European Union
Structural Funds

Practical Guide to communication on Structural Funds 2000-2006

Draft

European Commission
Directorate general Regional Policy

Foreword

The challenge of improving communication

It is often said, and rightly so, that the European Union must be closer to its citizens. On the eve of enlargement, it is evident that the European project must be more visible and that a greater effort must be made to bridge the gap between the citizens of the Union and its institutions.

Thanks to the Structural Funds, the European Union can demonstrate in a practical way how it impacts on the everyday lives of each and every one of us. Over one third of the Community budget is transferred to the people and the regions that need it most. At local level, with the assistance of the Member States and private investors, the actions of the European Union make it possible to build infrastructure, to innovate, to protect the environment and to respond to the need for employment and training. These are activities that benefit all of us.

But achievements in these areas must be communicated more widely and more effectively. There are three imperatives for better communication:

- to inform all the potential beneficiaries of the existence of the Structural Funds and how they can be accessed, in order to ensure that a large number of projects can be presented;
- to ensure greatest transparency in the use of public funds;
- to increase awareness among the general public of the actions carried out by the European Union in partnership with the Member States.

The participation of citizens in the European debate is essential to reinforcing European solidarity and therefore to consolidating the foundations of the Union. This highlights the importance of information, which must be considered a shared responsibility.

The management authorities of the Structural Funds, due to their local knowledge, are best placed to act as the voice of Europe in the regions, working in close proximity to the citizens. The purpose of this guide is to help them to take up this challenge with enthusiasm and creativity.

Michel Barnier,
European Commissioner responsible for regional policy and institutional reform.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Working together for successful communication

In adopting Regulation (EC) 1159/2000, the European Commission defined and supported the information and publicity measures concerning the Structural Funds for which the Member States are responsible.(1) The text concerns the period 2000-2006.

First of all, the Regulation establishes communication as a core task, as strategically important for the programmes as financial management or any other management activity. It seeks to provide a tool to help ensure a programme's success rather than to impose any kind of regulatory "strait-jacket". The aim is to shed light on a subject, namely communication, which often remains ill-defined.

The Regulation states that communication measures should be programmed, structured and evaluated, with regular reporting to Monitoring Committees.

Each programme must develop a communication strategy in pursuit of two aims.

On one hand, widely publicising the Structural Funds should ensure that programme funds are taken up and used as effectively as possible, while at the same time guaranteeing equal opportunity to all potential beneficiaries.

On the other hand, it is important to convey the message that:

- the Union and the Member States are working together for the benefit of regions and social categories in difficulty;
- they are pursuing common objectives (the Fund tasks);
- they pool their financial resources. The Union contribution is added to the national investment for added impact.

Ultimately, the general public must understand the reasons for, workings of, and results achieved by structural policy, a policy which is of direct and immediate concern to them. The Structural Funds are more than simply a set of funds.

It is also important to inform citizens about how their money is being spent, i.e. the results achieved by structural policy. Transparency regarding the use of public funds is an essential requirement for any democracy.

Another important aspect is for the general public to understand that structural policy makes a vital contribution to Europe's economic and political integration and thus to peace and stability.

The Regulation sets out the aims of communication, the essential target groups and the message content. It defines a set of obligations which must be met. First and foremost among these are the communication action plans and the evaluation of these actions.

The aim is to improve the quality and effectiveness of communication.

The Regulation defines a coherent framework for a rigorous and professional approach; it does not provide an answer to everything. It provides the basic ingredients which the Managing Authorities must then draw on as their needs require, thereby developing their own communication strategy in accordance with their particular context.

Project promoters also have certain responsibilities. The Managing Authorities must ensure that these are respected and also urge the Fund beneficiaries to show awareness of the importance of their role.

Project promoters can provide the tangible proof that structural policy, a tool of European solidarity, not only exists but produces results.

By fulfilling this role, project promoters can become genuine ambassadors for the European Union! This is why it is so important for the Managing Authorities to involve them in their communication activities.

<Example >

Flevoland (The Netherlands)

Project promoters as ambassadors for the European Union

A group of nine women pose proudly in the centre of the poster. Among them, the head of the Centre for Equal Opportunities occupies a prominent position. A sentence, which appears to leave her mouth, says: *"with European support, we help women to find work"*. The sentence is followed by two words in large bold characters: *"Mijn idee"* (My idea).

In the Dutch province of Flevoland (330 000 inhabitants) there is a strong belief in the virtues of communicating through people and their real life experiences.<LINK: Flevoland: Division of competencies>. Who is better placed than those on the ground to identify their own needs and to testify to the benefits of activities undertaken with European support?

The people with responsibility for information actions in Flevoland's management authority believe in inviting project promoters who benefit from the Structural Funds to deliver their own message. In general the response from promoters is positive, and even enthusiastic. When things are said by the people directly concerned they tend to have a much greater impact. In Flevoland, the citizens, entrepreneurs, and other project promoters become ambassadors for the European Union.

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Working together for successful communication: that is the message!

(1) This Regulation is in application of Article 46 of Regulation (EC) 1260/1999 which requires information and publicity measures about the activities of the Structural Funds to be carried out.

The guide and how to use it

This publication aims to assist the Managing Authorities in meeting the challenge of developing effective information and publicity measures about the Structural Funds.

It consists of fact sheets dealing with the kind of issues the Managing Authorities commonly face when deciding on which communication measures to adopt. These fact sheets are divided into two groups: the first seeks to clarify various points in the Regulation; the second (the tool box) provides practical details as an aid to better communication.

The request for an explanatory guide was addressed to the Commission at the seminar held in March 2002, entitled "*Working together: successful communication on the Structural Funds*".

This guide also aims to bring together good practices in the field of information and publicity which reflect the thinking behind the Regulation. It is important to identify and highlight these practices so that information managers can take inspiration from them.

The ultimate purpose of the guide is in fact to save time (and perhaps also money) in managing an activity - namely information and publicity - for which the public authorities sometimes lack the necessary skills.

At the same time, this aim cannot be achieved without the extensive and committed involvement of those for whom the guide is intended. Their contribution will be crucial to the guide's quality. In this respect it is those who write the guide who will be the first to read it!

The Commission, for its part, supports the exchange of experiences and coordinates the informal networks of information managers.

It is these exchanges which should enable the guide to benefit from examples in the field, examples which are first identified by members of the *Structural Funds Information Team (SFIT)* informal working group, set up in May 2002. It is the Commission's task to communicate these examples to the networks of information managers.

The first of these networks (Objective 1) started up in March 2002 while the network for the Objective 2, Interreg and Urban programmes should be operational by the end of 2003.

BETTER UNDERSTANDING REGULATION (EC) 1159/2000

The Regulation at a glance

Commission Regulation (EC) 1159/2000 defines the obligations of the Managing Authorities concerning information and publicity measures about the assistance available from the Structural Funds. What are the main aims, innovations and priorities of this Regulation?

INFORMATION AS A CENTRAL COMPONENT OF MANAGEMENT

For the first time in the history of the Structural Funds, the programming logic also extends to communication, with a communications action plan now included as an inherent part of it.

Programme management thus also covers communication actions. As for any other development measure, their implementation must be closely monitored.

TWO FUNDAMENTAL AIMS

"Information and publicity about assistance from the Structural Funds is intended to increase public awareness and transparency regarding the activities of the European Union", states the Regulation. Two fundamental aims of general application for communication actions are then set:

- **transparency** – to inform potential beneficiaries of the opportunities available to them and to render the procedures accessible;

- **increased public awareness –** to inform about
  - joint action by the European Union and the Member States and the results achieved;
  - the tasks of the Structural Funds as specific objectives of this joint effort;
  - the Union's financial participation

  so that the general public knows as much as possible about what is being done.

THREE TARGET GROUPS

The Regulation identifies three broad categories of target group at which the information and publicity measures are aimed:

- potential beneficiaries and project promoters, in the public sector (thus the public authorities at all levels);
- the general public;
- the economic and social partners and non-governmental organisations.

The size and rather general nature of these categories means that the specific targets must be identified more precisely when drawing up the communication plans.

TWO STRONG POINTS: THE COMMUNICATION PLAN AND THE EVALUATION

Compared with the previous period (1994-1999), the Regulation brings two major innovations.

The first innovation is the obligation for the Managing Authority to **draw up a communications actions plan**. This must include:

- the aims;
- the target groups;
- the communication strategy;
- the indicative budget;
- the administrative departments or bodies responsible for implementing the plan. To facilitate dialogue, the name of the person or persons at the head of the departments concerned must also be given.

This communication plan is included in the programme complement of the various kinds of programme co-funded by the Structural Funds, namely:

- the regional operational programmes, whether financed by one or several of the Structural Funds;
- the multi-regional or thematic operational programmes;
- the Community Initiative programmes;
- the single programming documents;
- any other kind of programme co-funded by the Structural Funds, such as the innovative action programmes for which provision is made under Article 22 of Regulation (EC) 1260/1999.

