

A Guide to Capturing Lessons Learned



Mark White and Alison Cohan

The Nature
Conservancy 
Protecting nature. Preserving life.™

Contents

Basic Lessons Learned Process 2

- 1. Define the Project 2
- 2. Collect 2
- 3. Verify and Synthesize 2
- 4. Store 2
- 5. Disseminate 2

Deciding on a process for collecting lessons learned 2

- Approach 1. Integrated 3
- Approach 2. *Post-Facto* 3
- Approach 3. Combination 5

Process Details 6

- Identifying the project team 6
- Selecting the lesson learned writer/leader 6
- Identifying Lessons Learned 7
- Dissemination strategy 8

Suggested Lessons Learned Case Study Format 9

Appendices 11

List of Figures and Tables

Figure 1. Basic lessons learned process 1

Table 1. Simplified, integrated process for capturing lessons learned from project onset 3

Table 2. Step-by-step detailed process for capturing lessons learned post-facto. 4

Table 3. Pros and cons of simple, integrated versus detailed, post facto methods of collecting lessons learned. 5

Table 4. Combined process for capturing lessons learned throughout project duration. 5

A Guide for Capturing Lessons Learned

Throughout a project's life cycle, we learn lessons and discover opportunities for improvement. As a key part of The Nature Conservancy's Conservation by Design principles, documenting lessons learned helps a project team discover both strengths and weaknesses. It provides an opportunity for team members and/or partners to discuss successes during the project, unintended outcomes, and recommendations for others involved in similar future projects. It also allows the team to discuss things that might have been done differently, the root causes of problems that occurred, and ways to avoid those problems in later project stages.

Use of lessons learned is a principal component of an organizational culture committed to continuous improvement and adaptive management. Lessons learned mechanisms communicate acquired knowledge more effectively and ensure that beneficial information is factored into planning, work processes, and activities. The mechanisms or processes used to collect, share, and disseminate lessons learned may vary, but in general such a process is comprised of five main elements: defining the project, collecting information, verifying applicability, storage, and dissemination. Figure 1 is a generic representation of the lessons learned process. Appendix 1 offers general guidelines for capturing lessons learned.

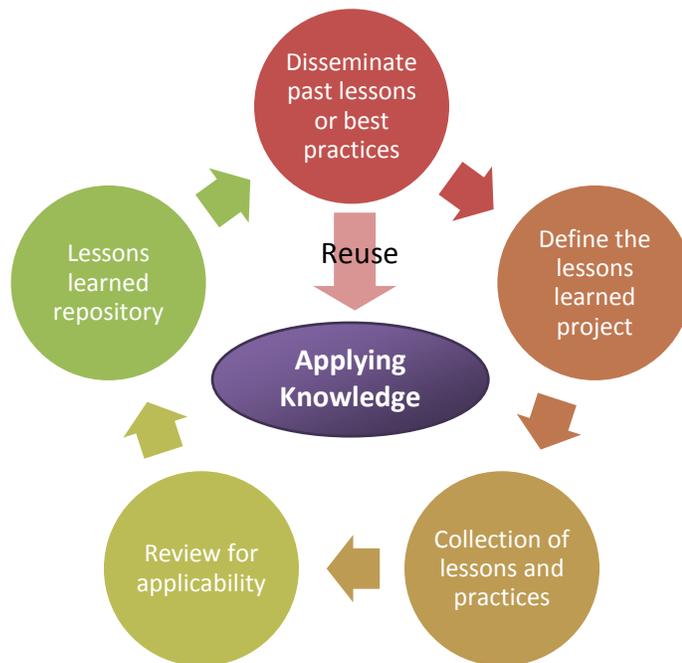


Figure 1. Basic lessons learned process

Modified from Weber, R., Aha, D., and Becerra-Fernandez, I. Categorizing Intelligent Lessons Learned Systems. Intelligent Lessons Learned Systems: Papers from the AAI Workshop (Technical Report AIC-00-005). Aha, D.W. and Weber, R. (Eds.) pp. 63-67. Washington, DC: Naval Research Laboratory, Navy Center for Applied Research in Artificial Intelligence, 2000.

