



Strengthening Forest Communications in the Asia Pacific Region

Hanoi, Viet Nam

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Strategic Communications - Using SWOT Analysis

SWOT analysis is a strategic planning tool used to evaluate the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats involved in any particular situation.

It starts with business objectives and identifies the internal and external factors that are favourable and unfavourable to achieve the objective. The technique is widely used for business planning but can be used very effectively in planning communications plans and strategies.

The technique can be very simple or quite complex but its helps to identify your advantages, forecast problem areas, plan for unforeseen events, and spot areas where you might be vulnerable.

SWOT analysis helps us address our challenges by looking at four factors:

It doesn't really matter if some items are in two categories, or even if they are in the right categories, the tool is about helping us identify the important factors.

Internal factors	
Strengths	Strengths - things that we are good at or which work in our favour. We must keep these, play on them, use them to our advantage. For example, we might have good scientific evidence.
Weaknesses	Weaknesses - things that are not good for us and will work against us. We must find ways to avoid these or get rid of them altogether. For example, we might not have adequate resources to communicate effectively.

External factors	
Opportunities	Opportunities - things that might work in our favour if we recognise and capitalise on them. An example might include knowing an influential journalist that is friendly to foresters.
Threats	Threats - are things that might hurt us or hamper our work. We need to identify and manage these. For example, hostile campaigning groups.