On the other hand, no communication plan needs to be drawn up for a Community Support Framework. In this case any such plan is left to the discretion of the responsible authority.

The second innovation introduced by the Regulation concerns the **evaluation of communication actions.**

The communications action plan must include evaluation criteria. These criteria are designed to verify and measure the quality and effectiveness of the actions undertaken. The main aim is to gauge to what extent the Regulation aims (transparency and public awareness) are achieved. <LINK: Evaluation >

The Managing Authorities must:

- provide proof of what has been done, in the form of examples of communication tools (publications, multimedia products, posters, etc.) or a description of any action (such as an event) which cannot be in the form of a concrete tool;
- prove the quality and effectiveness of the actions undertaken, that is make evaluations based on the specific quality and effectiveness indicators and inform the Commission of the results of these activities.
- report to the Monitoring Committees on developments;
- set aside a specific chapter in the annual reports to assemble the information communicated to the Monitoring Committees.

Some fundamental points

The Regulation places the emphasis on:

- the need to reach a wide public - the information is not aimed solely at potential beneficiaries of the Structural Funds but at the whole of civil society affected by the action undertaken;
- the need to mobilise the media (radio, television, newspapers, web) to reach the general public;
- the obligations, in respect to individual projects, on the part of the Managing Authority and the project promoters. When project promoters become fund beneficiaries they also become producers of information;
- the role of the new information technologies as a communication tool.

Various obligations

The Regulation also covers the following three aspects:

1) Obligations in terms of tools and visibility

In short, the Regulation

- states the information tools (billboards, plaques, information to beneficiaries, posters, other) whose use is obligatory (<LINK: **Summary table** >

- gives instructions on how to ensure visibility for the European Union in the obligatory tools and optional products. The message is the following: if a non-obligatory tool is developed, it must respect the rules of visibility as they apply to obligatory products. More specific technical specifications apply to billboards.

2) The visibility of co-funding

This is guaranteed by a standard sentence. Other expressions may be used, however, based for example on more common and attention-grabbing words, in order to better express the concept in question.

3) Graphics

The Regulation states that the European Union's emblem *"shall be presented in accordance with the current specifications"*. The European flag must be accompanied by the mention of the European Union written in full. This guide includes and explains the other specifications which currently apply to the graphics. <LINK: The graphic image>
states

THE COMMISSION'S ROLE

The European Commission provides technical support for implementation of the Regulation.

This aid is offered in a spirit of **partnership** and takes various forms:
- the provision of expertise and equipment;
- support for the exchange of experiences;
- organisation of informal networks of information managers.

COMMISSION REPRESENTATION

The Commission is represented in all the European Union countries with offices in a number of major towns. These can make their experience in the field of information available to the Managing Authorities.

The Regulation proposes working with these offices, particularly in two specific fields:

- the link with the media;
- the organisation of information events (conferences, seminars, fairs, exhibitions, competitions).

The full text of the Regulation is appended to this guide.
<LINK: **ANNEXES**>

Transparency

Ensuring that potential beneficiaries are as widely informed as possible of the opportunities available to them is an obligation under the Regulation. This information must promote the desire to become involved, explain the procedures, ensure equal opportunity among candidates, encourage the launch of quality projects, and help make good use of the funds available.

OVERALL AIM

To publicise the opportunities offered by the various programmes and the means of benefiting from them. The communication plan must pursue this aim.

TARGET GROUPS

- All the potential beneficiaries, in particular SMEs.
- The various partners, that is all the private or public bodies able to pass on the information to project promoters. <LINK WITH 2.1. inform potential and final beneficiaries IN THE REGULATION) >.

INFORMATION CONTENT

It is essentially a question of

- providing information on the existence of the various programmes and how they develop throughout the programming period;

- ensuring that the procedures for access to funds are clearly understood;

- explaining how applications will be dealt with;

- clarifying how the money will be allocated and how equal opportunity among project promoters will be guaranteed;

- making known details of contact points as sources of information on how the programme operates and the criteria for receiving assistance.

It is therefore necessary to ensure that the administrative process which applies to all requests for funding remains transparent from start to finish.

1. Providing information on the existence of the various programmes and progress throughout the programming period.

To publicise the fact that national and Community funds are available, it is obligatory to:

- publish and circulate the programme texts. To be effective, however, this action must be part of an overall "appropriate system for the dissemination of information", namely the communication plan. <LINK **with the communication plan** >, that must be implemented in stages;

- provide continuous information on programme progress throughout its implementation; <LINK: **The newsletter** >

- ensure that these measures cover the three aspects of management, follow-up and evaluation.

Explaining the Structural Fund tasks, i.e. the basic aims of the Union's structural policy.

It is desirable for any communication on the existence of the Structural Funds and on how to gain access to them to be accompanied by messages about the Fund tasks <Link: "**THE TASKS OF THE STRUCTURAL FUNDS" in the Visibility chapter**>.

The Regulation thus recommends developing links between the things to be done and the global objectives which a given action is helping to achieve. Providing information about these links becomes an obligation when the Managing Authority is addressing the general public.

2. Ensuring that procedures for access to the funds are clearly understood

Calls for projects or for tenders should set out very clearly the conditions which project promoters must meet if they are to qualify for funding. In doing so it is important to:

- limit, as much as possible, the use of administrative terms, or

- provide an explanatory glossary which explains in everyday language the most technical concepts and terms.

A list of the most frequently asked questions (FAQ) avoids having to give the same answers on repeated occasions, provided it is made available to all those who are interested.

<Example>

Cornwall and Scilly (United Kingdom)

Deciphering "euro-jargon"

Cornwall and the Isle of Scilly in the South West of England constitute the southernmost part of the United Kingdom. This NUTS 2 region, which has 500,000 inhabitants, has been an Objective 1 area since the year 2000. The Managing Authority has four people working full-time on communications, and they are assisted by external consultants. The ultimate objective is to train all the civil servants with responsibility for the management of the Structural Funds in communications.

The Managing Authority endeavours to ensure that opportunities and procedures are transparent. To achieve this, various actions are implemented. Three of these actions deserve particular mention:

The first is a free telephone service ("toll free number"). This helpline acts as a bridge between potential applicants and the civil servants administering the programme. The uniqueness of the service is that those manning the lines must respond to callers seeking project advice within 7-10 days. For other types of queries the deadline is shorter: a maximum of 72 hours.

The administration also provides access to information via the internet. In order to ensure that administrative terminology does not act as a barrier, a lexicon (A to Z) explains the more complicated words of "European jargon".

Every three months, the administration published a contact newsletter. This provides the public, applicants and partners with a precise account of the way in which money is allocated and contains a detailed assessment of expenditure.

For further information: www.objectiveone.com

3.Explaining how applications will be dealt with

Every administration has its own way of working and thus of dealing with funding applications.

Explaining the various stages by which the administration arrives at a decision helps to create a relationship of trust between the project promoter and the administration.

4. Explaining how the money will be allocated and how equality between project promoters is guaranteed

It is important to demonstrate that the selection process (for projects and contracting parties) is impartial and rigorous.

This is why the selection and awarding criteria for calls for tender must comply with European directives and national practices.

The project selection criteria must also be very clear and precise in order to facilitate the choice of quality projects.

5. Providing details of the contact points

The proactive information effort may not be enough. It is important to prepare for the eventuality of the administration having to answer additional questions and for it to be able to "explain how the assistance packages operate and the criteria for eligibility". Direct contacts between the administration and the interested parties are therefore essential. By making arrangements to meet this demand the administration can also identify any weak points in the proactive communication initiatives.

To this end, national, regional and local contact points must be established and their details forwarded to all the interested parties. These contact points must be able to provide clear and rapid answers. In this respect, the Regulation states that publications must *include references to the body responsible for the information content and to the Managing Authority designated to implement the assistance package (point 6.5.1 of annex).*

Among other things, these contact points must explain the characteristics a project must meet if it is to expect to qualify for funding. This saves time for the project promoters - who are spared the trouble of submitting applications with little chance of success - and for the administration that does not have to study them.

The communication plan must seek to satisfy all the Regulation's transparency requirements.

<Example>

Nord-Pas-de-Calais (France)

The importance of human contact

In the region of Nord-Pas-de-Calais (France), there is a strong belief in the merits of face to face communication and partnership.

Before the development of the programmes, in 1999, the General Secretariat for Regional Affairs (SGAR) of the Prefecture of the region organised local meetings: in Avesnes, Douai, Valenciennes, Arras, Lens, Cambrai, Boulogne, Dunkirk… Elected officials from all levels, representatives of the magistrates, professional organisations, larger associations and the heads of enterprises were invited to attend these meetings. The aim was to gather opinions and ideas for the development of the programmes. Almost 350 people took part in the meetings.