Basic Lessons Learned Process

1. Define the Project

This step is the initial step wherein the need for lessons learned is identified and the process and team through which the lessons will be collected is established. It is important to establish the specific need and purpose for lessons, the audience for the product, and which individuals should comprise the project team. Initial engagement from all key players should be established in advance of the project. Select staff with specific expertise or knowledge of the project and other needed skills, such as communication and writing. The team should then agree to a product format (length, style, and presentation), data collection and analysis methodologies (e.g., surveys, questionnaires, workshops) and process, dissemination strategy, and other activities that will be needed.

2. Collect

The collection process involves the capture of information through structured and unstructured processes such as project critiques, written forms, and meetings. The collection of lessons may come from as many sources as an organization is willing to solicit. Lessons learned can be based both upon positive experiences that achieve organization goals, and on negative experiences that result in undesirable outcomes. For some projects, a collaborative lessons collection process can be as or more important as documenting the lessons.

3. Verify and Synthesize

This process serves to verify the accuracy and applicability of lessons submitted. Domain or subject matter experts may be involved in coordinating and conducting reviews to determine whether or not a lesson is relevant across many other projects, is unique to a particular department or project, or applies to the organization as a whole.

4. Store

The storage aspect of lessons learned usually involves incorporating lessons into an electronic database for future sharing and dissemination. Information should be stored in a manner that allows users to identify search lessons by keyword.

5. Disseminate

The final element, and the most important, is the dissemination of lessons learned, since lessons are of little benefit unless they are distributed and used by people who will benefit from them. Dissemination can include the revision of a work process, training, and routine distribution via a variety of communication media. Lessons can be “pushed,” or automatically delivered to a user, or “pulled” in situations where a user must manually search for them.

Deciding on a process for collecting lessons learned

There are primarily two different approaches to capturing lessons learned, and each project team must decide which approach, or perhaps a combination of approaches, works best for

their project. Both approaches are described below, and a third “combination” approach that combines Approaches 1 and 2 is offered as well.

Approach 1. Integrated

The simplest approach is to incorporate lessons learned early, regularly, and consistently through regular project reporting, or within the context of the initial management plan. Capturing lessons learned would be part of the regular annual or semi-annual reporting cycle and may even be embedded in the initial project management plan. Table 1 outlines this integrated approach. One major advantage of this method is that there need not be a separate and often costly lessons learned project with an outside leader or team, but instead the process is embedded within the project plan, and is carried out by the project manager or internal designee. This approach is far less resource-intensive.

Table 1. Simplified, integrated process for capturing lessons learned from project onset

Step 1	Project manager meets with staff every 3-6 months to identify and discuss top key lessons. (The timing of this process can be tied with specific reporting requirements or be done more or less frequently if desired.)
Step 2	Project manager or assignees synthesizes discussion and enters summary points into the case study format (see below).
Step 3	Project manager or assignee submits/synthesizes lessons (in case study or other formats) in semi-annual and annual progress reports.
Step 4*	Central lessons learned coordinator disseminates lessons, either through regularly updated website or internal newsletter, or holds annual workshop on top lessons learned for sharing between projects. Coordinator might also identify similar projects that can most benefit from specific lessons shared and facilitate short workshop.

* More detail is provided on these steps below.

Approach 2. Post-Facto

The more detailed, complex approach is one which requires a thorough examination of the project *post-facto*. This is sometimes done in projects reactively or as an afterthought when project managers realize things could have been done differently. However, many organizations who have invested heavily in a project over a long period of time, or who are interested in replicating similar projects are willing to spend the time and money necessary to improve future efficiency. While more resource-intensive, this approach offers the benefit of bringing project members and partners together for an extensive look into the operations, successes, and shortcomings of the project. Table 2 outlines a process for capturing lessons learned in a thorough manner at the end of a project. The steps can be modified or rearranged to meet the project’s needs; however it is good practice to follow a methodical approach. The next section provides further detail on steps in this approach, such as identifying the project team, and choosing a lessons learned writer/leader, data collection method, and dissemination strategy. Table 3 outlines the pros and cons of each method.

