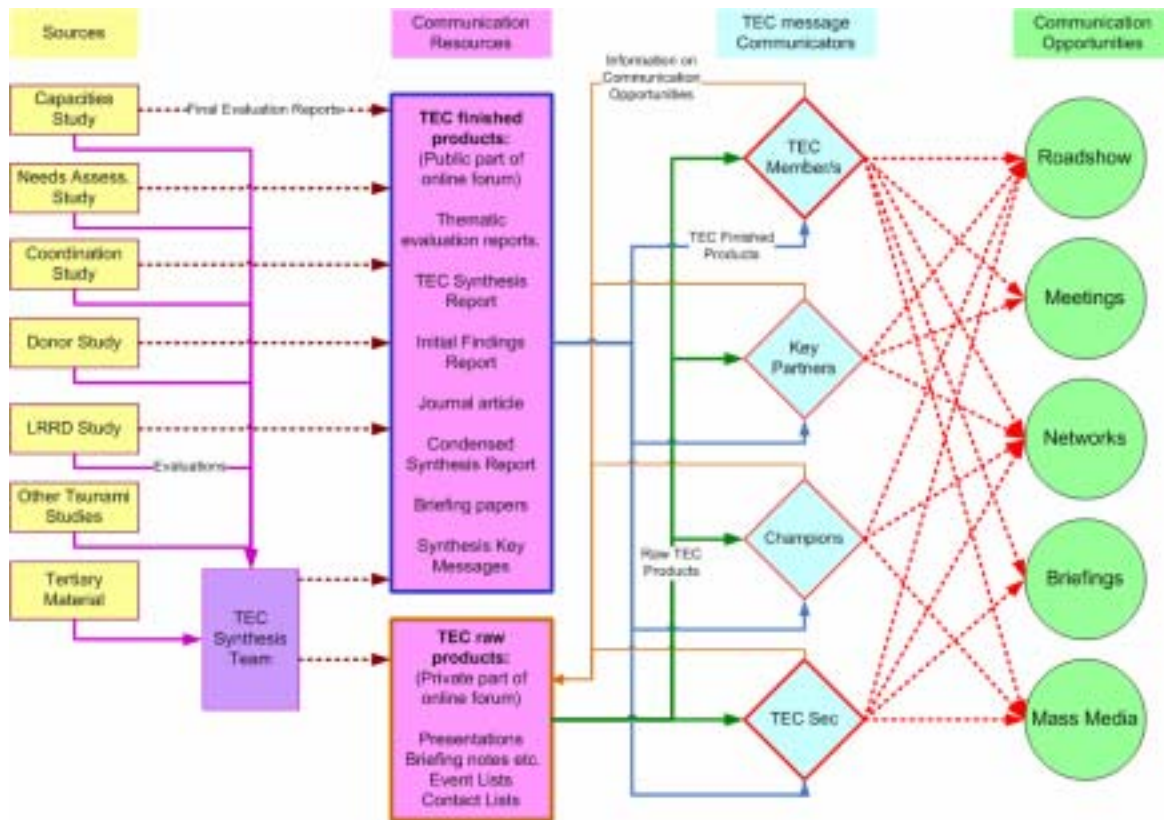
Despite these limitations, the TEC will provide some feedback for both the donor and recipient public. The condensed synthesis report will be in a format that is accessible to the general reader and other briefing papers may be prepared to address these audiences.

EVALUATION LEARNING

The third aim of the TEC, that of promoting learning about evaluation from the process itself, will be dealt with by channelling the learning from the evaluation via ALNAP, an example of promoting use by using existing channels.

An Outline of the TEC Decentralised Strategy

The following schematic outlines the strategy. For reasons of space, not all elements are shown. The key principle to the TEC communication strategy is that of decentralisation, where the whole TEC membership, key partners (such as the Office of the Special Envoy), and champions (individuals in pivotal positions who support the work of the TEC) play a role in dissemination and the promotion of utilisation in addition to the TEC secretariat itself. (This grouping of members, partners, champions and the Secretariat is referred to as TEC message communicators below)



The elements of the strategy set out below are intended to support this decentralised approach.

TWO TYPES OF PRODUCTS

The TEC will produce two types of products:

- Finished products suitable for public circulation. The finished products include the thematic evaluation reports, the synthesis report, and various outputs that can be immediately used. These products will be available on the public area of the TEC online forum.
- Raw products, for use by TEC message communicators in order to support the overall communication strategy. These products will include, for example, PowerPoint presentations, briefings notes, draft papers as well as resources such as contact lists and event diaries. These will be on the private area of the TEC online forum to which TEC message communicators will have access.

A DUAL ROLE FOR TEC MEMBERS

Under the decentralised strategy, TEC members, partners and champions will need to provide information to the Secretariat on communications opportunities so that the Secretariat can coordinate the overall communications effort. The TEC Secretariat will continue to collate this information and will make it available through the private part of the online forum so that every communications opportunity can be fully used.

A DUAL ROLE FOR THE TEC SECRETARIAT

The TEC secretariat will also have a dual role. The secondary role will be in carrying out communications work directly, but the primary role will be in facilitating the communications work by TEC message communicators. This will be principally the work of the TEC media specialist, who will also be responsible for maintaining the communications plan.

The facilitation of communications will include the production of special one-off raw products for use by TEC partners and others. Such raw products may include presentations and briefings.

EXISTING INITIATIVES

The TEC will, as much as possible, engage with existing initiatives such as the Good Humanitarian Donorship Initiative or the UN Reform process. Agencies may already have processes for dealing with learning and outputs from such initiatives and channelling TEC messages through them increases the likelihood that the TEC findings will be used.

EXISTING NETWORKS

The relief and rehabilitation sector is a confusing mass of networks based around common interests, funding, themes, geography, or brands. They range from donor networks like the DAC to NGO networks like Interaction or Voice. The TEC will use such networks to act as a multiplier for the dissemination of the TEC findings. Networks will not be restricted to the relief and rehabilitation sector, as networks in affected countries may also be targeted by TEC message communicators.

KEY PARTNERSHIPS

The Office of the Special Envoy is one key partnership for the TEC. Other key partnerships which allow the TEC to disseminate the TEC findings and encourage utilisation may include the ODI's Humanitarian Policy Group. The needs of key partners will be supported by the production of specific raw products where needed.

CHAMPIONS

Champions are key to the TEC strategy of using existing networks and initiatives, as these individuals are often opinion formers within such networks. Champions will be supported by the TEC Secretariat through the production of special briefings and other raw products as needed.

ONLINE FORUM

The online forum is a key element of the strategy, in that it will allow TEC message communicators immediate access to both the publicly available TEC documents and the raw products which they can adapt for use in specific contexts.

Raw products will be kept on a private part of the site to which only TEC message communicators will have access.

FLEXIBLE TOOL KIT

The final principle of the TEC communication strategy is that of flexibility. All of the TEC outputs provide a menu of tools that the TEC message communicators can add to their own input to maximise the dissemination and utilisation of the TEC learning.

This flexibility is reflected in the TEC communications plan, which is a timetable for actions based around a set of TEC outputs, audiences, contact lists, event lists and other resources.