After the adoption of the programmes, a second round of meetings was organised. SGAR believe that the advantage of this direct communication is that it gives "quality feedback which is not possible with written publications". In July 2002, SGAR decided to go a step further, with the setting-up of an "Animation and Territorial Support Unit". This unit acts as an interface between project promoters and the services of the State, the regions and the departments. Among its activities, the unit regularly holds local day-long clinics, the objective of which are to assist operators to prepare their proposals. "These clinics", explains a SGAR representative, "make it possible for Europe to have a greater presence on the ground".

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Visibility and awareness

The Regulation requests the Managing Authority to increase the visibility and awareness of the European Union's action among the general public. To fully understand this aim, it is important to clarify the basic concepts while at the same time stressing more specific obligations.

There is a link between visibility and awareness. Facts and ideas are rendered visible and disseminated among a certain public. To varying degrees their reservoir of knowledge is altered as a result. Awareness is the change which occurs among all those who are the recipients of information.

Visibility is therefore the intermediate stage in a process whose final goal is awareness. The communication plan must initiate this process and bring it to a successful conclusion. <LINK: The communication plan>

THE BASIC CONCEPTS

The aim is to inform the general public that

- the European Union and the Member States are working together;
- this cooperation is in pursuit of specific objectives (described in the Structural Fund tasks) and produces results;
- the European Union partly finances all the initiatives (the programmes) to which it has given its approval.

There is a need to explain these concepts clearly if people are to be genuinely aware of them. An attempt must be made to popularise them.

The form the message takes depends on the characteristics of those to whom it is addressed. This is why the communication plan must analyse the target groups very carefully. <LINK: The Communication plan>.

THE ROLE OF THE EUROPEAN UNION: A SHARED POLICY

The aim is to inform the general public about "the role played by the European Union" or, in other words, about "the European Union's action" or "the Union's involvement".

Communications often fail to do justice to the European Union's role, reducing it to that of a co-funder. Financing is not, however, an end in itself but rather the consequence of a shared development strategy at national and Community level. This team work is inherent in structural policy.

EXPLAINING THE UNION'S ROLE

"The Union and us"

There is no single way of explaining the cooperation generated between the Member States and the European Union as a result of structural policy.

A number of examples of brief and catchy messages prove that it is perfectly possible to convey this idea without using the language of bureaucracy and red tape.

<Example

Centre (France)

"A Europe for your projects"

In communications, very often the simplest ideas are the best. This is certainly true of the slogan "A Europe for your projects", which was conceived by an expert group in the Centre region of France, an Objective 2 area.

The expression "your projects" puts projects and promoters at the centre of European attention. Overall, the slogan is personable and friendly. Europe is not the abstract and distant entity that is sometimes portrayed. It is close to its people and conscious of their needs.

The slogan is accompanied by a new logo, which is presented on all information and communications products. This logo plays on the double significance of the letter €, which represents both the E of Europe and the C of Centre. Between Europe and the region there is harmony: this is the message being portrayed.

For further information: *<à compléter>*

<Example

Flevoland (The Netherlands)

"My idea"

A group of nine women pose proudly in the centre of the poster. Among them, the head of the Centre for Equal Opportunities occupies a prominent position. A sentence, which appears to leave her mouth, says: "with European support, we help women to find work". The sentence is followed by two words in large bold characters: "My idea" (Mijn idee).

In the Dutch province of Flevoland (330 000 inhabitants) there is a strong belief in the virtues of communicating through people and their real life experiences.<LINK: Flevoland: Division of competencies>. Who is better placed than those on the ground to identify their own needs and to testify to the benefits of activities undertaken with European support?

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<Example>

Finland

Strength from EU programmes

In parallel with the drafting of a communications plan for the Objective 1 and 2 programmes, the Finnish Ministry of the Interior decided to develop a slogan. To identify a good approach to this, those in charge at the Ministry, supported by external consultants, worked in stages < LINK "Finland: Firstly listen >.

Initially, they identified a series of key topics, which could be categorised according to different situations and to the target publics. Several common ideas were put forward: the local origin, setting objectives, equality, know-how, collaboration, added value, well being and employment, sustainability and effectiveness. In a second phase, they searched for a slogan which could summarise all of these concepts. The Ministry of the Interior was particularly kee to give a "human face" to the programmes. It was in this context that the expression "strength" was chosen as a symbol and that the slogan "strength from EU programmes" was created.

With regard to the use of the concept by other administrations, regions and project promoters, the Ministry of the Interior have opted for pragmatism. The various entities were invited to take the central slogan and the accompanying visual image, without constraint. This approach paid dividends: in fact, this message and the visual images are used by the majority of organisations in their publications and on their Internet sites.

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THE TASKS OF THE STRUCTURAL FUNDS

The Structural Funds are the operational arms of a structural policy which is based on financial solidarity between the Union Member States. Each of the Funds pursues goals which the information and publicity measures must explain:

- **Reducing economic and social inequalities** (European Regional Development Fund):

This is a matter of improving the living conditions of millions of people by providing concrete responses to training, employment, environmental, cultural, health and transport issues.

The aim is twofold, depending on the problems faced:

a) in regions lagging behind in development, the basic conditions are being created to give everyone the chance to develop and build their future;

b) in regions undergoing social and economic conversion, we are not starting from scratch. In this case support is given to the switch from traditional economic activities to new activities.

Structural policy is an essential element of the European Union enterprise.

By reducing social and economic inequalities we are reducing the resulting tensions and helping to build a more stable, prosperous and peaceful Europe, which is the very essence of the European Union enterprise.

It is very useful to draw attention to the link between the drive for European integration and the *raison d'être* of structural policy.

- **Job creation** (European Social Fund)

- Enabling everyone to find a job

by developing
- the spirit of enterprise
- the ability to adapt to the world of work,
- equal opportunities for men and women,
- investments in human resources.

- **Rural development** (European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund)

- Preserving the link between diversified farming and the land
- Improving and supporting the competitiveness of agriculture
- Ensuring the diversification of activities
- Helping to keep thriving communities in rural areas
- Preserving and improving the environment, the landscape and the rural heritage

- **The development of fishing** (Financial Instrument for Fisheries Guidance - FIFG)

- Helping achieve a sustainable balance between marine resources and their exploitation
- Modernising fishing structures to ensure the future of the industry
- Helping maintain a dynamic and competitive sector and revitalise areas dependent on fishing
- Improving the supply and exploitation of fishery products.

Each programme also has specific aims which cannot of course be covered by the Regulation. It is for the information managers to highlight these while at the same time linking them to the basic tasks of the Structural Funds.

To make it easier to learn and remember the messages, the Regulation no longer makes it compulsory for each Structural Fund to be mentioned. This is therefore now optional.

PRESENTING THE INFORMATION

Once the message content has been decided, there remains the matter of "presentation", of rendering it in a form which enables it to reach the target group most effectively. There are four recommendations in this respect <LINK: The basic principles>.

a) it is essential for the information to be formulated in a way which takes account of the questions in the minds of the general public and economic players.

<Example>

Walloon Region (Belgium)

The sports card

How to create awareness of Objective 1 programmes among the citizens of the province of Hainaut (Wallonia, Belgium)? How to make complex European and economic messages more accessible to ordinary people? This is the challenge that confronted those in charge of information and communications in the Walloon region.

The solution? To reach the general public, the Walloon region chose sport as a universal reference point. The management authority conceptualised an entire communication campaign around this theme.

Why sport? "Because sport and the economy", explain the originators of the campaign, "have many common values: to participate, to win, team spirit, creativity, strategy, to challenge oneself.. ". Because, they add, "sport is an important driving force in the spirit of Hennuyers and offers the possibility to exploit strong images and motivational slogans".

The communications campaign was developed around four media: television, free local newspapers, a newspaper called “all-boxes", which is sent to over 560,000 homes, and a poster campaign using more than 335 buses. Across all the media, two main slogans were proposed: "Mark the points for the future of Hainaut" (based on a basketball slogan) and "nobody stays on the sideline".

For further information: <A compléter>

b) in addressing the general public, the language of officialdom must be avoided, along with abstract concepts, empty phrases, jargon and propaganda. The language must be simple and direct.

<Example >

Newcastle Upon Tyne (United Kingdom)

The Metro in the colours of Europe

Collaboration between the United Kingdom and the European Union has facilitated the extension of the metro line from Newcastle (in the North East of England) to Sunderland. This work required considerable financial investment, around EUR 24 million. The North East of England, which was responsible for the project, had an excellent idea for how the new service could be promoted: to use the metro itself as a means of publicity. An agreement was concluded which permitted the beneficiary to freely paint the exterior of one of the trains in the yellow and blue of Europe, and to put 32 advertising spaces in the interior of the carriages. < CLICK VERS LA PHOTO DU TRAIN>

To find a slogan for this campaign, the authorities in the North East of England enlisted the services of a specialist advertising agency. The objective was to find something simple and concrete, "but which did not present Europe as a boring, bureaucratic entity", and something that would evoke financial support without referring of it in a condescending way. It had to show that the European Union has a direct impact on the lives of the people in the North East. "You are now sitting on a whole load of European money", proclaims the message on the billboards above the heads of the passengers.
<CLICK VERS LES PHOTOS>
With this message, the users of the metro are placed at the centre of attention: they will all benefit from the Structural Funds.