Table 2. Step-by-step detailed process for capturing lessons learned post-facto.

Define the Project	
Step 1	Identify the need for lessons learned. Clarify the purpose and audience before proceeding.
Step 2	Identify any specific issue(s) that might provide an appropriate focus for the lessons learned work.
Step 3	Define the lesson learned project – draft Terms of Reference (TOR), charter, and budget. Include objectives, timeline, audience, indicators of success, resources needed, dissemination strategy, and other core needs.
Step 4*	Identify the project team. Build initial engagement from all key players who will be involved in advance of the project. Select staff with specific expertise or knowledge of the project and other needed skills, such as communication and writing.
Step 5	Confirm budget, resources, and team availability.
Step 6	Identify the key characteristics, experience, and qualifications of the writer/leader.
Step 7	Select the lessons learned writer/leader.
Step 8	Have the writer sign an agreement and associated TOR, charter and budget to define scope of effort and commitment.
Step 9	Arrange for the lessons learned writer/leader and project team to meet and further refine the charter and develop a specific schedule. Steps 10 through 13 below can best be accomplished through a facilitated meeting with the project team.
Step 10*	Have the team agree to a product format (length, style, and presentation), data collection methodologies (e.g., surveys, questionnaires, workshops) and process, dissemination strategy, and other activities that will be needed.
Step 11	Determine if additional external reviewers are needed and who they are.
Step 12	Develop a questionnaire and interview methodology if data will be collected from others. Identify key factors, topic areas and issues that questions should address to meet the needs of the project.
Step 13	Design, refine and agree to the data analysis process. Identify all of the documents and individuals/groups that will provide the appropriate information.
Data Collection	
Step 14	Collect the data from primary (e.g., interviews) and secondary sources (e.g., documents, meeting minutes). Review project material such as previously gathered lessons learned material and the reports to get a sense of project issues and successes.
Verify and Synthesize	
Step 15	Summarize the data for the lessons learned in the agreed upon lessons learned format and create a draft lessons learned document.
Step 16	Send draft lessons learned document to the peer review team.
Step 17	Revise the draft and get the final version approved by the project initiator(s).
Store	
Step 18*	Store organized lessons learned in a database, website, or other lessons repository.
Disseminate	
Step 19*	Finalize and implement the lessons learned dissemination strategy.

* More detail is provided on these steps below.

Table 3. Pros and cons of simple, integrated versus detailed, post facto methods of collecting lessons learned.

	Pros	Cons
Integrated method	Less costly	Focus within organization may not allow broader perspective or include partners' lessons
	Less time-intensive	
Post-facto method	Brings multiple partners together for extensive analyses	Resource-intensive (time and money)
	Process can be designed to build better collaboration and communication within a partnership	Often requires specialized lessons learned leader or facilitator

Approach 3. Combination

While it is preferred to begin with the integrated approach wherein lessons learned are part of the initial project plan and team members meet regularly to capture lessons learned, it is also helpful to bring together key partners and stakeholders with the project team and the end of or during a project. This allows for a broader analysis and may help to build a sense of collaboration and communication within the partnership or group responsible for project implementation. Table 3 outlines how this combined approach may unfold.

Table 4. Combined process for capturing lessons learned throughout project duration.

Step 1	Project manager meets with staff every 3-6 months to identify and discuss top key lessons. (The timing of this process can be tied with specific reporting requirements or be done more or less frequently if desired.)
Step 2	Project manager or assignees synthesizes discussion and enters summary points into the case study format (see below).
Step 3	Project manager or assignee submits/synthesizes lessons (in case study or other formats) in semi-annual and annual progress reports.
Step 4	An annual and/or end of project facilitated group discussion FGD involving key partners and stakeholders—possibly facilitated by TNC, partners, or by third party (depending on how the institutional arrangement of the project and the conditions of the relationships). A survey can be added for partner participants attending the discussion to capture their views of the lessons learned.
Step 5	Key lessons are summarized and distributed to all who participate in the group.
Step 6*	Central lessons learned coordinator disseminates lessons, either through regularly updated website or internal newsletter, or holds annual workshop on top lessons learned for sharing between projects. Coordinator might also identify similar projects that can most benefit from specific lessons shared and facilitate short workshop.