The same image ("a load of money") was also used for other slogans adapted to other contexts. For technology projects, the sentence became: "Log on a whole load of European money".

<CLICK PHOTO> For projects in the area of wind energy: "A whole load of European money is a breath of fresh air". <CLICK PHOTO> Finally, for various infrastructural projects, the sentence became "Building on a whole load of European money". <CLICK PHOTO> Each slogan, which serves to attract attention, is supplemented by additional text which explains in more detail the characteristics of the different projects and outlines the rules of the financing.

< LINK: See the graphic images of these examples >

c) to help convey the message, it is recommended that examples be given of actual projects realised thanks to assistance from the Structural Funds. It is important to explain exactly how the project in question solves a problem and helps improve the quality of life of the population.

THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA

The Regulation stresses the importance of involving the media as a means of boosting the visibility of the Union's action and thus public awareness of it.

The information communicated to the media must cover all the basic concepts, namely

- the idea of joint action
- the task of each Fund
- co-funding
- the specific programme objectives

"The messages shall state the tasks of each Fund" - hence the need to popularise the text of the Regulation.

There must be contacts with the media throughout the life of the programme (launch, implementation, close). This is essential if the media are going to show a continuous interest in it.

<LINK: Managing press relations>

PROJECT VISIBILITY

Individual projects also require visibility. This is certainly not a question of making visible something which is invisible but rather of attracting public attention to:

- the realisation of these projects;
- their origin, namely cooperation between the Union and the individual countries;
- the Union co-funding which stems from this cooperation.

For this purpose, a number of instructions which apply to the Union as a whole must be respected so that projects are visible in the same way and citizens are able to recognise the same common thread. This is the meaning of the expression "a coherent picture of the assistance" which is to be found in the Regulation.

This does not mean that the intention is to produce the same language irrespective of the region or Member State. The words and slogans can vary to reflect the many differences in national and regional sensibilities. But the Union's contribution and therefore image must be perceived in a homogenous fashion.

1.The Union's visibility in the compulsory tools

The Regulation stresses the fact that the Union's involvement and financial contribution must be visualised in a number of tools, some of which are obligatory and others optional.

<LINK: **Summary table** >

Summary table

COMPULSORY TOOLS PER TYPE OF PROJECT								
	TYPE OF PROJECT							
TOOL	Infra-structure > 3 million EUR	Infra-structure < 3 million EUR	FIFG > 500,000 EUR	FIFG < 500,000 EUR	SME	SOCIAL	AGRICULTURAL	COMMENTS
Billboards	YES	NO	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	
Plaques	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES *	NO	NO	* only for a period of one year
Notification *	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	* the Regulation does not stipulate this as an obligation, but it is customary practice
Publications *	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	*paper, electronic, other
Posters	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES	YES	YES	

➢ Billboards

The following rules apply:

- Billboards are obligatory for co-funded infrastructure projects, the global costs of which (national plus Union funding) exceed 3 million euro (or 500 000 euro for operations partly financed by the Financial Instrument for Fishing Guidance FIFG). These billboards must include a space reserved for indicating the European Union's contribution. The billboards must be erected on the project sites.

- Each billboard must mention that the project is partly financed by the Union. Mention of the Structural Funds is optional.

- The billboards are removed at the latest six months after completion of works, to be replaced by commemorative plaques.

At least 25% of the space available on the billboard must be devoted to the Community participation, and specifically to:

- the Union's image, with the flag and the words "European Union" in full <LINK: Graphic image>
- a mention of the financial contribution (co-funding);

The lettering in the mention of the Union's financial contribution must be at least as big as the lettering used for the national information.

➢ Commemorative plaques

Commemorative plaques must be placed when the billboards on the site of infrastructure projects are removed on completion of the works. These bear permanent testimony to the Union's action.

Plaques for infrastructure projects must comply with the same obligations as those which apply to billboards.

The only exception is plaques dedicated to companies which have made physical investments, which are to be placed for a period of one year.

- **Posters**

Posters <LINK: THE POSTER CAMPAIGN> inform the general public of the Union's role in the following fields:

- development of human resources
- vocational training and employment
- investment in companies
- investment in rural development

These are also obligatory.

2. The Union's visibility in optional tools

A number of tools are optional. However, if they are used, they must provide the same visibility regarding the Union and its financial contribution as the compulsory tools.

Optional tools are billboards and plaques for works below the Regulation thresholds as well as any other product which is not included among the compulsory tools.

- **Print and electronic publications**

Mention should be made of the Union's participation at the beginning. This means:

- the title or cover page provided this provides full visibility.

- the home page of a website.

The information tools may of course also draw attention to the Union's participation on other pages.

These products must make it possible for all those interested to obtain more information if required. This is why the Regulation states that the particulars of the Managing Authority and whoever is responsible for the information content must be included in the text.

- **Mentioning the presence of European Union financing**

A project must acknowledge aid from a programme financed by the Structural Funds. By definition, this programme pools national and European Union funds. This means that every project receives mixed funding, from its own country and from the Union.

It is compulsory to make it clear to the project promoter that some of the aid it receives comes from the Union budget. The letter from the Managing Authority (notification of aid) must contain this information.

The amount of this contribution and the percentage of the total aid volume can also be mentioned.

The graphic image

The Union's image is represented graphically by the European flag accompanied by the words European Union written in full. What are the detailed specifications stipulated in the Regulation in this respect? What are the standards to be respected for the European emblem?

In the interests of coherence and effectiveness, it is preferable to include the Union's graphic image in all information tools, although for paper publications the Regulation only makes this obligatory if the national and regional flags are also portrayed.

Mention of the Union must accompany the flag. This serves to immediately differentiate the communication from an increasingly common practice whereby the flag (alone) is often used for publicity and commercial purposes without any connection to the Union's aims as pursued through the Structural Funds.

So as to retain a sober and recognisable graphics throughout the Union, the Regulation does not require each programme to develop specific logos. Nevertheless, some programmes have acquired a specific symbol and graphics guide with the aim of lending a common denominator to their initiatives.

THE EUROPEAN FLAG

How should the European Union flag be used? Here are some basic elements:

- **The number of stars**

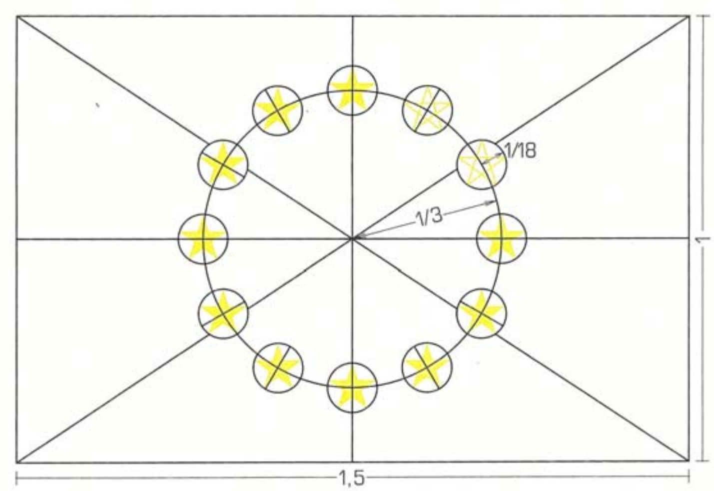
<PHOTO: European flag>

<Caption> Against an azure background, a circle consisting of 12 gold stars, their points not touching.

The European Union emblem consists of 12 stars. There is no connection between this number and the number of countries which make up the European Union. The number of stars will not therefore change in the future.

- **The geometry of the emblem**

<PHOTO: Stars in a circle>



<Caption> The stars form an invisible circle.

The European emblem is a rectangular flag whose length is one and a half times its height. The stars are situated at equal intervals and form an invisible circle, the centre of which is the point of intersection of the diagonals of the rectangle. The radius of this circle one-third of the height of the vertical side. Each of the stars has five points which are situated on the circumference of an invisible circle, the radius of which is one-eighteenth the height of the vertical side of the rectangle.

- **The positioning of the stars and the emblem**

<PHOTO: 3 bad European flags>

<Caption> Three examples of badly positioned stars.

All the stars are upright, that is to say with the one point vertical and two points in a straight line at right angles to the mast. The stars are laid out like the hours on the face of a clock.

A common error is to place the emblem upside down. It is easy to check whether it is the right way up by looking at the stars. If the stars show two points facing upwards, the emblem is the wrong way up. Another error is to change the direction of the stars. Remember the rule: two points of each star at right angles to the mast.

The European flag must accompany a mention of part-financing by the European Union. This must be at the same level as the national and regional emblems where these are present, except of course on billboards where an ad hoc space is set aside for information on the Union.

- **The flag colours**

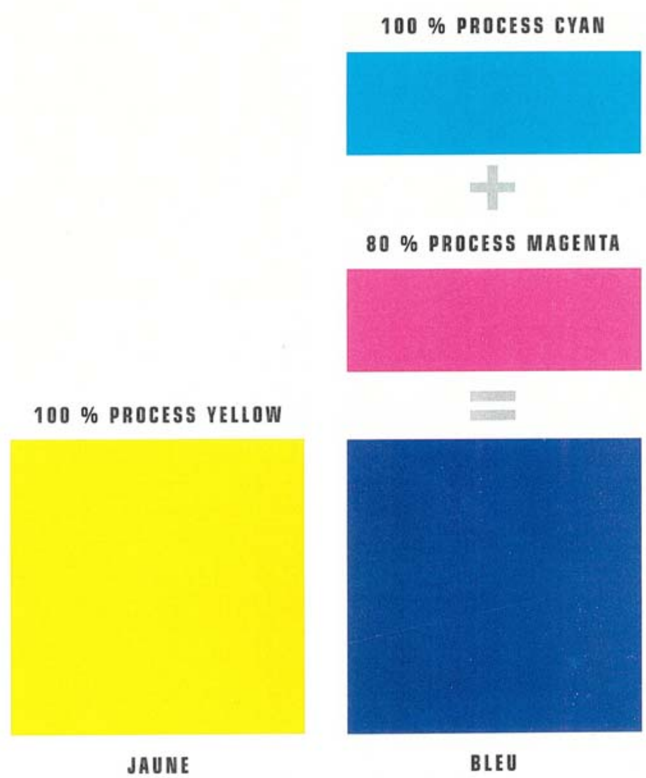
The European flag must be in the official colours:

<PHOTO: Blue rectangle>
<PHOTO: Yellow rectangle>

PANTONE REFLEX BLUE for the surface of the rectangle.
PANTONE YELLOW for the stars.
The international ***PANTONE*** range is very widely available and easily accessible even for non-professionals.

- **Four-colour process**

<PHOTO: the four colours>



If the four-colour process is used, it is not always possible to use the two standard colours. It is therefore necessary to recreate them by using the colours of the four-colour process. The Pantone yellow is obtained by using 100% 'process Yellow'. Mixing 100% 'process Cyan' with 80% 'process Magenta' gives a colour very similar to the Pantone reflex blue. The two colour samples, reproduced below, are obtained by using the 'process' colours of the four-colour process in the suggested proportions.

Internet
PANTONE REFLEX BLUE corresponds to the web palette colour RGB:0/0/153 (hexadecimal: 000099) and PANTONE YELLOW corresponds to the colour RGB:255/204/0 (hexadecimal: FFCC00).

- **Single-colour reproduction**

<PHOTO: European flag in blue and white>

If only black is available, the rectangle should be outlined in black and the stars should be black on a white background.

If the only colour is blue (preferably Reflex Blue), it should be printed at 100% as background with the stars left in white.

- **Reproduction on a coloured background**

The emblem should preferably be printed on a white background. Multicolour backgrounds should be avoided, especially involving a colour which clashes with the blue. Where a coloured background must be used, surround the emblem with a white border with a thickness equal to 1/25 of the height of the rectangle.

<PHOTO: European flag on a blue background>

<Caption> Give the rectangle a white border.

- **Reproduction on a blue background**

On billboards with a blue background the stars of the European emblem are shown alone. It is not necessary to give the flag a border.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Additional information may be obtained from the European Commission's Internet site:
http://europa.eu.int/abc/symbols/emblem/graphics/graphics_en.htm

Evaluation

Together with the communication actions plan, the evaluation of information measures is one of the two innovations brought by the Regulation. Evaluation establishes the quality and effectiveness of the measures. This is why it is first of all important to define the quality and effectiveness criteria.

ADVANCE EVALUATION

The Regulation requires the transfer of knowledge to potential beneficiaries and the general public.

It is therefore appropriate to evaluate knowledge:

- of access procedures to a programme Fund (potential beneficiaries may already have some knowledge after having participated in calls for projects under other programmes)
- of the Union's role in the Structural Funds, namely
  - joint action by the Union and Member State,
  - the Fund tasks,
  - part-financing by the Union.

On this basis it is then possible to define the communication strategy and indicative budget to implement it. <LINK: The communication plan>

The information channels

The findings of such inquiries should provide additional elements to help define strategy.

The target groups in question can be asked:
- if they already receive information on structural policy;
- if so, how they receive it;
- how they would like to receive it.

It is also important to check whether each protagonist or information medium has properly fulfilled its role

- Has the internal communication worked well?
- Did the project promoters effectively pass on information?
- To what extent were the media mobilised?

It is very important to draw up a questionnaire with which to test the knowledge and attitudes of target groups. The clearer and more precise these questions are, the easier it will be to process and use the results.

External specialist companies can be used for launching and conducting an opinion poll, while the administration retains control of questionnaire content.

<LINK: **The use of external service providers** >

Universities and their research centres can be a valuable source of methodological assistance, providing a quality service.

THE EVALUATION OF MEASURES, TOOLS AND COMMUNICATION STRATEGY AFTER IMPLEMENTATION

The Regulation contains the following references to evaluation:

1."Information on the quality and effectiveness of the information and publicity measures and suitable evidence such as photographs shall be submitted to the Monitoring Committees by the Managing Authority."

2. "Each communications action plan shall include…
- the criteria to be used to evaluate the measures carried out"

3." … the annual implementing report… must contain a section on information and publicity …"

The Regulation imposes the following obligations:

1a. to prove the realisation of the measure and accompanying information tools by providing concrete examples, or, failing this, photographs (for example of an event, poster campaign, billboards and commemorative plaques - namely anything that cannot be submitted to a Monitoring Committee)

1b. to prove the quality and effectiveness of the measures, the tools and the overall strategy implemented

All these elements under 1a and 1b must be submitted to the Monitoring Committees.

2. To indicate the evaluation criteria applied to the measures in question as confirmation of the necessary quality and effectiveness. These criteria must make it possible to measure these two aspects and they should be presented in the communication plan.

3.An annual summary of the measures carried out must be included in the annual progress report on the programme.

USING THE MEASURING INDICATORS

To evaluate necessarily means to measure. For this purpose, specific indicators must be identified and used.

A) Effectiveness indicators

1) Impact indicators, linked to the basic aims of Regulation

Change (increase/decrease) in level of transparency ("knowing more" about the means of access to programme Funds).
Change (increase/decrease) in level of awareness ("knowing more" about Union action through the Structural Funds) .

<LINK: **Ireland - Surveys of public opinion help to fine tune the message**>

2) Results indicators

Evaluation of the direct and immediate effect of the tool or measure on target group (see examples on next page)

How to use the impact and results indicators:

Initial questioning of target groups of information and publicity measures.
Intermediate and final questioning of the same target groups and recording of changes
- in terms of transparency and awareness.
- in terms of results produced by the measures and tools.

3)Implementation indicators

Effective implementation of the various measures/tools as set out in the communication plan in comparison to the measures/tools planned.

4)Budgetary indicators

Evaluation of information and publicity budgets actually used compared with funds available

B)Quality indicators

Specific indicators for each of the measures/products realised.
Method: Interviewing of target groups of measures/information tools/publicity regarding the quality of the measures/products.

INDICATORS FOR INFORMATION AND PUBLICITY MEASURES
(non-exhaustive list of examples of indicators)

EFFECTIVENESS INDICATORS

1) Impact indicators
Change in level of transparency = Change in knowledge of means of access to programme Funds

Example:
In the area eligible for the programme, more/fewer potential beneficiaries report a better/worse

knowledge of means of access to the Fund than at the start of the programme.

Change to level of awareness:
- The Union's role, namely:
- Joint Union-Member State action
- The Fund tasks
- Union co-funding

Example:

In the area eligible for the programme, the target groups for the publicity show a better/worse/equal knowledge of the three concepts (Union's role, Fund task, co-funding) than at the start of the programme.

2) Results indicators

Definition of a results indicator:
Evaluation of the direct and immediate effect of the tool or action on target groups.

Examples:

- Number of visits to a website
- Number of participants at an event compared with number invited
- Number of readers of a press article compared with number of copies distributed
- Number of funding requests received compared with potential beneficiaries reached
- Number of articles and/or TV or radio reports resulting from a press conference or major event
- Audience figures for a TV/radio programme
-

3) Implementation indicators

Number of measures/tools implemented compared with number of measures/tools planned.

4) Financial indicators

Actual expenditure compared with planned expenditure = Take-up of budget for information and publicity.

QUALITY INDICATORS

Publications:

- Attractiveness
- Clarity of language
- Balance between text – image
- On-line and off-line electronic products
- Ease of use
- Ease of access

Events:

- Quality of the organisation
- (punctuality, functioning of services, performance of personnel in charge of the organisation)
- Level of participation in the debate.
- Professionalism, clarity and length of speeches
- Quality of the documentation distributed
- Ease of access to the event site

<Example>

Ireland

Surveys of public opinion help to fine tune the message

In 2000, the Irish government adopted a communications strategy for the promotion of the National Development Plan (NDP), which is cofinanced by the Structural Funds. In the spring of 2001, a market research company was commissioned to carry out a comprehensive survey, the aim of which was to assess the level of awareness, understanding and interest in the NDP, to explore issues of concern to the public, and to identify the most effective means of communicating information about the NDP.