Process Details

Identifying the project team (Approaches 2 and 3)

In identifying the project team, it is important to build initial engagement from all key players who will be involved in advance of the project. Include the project manager, the project team, and the key stakeholders in the lessons learned exercise. Select staff with specific expertise or knowledge of the project and other needed skills, such as communication and writing.

Selecting the lesson learned writer/leader (Approaches 2 and 3)

There are a few different approaches in selecting a lessons learned leader. We suggest picking someone with good or at least some familiarity with the larger organization's goals and process but not someone directly involved in the daily operations of the project. There is certainly something to be said for having an outsider that is an expert in capturing lessons learned lead the process. The outsider obviously will have no knowledge of the project and thus no inherent biases. However, the downsides to this approach are that there may be less buy-in from the project team members, stakeholders or partners may be less willing to share information with a stranger, and some insider information may be lost in the process. One alternative to this approach is to pair the expert with the project manager or another insider heavily involved in the project. Then the two could work as a team to lead the process and hone the lessons learned. Another alternative, as suggested above, is to have the project team itself identify and develop the lessons learned through an iterative, adaptive process throughout the life of the project.

Data collection methods and storage (Approaches 2 and 3)

See Appendix 2 for a detailed analysis of the purpose, advantages, and disadvantages for different data collection options (e.g., surveys, interviews, workshops, reviews).

Multiple resources exist for creating questionnaires and surveys, and designing interview questions. One free, user-friendly survey website is SurveyMonkey.com (www.surveymonkey.com), which offers advice for question design and also offers basic data analysis and display options. This document provides excellent guidance on conducting a survey and designing a questionnaire - <http://www.statpac.com/surveys/surveys.pdf>.

Whatever method you are using, concentrate on obtaining information in four general areas:

1. *What went well?*
2. *What didn't go well or had unintended consequences?*
3. *If you had it all to do over again, what would you do differently?*
4. *What recommendations would you make to others doing similar projects?*

You can include other more detailed questions in your survey or interview, such as:

- *Were the project goals attained? If not, what changes need to be made to meet goals in the future?*
- *What surprises did the team have to deal with?*
- *What project circumstances were not anticipated?*
- *Did you develop any useful workarounds or solutions to problems that cropped up during the project? Document the details in a way that will make sense later.*
- *For any problems that went unresolved what preventative measures can you invent now that can help things go more smoothly next time?*
- *Are there any new "best practices" you can derive from this project? Note anything that went so well – and now seems to be so thoroughly "road tested" – that you would want to repeat the positive experience next time.*
- *Can you create an easily accessible repository for lessons learned and best practices you have documented? This could be a database, website, or even a simple document.*

Identifying Lessons Learned (All approaches)

The guidelines below are modified from the book "Learning to Fly - Practical knowledge management from leading and learning organisations"¹, and set out ten key steps to facilitating a lessons learned review.