A two-phased research project was undertaken. The first stage involved exploratory qualitative research. This was followed by a nation-wide quantitative survey of public opinion in eight NUTS III regions: 1200 people were interviewed, representing the various socio-economic groups. This survey provided an important first glimpse of opinion on the National Development Plan and the Structural Funds. In May/June 2002, a second survey was conducted, this time based on a sample of 600 people. The objective of the second survey was to evaluate the evolution of awareness and understanding.

The second study showed that the proportion of people "knowledgeable" of the National Development Plan had increased from 49% to 59% in one year. 79% of those interviewed also thought that the NDP was "a good idea". Therefore, the communication seems to have been effective. However, a detailed analysis of the data collected highlighted some important issues. It would appear that the percentages of people “aware” of the NDP varied considerably from one region to another. In addition, the survey clearly showed that the general public were primarily interested in local projects and the impact of national projects on their locality.

Thanks to these two surveys, some very useful conclusions have emerged which will inform the future management of communications actions: the need to use simple language to engage people, the importance of taking better account of the local dimension and of better explaining the impact of the NDP on the everyday life of citizens.

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The communication plan

Drawing up and implementing a "communication actions plan" is now - together with the evaluation - an obligation. The communication plan lends solidity and coherence to all the measures and products. It is a framework which should be referred to constantly.

A well constructed communication plan consists of three principal elements: diagnosis, strategy and operational plan.

1. DIAGNOSIS

To produce a global communication plan, it is recommended to first take stock of the present situation. **<LINK: Evaluation>.**

This diagnosis will make it possible to decide on the main lines of strategy.

<Example>

Finland

Listen first

In 2000, the Finnish Ministry of the Interior, which is the national Managing Authority, followed the example of other Member States and adopted a communication plan for the Structural Funds. <LINK: Finland: strength with EU programmes>. This plan was based on the results of a participative process. Rather than imposing things from the top, from the very beginning the Managing Authority decided to consult widely with the partners involved.

What lessons could be drawn from previous communications activities? What lessons should be considered in the future? In collaboration with a communications agency, the Ministry of the Interior interviewed representatives of 18 organisations which were directly involved: Ministries, regional councils, the Chamber of Commerce, the Finnish Association of Local Authorities, the National Organisation of Trade Unions, the Federation of Finnish Employers… Following this, a seminar was organised in the spring of

2000, which included the participation of actors and communications experts. It was only then that the communication plan was finalised. It is sometimes said that to decide, one must first of all listen!

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2. *STRATEGY*

This is essentially a matter of answering two major questions:

- what do you want to say?
- who do you want to say it to?

The strategy must also take into account the way the communication operates. <LINK: The basic principles>

Understanding the aims and target groups

The aims of transparency and visibility/awareness <LINK> as well as the target groups are stated clearly in the Regulation.

The communication plan must provide an in-depth analysis of the target groups in question, each of which has its own knowledge and characteristics.

This analysis must make it possible to identify the needs and expectations of the various target groups, thereby ensuring that they are met by each programme. It is therefore a question of establishing a link between what the Regulation states must be said and what the target groups want to hear and receive.

Creating a unifying theme

A single graphic image and key messages should be adopted in keeping with the stated aims and target groups. These elements should be present as a kind of "trademark" in all the communication products.

3. *THE OPERATIONAL PLAN*

Strategy determines the direction to be taken. The means by which the messages can be communicated to the various target groups can then be decided. The operational plan covers all the tools which implement the strategy.

This plan seeks to define

- the action instruments to be used;
- the link between these instruments;
- the budget;
- the timetable.

The action instruments

To choose a tool one must be aware of its potential and its limitations.

The link between the actions

The operational plan must seek to incorporate all the measures and tools within a coherent whole. This plan presents the links between the various initiatives programmed and the ultimate aims of the Regulation as well as the way these initiatives interact. This saves time and effort.

The human resources

There are two possibilities.

First scenario: a specific team is set up to conceive, implement and evaluate the information and publicity measures about the Structural Funds. In this case it is important for the team to remain in close communication with the managing team.

The second scenario is much more common among the Managing Authorities: the managing team is also responsible for the information and publicity measures. As these are not experts in the subject, they have to learn quickly. The ideal solution is to provide them with ad hoc training.

Sometimes the solution is simpler than one may think. The administration already has some very skilled individuals. These should be used to optimal effect, with a transfer of knowledge to those who need it.

<Example>

Flevoland (The Netherlands)

The division of competencies

The province of Flevoland, located to the north of Amsterdam, has 330 000 inhabitants and since 1994 has been designated as an Objective 1 area. Within the provincial administration, 30 people work on the management of European projects, including ten project leaders. A decision was taken to train these project leaders in the basics of communications, as this was not their main profession.

To facilitate this, the project leaders were invited to a two day seminar. At the close of this residential seminar, which put participants in direct contact with communications specialists, a practical guide was produced, which addresses the issues raised by the participants.

The seminar also made it possible for the participants to learn about day-to-day communications activities, such as drafting a press release and press relations. For more complex questions, the project leaders have ongoing access to the assistance of the communications specialists attached to the Province.

This sharing of in-house competences in communications is the option which most benefits the provincial authorities of Flevoland. .<LINK: Flevoland: project promoters ambassadors of the European Union >

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The budget

The funds available, which vary from one programme to another, must of course be a consideration when deciding on the instruments to be used.

It is generally very useful to have an idea of the costs of the various products so that estimations will prove generally accurate.

Information and publicity is funded out of the "technical assistance" budget which is available to every programme.

The timetable

The timetable must seek to link the information and publicity to the various programme phases, given that information is an element of management and must contribute to its success.

Informing potential beneficiaries is a priority as long as the money is available. At the same time, information on the Union's role becomes increasingly important as the programme successfully completes the projects co-funded by the Structural Funds.

SOME TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

The basic principles

Communication is based on a number of commonsense principles and essential rules. What are these principles and rules?

BASIC RULES

A plural concept

Any communication includes three elements: an emitter, a message to be transmitted, and a recipient (the target). It is on the basis of these three elements that an overall line of communication and specific measures are developed. A number of formulae can be distinguished.

Internal or external communication

Internal communication: that is, within a given group. Examples: in a particular region, a Managing Authority communicates with the various section managers; at European level, the "information managers" employed by the Managing Authorities exchange data.

External communication: a group communicates with an external target. Example: a Managing Authority which wants to reach the potential beneficiaries of a programme or the inhabitants of a particular region.

External communication can be direct or indirect

Direct communication: the emitter communicates directly with the recipient, without intermediary. Examples: a Managing Authority sends a personalised letter to the SMEs in the region or carries out a poster campaign.

Indirect communication: the emitter decides to communicate the message through intermediaries: a media (radio, television, press, etc.), schools, associations, specialist information networks or any other body with which the emitter may entrust the content.

Indirect communication is usually by means of advertising or journalists.

Paid media communication: the emitter purchases space (advert or spot) with a media support. The cost is proportional to the support's audience and impact. This is advertising.

Communication through journalists: journalists are provided with information which they then process and retransmit independently through their media. Journalists do not act according to any instructions, cannot receive any direct remuneration from the information source, and must respect a professional code of conduct.

Sometimes the communication assumes a combination of forms

Mixed communication: in this case the information is through a number of channels. Example: an advert in a newspaper invites readers to order a brochure through a freephone number (thus mixing direct and indirect communication); the emitter reaches an agreement with one medium (programme sponsorship), in return for which this medium undertakes to broadcast information in "journalistic" form, that is free of control (a combination of paid communication and press relations).

COMMONSENSE PRINCIPLES

Here are five commonsense principles which can serve as a constant reference. Applying them will increase the chances of your message being heard in what is an increasingly crowded communications space.

- **Place yourself in the position of the recipient**

The message must always seek to answer the concrete questions people are asking. This is an important reflex to acquire.

- **Remain simple and concrete**

The natural tendency is to try and explain everything, including all the institutional details. The price paid for this will be immediate: the message will not get across.

- **Target your message**

The information must be chosen in accordance with the target groups and their expectations. Different economic, social and cultural groups need to be addressed differently.

- **Use different channels**

Example: a TV commercial will arouse curiosity. It can be usefully followed up by press releases in newspapers and even a personalised mail-out.

- **Drive home the message**

Communication abhors a vacuum. While a surfeit of communication can be damaging, communication cannot be sporadic, disappearing and then reappearing. Actions must be repeated and the effort must be maintained. In takes a sustained effort to achieve long-term results.

The use of external service providers

In the field of communication, it often proves necessary to use the services of external agencies. When doing so, the national legislation must be respected, which takes into account the European Directive on public service contracts (Directive EEC/92/50), as well as the World Trade Organisation agreement on government contracts.

1. Analysing internal skills

Before delegating to external service providers it is advisable to first take stock of the communication missions to be undertaken and human resources which may be available internally. As a general rule, the administration must itself discharge the orientation and control missions, charging communication experts with the performance of contractual missions. The Managing Authority must assume direct responsibility for relations with journalists.

2.Drawing up the call for tenders

A call for tenders must be made for any contract for an amount in excess of 130,000 SDR (1). A contract notification and specifications must be drawn up before launching the call for offers.

3. Genuinely fair competition

To ensure fair competition, the call for tenders must ensure that the principles of transparency and equal treatment are respected. The specifications must therefore be careful not to impose so many conditions that access to the contract is in practice restricted. It should be drafted in clear and concise language free of any discriminatory elements so as to make public the rules of play.

[1]

4. Cooperation between administrations

It is useful to consult other sections of the administration which may already have acquired expertise in drawing up calls for tenders in the field of information and communication. This will make it possible to benefit from the experience of others, avoid errors and save time.

5. Thinking ahead

The services requested will often be provided over many years. In such cases it is important for the contract to be flexible. If not, it could rapidly become outdated, obliging the administration to repeat the call for tenders procedure. Clauses can be written into the contract to provide for automatic mechanisms for revising certain elements (such as prices) so that the contracts can adapt to the service requirements.

[1] Special Drawing Rights, equivalent to 162,293 euro. This amount is updated every two years and is published in the Official Journal of the European Communities.

6.Scope for creativity

It is also important to encourage the tenderer to show creativity and innovation. To do so, the specifications can include the option of including "variants" in accordance with Community legislation on public works contracts. The means of evaluating these variants must be explained clearly.

7. Quality

In order to place the emphasis on the quality of service, it is suggested to cite as selection criteria the economically most advantageous offer rather than the lowest cost.

8. Cost transparency

It is important to define from the outset a calculation method which enables any tenderer to provide precise answers regarding price. This will give the administration precise figures to work on and avoid any unpleasant surprises when managing the contract.

The poster campaign

At certain moments in the life of programmes it is important to quickly and effectively inform the general public by launching a high impact advertising campaign. This means purchasing advertising space, in the form of radio, TV or cinema commercials, press ads or posters. A poster campaign is a very effective means of advertising, the potential of which is sometimes under-estimated.

A poster campaign is admittedly a costly exercise, but it does offer value for money.

An advertising campaign must, however, consist of more than posters alone. The posters must provide a kind of backdrop for other actions.

VARIOUS FORMULAE

A poster campaign itself takes on different forms depending on the channels used. This is a field in which each country has its own traditions. Nevertheless, we can distinguish between:

- large format billboards (usually 20 m²) as found on street corners;
- smaller posters, as found in bus shelters and on the urban furniture in general (format usually 2 m²);
- posters on public transport, at railway stations, underground stations, airports;
- so-called "alternative" posters – usually small billboards, sited in shops for example.

Each formula has its advantages and its disadvantages. Large billboards can be hired to target a specific geographical area, such as an urban area. Posters in bus shelters and other items of urban furniture will hold the public's attention for longer. However, the geographical targeting is more difficult: in several countries this advertising space is only sold at national level. The public transport network (including posters in vehicles) offers greater flexibility in terms of geographical targeting.

INTERMEDIARIES

What should be the criteria when deciding on the formula to adopt (large billboards, urban furniture, public transport, etc.)? All countries carry out surveys to measure the precise impact and "penetration" of these media. These take into account a number of parameters. This discipline is known as "media planning".

To find one's way around this complex market, select the right supports and act in total security, it is necessary to seek advice from and use the services of competent intermediaries.

"Space brokers" exist in most European countries. These are independent consultants in the service of the customer (and not the media). They have full technical and financial data on space purchasing in the various media, helping their customer to make the right choice in full knowledge of the facts.

Managing press relations

Journalists detest propaganda and like facts and concrete stories. They also have to react quickly. Effective communication with journalists requires careful thought.

1. The facts

A programme which is partly financed by the European Union is making it possible to build a bridge which will make life much easier for local residents. There is no need for "inflated language" when communicating this kind of information to journalists. All you need to do is give the essential details of the construction and the effect it will have on the population. This is the material which should be included in a press release, that should remain clear and concise. <LINK: The press release>

2. Confidence and cooperation

The best way of ensuring the cooperation of journalists is to establish a relationship of trust based on mutual respect. There is no point contacting the journalist all the time for the least reason or swamping him with too much documentation: too much information kills information, stifling interest in it. It is best to act with diplomacy, involving the journalist only when it is really necessary.

To facilitate contacts with journalists, it is a good idea to have a list, the press file <LINK: The journalists' file >, which should be updated regularly.

3. The need to be pro-active

Do not wait for journalists to contact you. Go to them and anticipate their needs by drawing their attention to key events, particularly interesting projects or additional information sources.

4. Targeted contacts

The press is multi-faceted. Journalists work in different media (press, radio, television, Internet) each of which obeys its own rules. They each have their own specialities and centres of interest and operate in different zones, at regional or local level for example. This diversity should be borne in mind in contacts with journalists.

5. Availability

When a journalist is seeking information he wants to obtain it quickly: for the next day's article or programme. Hence this rule: never leave a question unanswered, always be available.

6. Relay

In his relations with journalists, the role of the press attaché is also to serve as a relay, where necessary referring the journalist to other competent persons and other sources.

7. "Press book"

Every time an article appears or a programme is broadcast on the Structural Funds it is worth keeping a record of it by compiling a "press book". This will facilitate a quantitative and qualitative follow-up.

The journalists' file

It takes time and effort to compile a good press file. But it is an investment which pays off in the longer term. It enables you to target the journalists, to contact them effectively and receive a better "return" as a result.

To effectively contact journalists you must of course first know who they are! To know who they are, they must be identified in advance and full details of their particulars noted. This preparatory stage has a name: compiling a "press file".

Three factors contribute to the effectiveness of a journalists file.

DIVERSIFICATION

The first requirement is diversity. No media should be ignored in the quest for good addresses: press, radio, television, Internet, general and specialist publications, national, regional and local papers, public and private media. All these journalists can be useful, at some time or another, for the transmission of information.

It could also be useful to have a file containing the particulars of journalists who are particularly interested in the Structural Funds. These journalists could then perhaps be sent info containing the basic notions of the subject <LINK: **THE TASKS OF THE STRUCTURAL FUNDS in Visibility chapter**>, enabling them to speak of it whenever an event provides the opportunity to do so.

UPDATING

The second requirement is regular updating of data. Journalists frequently change media and columns. New journalists also come on the scene. The press file must reflect this changing reality or it will soon be obsolete. Information must be constantly corrected, added and deleted.

STRUCTURING

The third requirement is a well structured computerised database. The trick is to be able to locate information quickly by introducing a number of key words.

- Type of media (television, radio, written press, etc.).

It is particularly important to note the frequency with which media appear and who sets the editorial deadline.

- Contact particulars of the journalist

Do not forget the fax number, e-mail and the direct telephone number if possible.

- The journalist's role and specialities:

editor-in-chief, editorial secretary, column manager, column member, freelance journalist. Avoid sending mail to the media without a reference name as it will get lost amongst everything else.

- Geographical area covered by the media

Journalists (and their readers - listeners - viewers) will be all the more interested in the information if it concerns events taking place close to home.

The press release

The press release is information which is communicated proactively to the media so that they can pass it on in an expanded form and presented in the appropriate manner.

How to ensure that the press release succeeds in attracting the attention of journalists who are in great demand?

SOME PRACTICAL TIPS

- Target the journalists contacted

Depending on the subject and the geographical zone covered, select carefully the journalists to whom the press release is to be sent. <LINK*:* The journalists' file>

- Act at the right moment

Dailies, weeklies, monthlies, etc. have different editorial deadlines. Bear in mind these specific deadlines when sending press releases.

- Set an embargo.

Specify that the press release cannot appear before a stated date. Any journalist who fails to respect this deadline would be committing an ethical fault.

- Write it like an article

To make it easy for the journalist to publish it, the press release should be structured as much as possible like an article the journalist would have written.

- Make information available on the Internet

Some journalists will want to provide more information than is contained in the press release. For this purpose, place on-line various supplementary texts in an Internet space set aside for the media **<*LINK:* The "press area" on the Internet site>**

TYPICAL STRUCTURE OF A PRESS RELEASE

A. **Heading**

This is the first element which addresses the journalist and the reader. A good heading is a short heading. It is based on words which people commonly use and which appeals to their "humanity" as they go about their day-to-day lives.

B. The introductory paragraph

Readers - and journalists! - are in a hurry. They have to be able to get the gist of a message almost at a glance. The introductory paragraph sums up the press release content in a few lines.

C. The text

Place yourself in the position of the reader you are addressing. Keep to one idea per sentence. Present facts, not value judgements.