1. Call the meeting. If conducting a *post-facto* process, hold a face-to-face meeting as soon as you can after the project ends, within weeks rather than months.
2. Invite the right people. The project leader needs to attend, as do key members of the project team. If a similar project is already underway, then there is great value in the new project team attending - a "customer" for the knowledge.
3. Appoint a facilitator. Identify a facilitator who was not closely involved in the project. The facilitator should be someone who can ask questions from an independent, but non-threatening standpoint. This isn't an audit, it's an investment!
4. Revisit the objectives and deliverables of the project. Ask "what did we set out to do?" and "what did we achieve?"
5. Go through the project step by step. Revisit the project plan and identify any deviation from plan. Where were the delays, and what went ahead of schedule? What changed and why?
6. Ask "what went well"? Ask "what were the successful steps towards achieving your objective?" and "what went really well in the project?"
Ask a "why?" question several times. This is vital, and will get you to the root of the reason. Don't take the initial response at face value. Often people don't even realise what the underlying reason behind a success or failure is.
7. Find out why these aspects went well, and express the learning as advice or guidelines for the future. This is a key point. Try to avoid expressing lessons learned in a passive, past tense, such as: "Project Foxtrot completed ahead of schedule because the project team remained in-tact throughout the design and execution stages".

¹ By Chris Collison and Geoff Parcell, www.chriscollison.com/12f/ year?

The lesson will be far more accessible to others if it is expressed as:

"On time-critical projects, ensure that the project team remains consistent throughout the design and execution stages of the project. This will eliminate any learning-curve issues due to the take-on of new staff".

As the facilitator, acknowledge feelings and press for the facts. Ask "what repeatable, successful processes did we use?" and "how could we ensure future projects go just as well, or even better?"

8. Ask "what could have gone better?" Ask "what were the aspects that stopped you delivering even more?" Identify the stumbling blocks and pitfalls, so they can be avoided in future by asking "what would your advice be to future project teams, based on your experiences here?"
9. Ensure that participants leave with their feelings acknowledged. Ask for "Marks out of ten" and "What would make it a ten for you?" to access residual issues.
10. Record the meeting. Use quotes to express the depth of feeling. Express the recommendations as clearly, measurably and unambiguously as possible, using the guideline format explained in point 7. Take a photograph of the project team, and ensure that you record contact information (e-mail and telephone) to make follow-up conversations easy for anyone reading the lessons learned. Ensure that you circulate the write-up around the participants for comment, and permission to use specific quotes before sharing more widely.

Dissemination strategy (All approaches)

Once you have captured lessons learned, make sure they are easily referenced by other project teams. Keep them in a location where they can be easily found and searched – maybe a project portal or intranet site. Start every project by accessing past project lessons learned. Track improved effectiveness and efficiencies on projects based on applying the lessons learned from past projects. In this way, the lessons learned from past projects help to increase the success of future projects. Make a component of every project a requirement to review the lessons learned from past projects. Strive to create a set of enabling conditions that foster an organizational culture of capturing and adapting behavior based on identified lessons learned.

See Appendix 3 for options for disseminating lessons learned.

Suggested Lessons Learned Case Study Format

Title:

Period covered:

Date of the report:

Case Overview (½ - ¾ page):

Background

Project Objectives/Goals

Conservation impact (1-2 paragraphs):

Evaluative description of results/measures (include timeline)

What worked well? (1-2 paragraphs):

Could include quotes from partners/staff - reflective description on lessons learned

What didn't work so well? (1-2 paragraphs):

Could include quotes from partners/staff - reflective description on lessons learned

If you had it all to do over again, what would you do differently? (1-2 paragraphs):

What recommendations would you make to others doing similar projects? (1-2 paragraphs):

Would the above two questions providing similar descriptions?

Suggestions for others (1-2 paragraphs):

Could include quotes from partners/staff – prescriptive advice

Resources: Links to other relevant information

Metadata: -- would the information below appear at the bottom of the case study report?

Author: Name/Job Title/OU/Region/email

Location of Project: Region, OU/Country/State

MHT: What is the Major Habitat Type for this partnership?

Types of Partners: Government, Place-based NGO, International NGO, Corporate, Community Based Organization etc.