D. The subheads

These divide the text into blocks of ideas and thus facilitate two-speed reading.

CIRCULATING A PRESS RELEASE

If the content is to remain topical, the press release must reach its recipients as quickly as possible. Its circulation must therefore be organised in advance.

If news is also announced directly, at a press conference for example <LINK>, the press release should be distributed at the place of the press conference or in any event at the place where the event takes place. It can be distributed individually or with other documents in what is known as a *press pack.*

In other cases, it may be sent by fax or e-mail, or made available on a website provided the site is known and the journalists targeted visit it regularly.

Journalists have little time and work under considerable pressure. These are reasons to make life easier for them by making every effort to ensure that information reaches them without them having to go out and look for it.

The press conference

Press conferences are held to mark an important event and enable journalists to be the first to receive information on a particular subject. A press conference is the opportunity for the organiser to inform journalists on a given subject, while making their job easier in terms of information processing.

A successful press conference requires the mobilisation of substantial resources. To get 30 journalists to come to a press conference you generally have to invite between 100 and 150. Careful preparation of a press conference takes between 15 and 20 days work full-time for one person, plus a presence on the day and follow-up.

A press conference costs money, the amount of which should be calculated in advance. It is not an operation which should be repeated too often so as to avoid being a drain on budgets or dulling the interest of journalists. Journalists make the effort to attend a press conference because they feel it is going to be worth it. It is vitally important only to hold press conferences for "important" events and not to abuse the method to announce details.

"Variable geometry" events

Press conferences take various forms. Depending on the circumstances, it may be planned a long time in advance or set up at the last moment. It can be open to all journalists, be addressed at a targeted panel in line with the subject and geographical area, or be reserved for a limited circle of journalists seen as opinion leaders.

Press conferences are usually held in the late morning at a fixed place. They can also be held earlier in the morning (press breakfast) or around noon (press lunch).

Other press events can take half a day or even a whole day (but don't forget that time is valuable to journalists): for example a visit for journalists to projects aided by the Structural Funds. A number of elements can be combined, such as a field trip followed by a press lunch.

CHECKLIST

The secret of an effective press conference? The quality of the preparation! Here are four points which warrant particular attention.

1. The invitations

Send out the invitations two or three weeks in advance. Send two copies of the invitation to the editorial office: one for the journalist and one for the editor-in-chief.

2. The place

Choose a central location with easy access; attach a map with the invitation and make arrangements for parking.

3. Reception

Set aside a reception desk at the entrance to the press room. Journalists will be requested to give full particulars which can then be usefully included in the press file. <LINK: The journalists' file >

4.The follow-up

The press conference must enable the administration to establish direct and reliable contacts with the media. These contact points must, in turn, be able to "feed" the curiosity and interest of the journalists. There may not always be a major event but that is no reason not to prepare the field so that when something important does come up the journalist will be ready to talk about it, thanks to the continuous information flow from which he has benefited.

Constructing an Internet site

A website has become an essential tool. Here are a few simple rules to ensure it is effective.

1. Meet the needs

First of all, the site must try to meet the information needs of the target groups who are likely to use it. In principle, everybody can have access to the Internet. In practice, only a section of the population uses it. Conclusion: The Internet is not yet a tool for the general public.

The potential beneficiaries, on the other hand - and especially the associations which represent them - are making increasing use of the Internet as users as well as producers and distributors of information.

2.Provide a well-structured content

The site structure must enable visitors to obtain the information they are seeking quickly. It is therefore crucial to bear in mind their profile and expectations.

All the information producers within the same administration must coordinate their efforts to create a well structured product which is easy to use. To save time, they could study examples of sites already constructed.

3. Allow the site to grow and develop

Unlike a publication, a website offers limitless opportunities to improve content. Its success will depend on:

- the frequency with which it is updated,
- a team able to carry out maintenance at all times,
- level of accessibility, especially by people with a slow connection or older computers.

A website is the ideal tool for providing details on the use of a programme's funds, a situation that is changing continuously.

Examples of projects undertaken with the help of the Structural Funds can also feature on a website, with the major advantage that the project promoters will be able to upload information themselves. In this case the site content manager must keep a careful check on the quality of any added content.

4. Write for the layman

The Internet facilitates access to official texts approved by the Managing Authorities or the European Commission. However, these documents can only be read by specialists, i.e. civil servants used to the administrative language in which they are drafted.

To encourage interest on the part of the layman, short texts drafted (such as summaries of official documents) in a language they are familiar with are necessary <LINK: **Visibility and awareness** >

Before placing a text on line, tests among likely readers can be a means of checking their reaction and thus finding out if the text is going to effectively communicate anything to them.

Some well chosen images can be an aid to understanding, while purely decorative animations slow down the connection and discourage navigation.

5. Ensuring complementarity

Websites must be an inherent part of the communication strategy <LINK: The communication plan>. A simple example: an information leaflet with more information can be ordered from a website.

In the Södra Skogslan region (South Sweden), the presentation programme can be requested free of charge at the site <site address and click> created by the Managing Authority.

The "press area" on the Internet site

The media want "tailor-made" information. It is therefore recommended to create a space on the Internet site which is reserved for journalists, accessed directly from the home page by means of a simple "click".

THE "TAILOR-MADE" APPROACH

Journalists are of key importance. There must be specific information for them that is:

- **Rapid**: a journalist needs to find the information he is looking for very quickly.
- **Up-to-date**: dated information is obsolete.
- **Clear**: with so many demands on his time, a journalist will give priority to information which can be used without too much extra work.
- **Targeted**: a journalist will publish information if it corresponds to his own interests and those of his readers, listeners or viewers.
- **Concrete**: a journalist wants facts, personal testimonies and stories which strike a chord.

CONTENT

This "press area" should provide a minimum of basic materials:

- **Press releases**, to be arranged in descending order from the most recent to the oldest.
- A description of **good practices** in terms of programme management as well as successful projects.
- **Photos** illustrating these projects.
- **Documents explaining** in clear and comprehensible terms the Structural Funds and the role of the European Union as well as the national, regional and local authorities in fund management.
- **Links** to other sites.

Other services can also be usefully proposed "on line":

- A list of **events** to follow.
- **Personal contacts** to obtain more information.

- A **search engine** making it possible to select "press" information on the basis of thematic or geographical criteria.

SITE ACCESS

Should the "press area" be reserved for journalists issued with a password? Many sites do this. The advantage is that the password makes it possible to keep better track of the journalists who visit the site. Statistics can also be compiled, providing material for analysis and evaluation. The disadvantage is that this password can be an obstacle for some journalists not listed and contacted in advance. It is a procedure which restricts access to the information.

The newsletter

The newsletter is a very practical tool for communicating concise information to various target groups, regularly and proactively. It can also be sent electronically, in which case certain tips should be borne in mind.

The "newsletter" is different to other information tools, such as magazines or information files/sheets.

A magazine is usually published at less frequent intervals. It covers a number of subjects, treating them in some depth. A magazine usually addresses quite a wide public.

Information files are devoted to a given theme and adopt a didactical approach.

The newsletter is aimed at a more targeted readership and includes information tailored to their specific needs or expectations. It is published more often (monthly, or even weekly), making it more topical and even proactive in the sense of focusing the attention of readers on major upcoming events. The newsletter is also structured, with regular columns and concise information. The reader is looking to rapidly glean essential information, possibly activating links to obtain additional information if necessary. The newsletter is usually sent out pro-actively to its readers and on a flexible basis. It is not just a source of information but an instrument in increasing awareness - to generate interest, for example, in a particular call for tenders, new information sources or particularly innovative experiences.

The arrival of new information technologies now means that newsletters can be sent electronically. This brings major benefits in terms of time-saving, much lower dispatch costs, and the availability of easy-to-use files.

SOME TECHNICAL TIPS

1.Use the HTML code

Using the HTML format (as opposed to Word or another software program) for the newsletter text and lay-out offers a number of advantages. As soon as the e-mail is opened the text is displayed automatically on the screen and can be printed directly. This speeds up the whole process. HTML is also the language used to store information on the Internet. This means that the full collection of newsletters can be placed on your website in the form of archives which can be consulted easily.

2. Keep it simple

Keep the lay-out in HTML simple so that the newsletter can be read by all users (using different types of navigators). Avoid unnecessary embellishments!

3. Allow a choice between text and HTML format

Not all Internet users can yet download a text in HTML format. To get round this problem we suggest using a program which proposes two versions of the newsletter: in text format (without codes) or in HTML format. A navigator that cannot download the HTML will then display the text version as the default solution.

4. Do not include unnecessary pictures or colour backgrounds

Many Internet users do not yet have a broadband connection. So as to avoid excessive downloading time, it is preferable therefore not to include too many pictures or colour backgrounds (which are also impractical for printing).

5. Link with direct mail

Direct mail programs make it possible to select automatically the precise list of newsletter recipients, by activating a number of key words. A simple click will then send copies of the newsletter to hundreds or even thousands of addressees.