Priority: Freshwater, Climate Change, Marine, Conservation Lands

Date: month/year written (place to allow for updating date)

Language: Language of case submission or translation

Also include a photo of partner/ partnering or place



Appendices

Appendix 1

Guidelines for Capturing Lessons Learned²

- Include the project manager, the project team and the key stakeholders in the lessons learned exercise.
- Conduct the wrap-up lessons learned exercise soon after the project ends to get the most effective input from people.
- Recruit a lessons learned facilitator who is not closely connected to the project.
- Prepare for the exercise by meeting with the project manager.
- Review project material such as previously gathered lessons learned material and the final Quality Assurance report to get a sense of project issues and successes.
- Conduct the session in a comfortable setting.
- Set ground rules and timelines for discussion.
- Concentrate on obtaining information in four general areas:
 - What went well?
 - What didn't go well or had unintended consequences?
 - If you had it all to do over again, what would you do differently?
 - What recommendations would you make to others doing similar projects?
- Focus on behaviors or tactics that were successful or problematic, rather than people who were successful or problematic.
- Guard against a bias towards negative or positive comments.
- Ask questions to get balanced input.
- Accept input after the session from individuals who prefer to remain anonymous.
- Provide the project manager with a complete, unedited listing of input from the lessons learned exercise.
- Analyze the raw material for future use.
- Document lessons learned in a positive way that promotes their use as best practices.
- Include lessons learned documentation in the post-implementation review for the project.
- Has the facilitator reviewed the final quality assurance report or other project material, including previously gathered lessons learned information?
- Has input been received in the key project areas?
- Has input been documented as received in the session and provided to the project manager?
- Has material been analyzed and documented for follow-on use?
- Has an archive location, such as a lessons learned database or library been established?

² From Gantthead.com

Appendix 2

Data Collection: Methods and Sources³

METHOD	PURPOSE	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Questionnaires, Surveys and Checklists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Usually devised and administered to obtain statistical data for a particular question or set of questions. Often associated with quantitative research. Used when you need to get information quickly and/or easily from people in a non-threatening way. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can be completed anonymously Inexpensive to administer Easy to compare and analyse responses Can be sent to a large number of people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Might not get a detailed response The wording can cause bias Impersonal nature May not include all information Might have a low response rate
Structured, Semi-structured and unstructured Interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Useful to obtain a fuller understanding of someone's impressions or experiences of the partnership or to delve into more details about questionnaire responses. Structured interviews tend to be used for quantitative research; semi-structured and unstructured interviews tend to be used in qualitative research. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collects a full range and depth of information Can be flexible with interviewees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Time consuming Can be hard to analyse and compare Interviewer can bias responses Can be costly if involves face-to-face interviews
Review of Documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conveys information about how the partnership operates. Documents can include: MOUs, web literature, meeting minutes, films, partnership agreements, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collects comprehensive and historical information Is not disruptive to the partnership Information already exists Less rooms for biases in interpreting the information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can take time Information can be incomplete or out of date Need to be clear about what you are looking for Not a flexible approach
Participant and Direct Observation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To gather accurate information about how a partnership operates. Participant observation requires the partnership researcher to become a participant in the culture or context being observed. Direct observation involves the researcher observing actual situations or interactions rather than being told about them. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> View operations of a partnership as they are occurring Can adapt the case study in accordance with the events as they happen 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can be difficult to interpret observed behaviours Can be complex to categorise observations Observer can influence behaviour of partnership participants Difficult to remain impartial if participating Can be expensive
Focus Groups / Workshops	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Involve organised discussion with a selected group of individuals to gain information about their views and experiences about a topic. Usually involves exploring a range of views or a topic in depth through discussion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reliable sources of impressions that are shared by all Can be an efficient way to get a broad range and depth of information in a short time Can convey key information about the partnership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can be difficult to analyse responses Needs a good facilitator for safety and closure Can be difficult to schedule people together
Reviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides an opportunity for partners to reflect on the value of the partnership, determine whether the partnership is meeting its desired objectives. Offers a chance to agree as a group to any revisions to the partnership agreement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows opportunity to collect information from all partners Can allow for a deep analysis of the partnership If skilfully done can be a significant catalyst for improving the partnering process and relations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can be time consuming (especially if reviewer is meeting with different partners) Most effective after the partnership has been operating for some time An external reviewer could potentially be destructive to the partnership

³ From [The Partnering Initiative](#), [The Case Study Toolbook](#), 2005

POTENTIAL SOURCES OF INFORMATION FOR PARTNERSHIP CASE STUDIES

SOURCE	EXAMPLES OF INFORMATION	CHECKLIST
1. Contextual Data	Census	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Films	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Newspapers	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Photographs	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Policy documents	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Others	<input type="checkbox"/>
	2. Understanding the Partnership (Secondary Sources)	Legal Materials
Meeting Minutes		<input type="checkbox"/>
Memorandum of Understanding		<input type="checkbox"/>
Other Case Studies		<input type="checkbox"/>
Partnering Agreements		<input type="checkbox"/>
Reviews		<input type="checkbox"/>
Web Literature		<input type="checkbox"/>
Other		<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Understanding the Partnership (Primary Sources)	Beneficiaries of the Partnership	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Partners	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Partnership Broker	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Other Partnership Practitioners	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Policy Makers	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Staff of Partner Organisations	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Stakeholders (local community, suppliers, etc)	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

Adapted from Overview of Basic Methods to Collect Information by Carter McNamara and materials from Case Study Workshop, February, 2005.

Appendix 3

Options for Disseminating Lessons Learned⁴

This tool is designed to help case study researchers/writers and/or commissioners develop a dissemination strategy that meets the case study objectives and reaches target audiences. It outlines the process for developing and implementing a viable dissemination strategy and lists a number of dissemination options to choose from.

Developing a Dissemination Strategy: Points to Consider

- Begin by identifying the target audiences (refer to Tool 2 for a list of potential audiences internal and external to the partnership)
- Consider what impact you want to have on these audiences (use Tool 2 to match objectives against audiences)
- Think about what kind of case study your target audience is most likely to respond to (see Tool 6)
- Ensure the case study format is suitable (in terms of length, style and presentation) for the audience
- Take into account the time and resources available
- Select appropriate dissemination option(s) (See below)

DISSEMINATION OVERVIEW OPTIONS

Conferences / Events	Conferences can enable a case study to reach and influence a wide audience so long as there is a 'fit' with the case study focus and the conference theme. It can offer a useful platform and may be a valuable introduction to the partnership that can be followed up by other means. It may also be tailored for learning purposes. Other types of event can be more tailored to meet the wider goals of the partnership and may involve a range of communications opportunities (e.g. site visits, stories, small workshops).
Direct Contact	The essential element is that the case study is brought to life by personal enthusiasm and insight – tends to be more dynamic and engaging as a communications tool and has the potential to be more responsive (e.g. through questions and discussion). Direct contact may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One-to-one meetings • Small group meetings • Site visits • Workshops • Training • Presentations
Electronic Newsgroups	Many such internet-based groups are being established – their value is their inter-active nature and the fact that they can be very topical and responsive to new inputs.
Media	Effective access to the general public requires media engagement – it is notoriously hard to interest the media in 'good news' stories but the best route is probably to build connections with specialist journalists who are interested in the subject and will use your case study products to inform a considered journalistic piece.
Publications	Well designed and illustrated publications can be a useful way to give a case study a sense of longer term value – the challenge is to get the balance right between something overly academic and something more accessible without becoming superficial.
Specialist Literature / Academic Journals	Publishing in peer-reviewed academic journals /specialist literature certainly provides a measure of seriousness and respectability to a case study. However, the readership tends to be low and highly selective.
Through Third Parties	This term includes any individuals who know the partnership and are able to endorse the case study products from their own independent perspective and experience. Such individuals may become the partnership's 'ambassadors' or 'champions' and are likely to have influence because of their a) independence from the partnership and b) their own reputation.
Websites	An increasingly popular way of information sharing with many benefits in terms of accessibility and possibilities of up-dating etc. However, with such a deluge of web-based information, sometimes case studies can get 'lost'. Also, some key audiences do not have website access or do not give time to web-based communications.

⁴ From [The Partnering Initiative](#), [The Case Study Toolbook](#), 2005