Indicators for communication activities
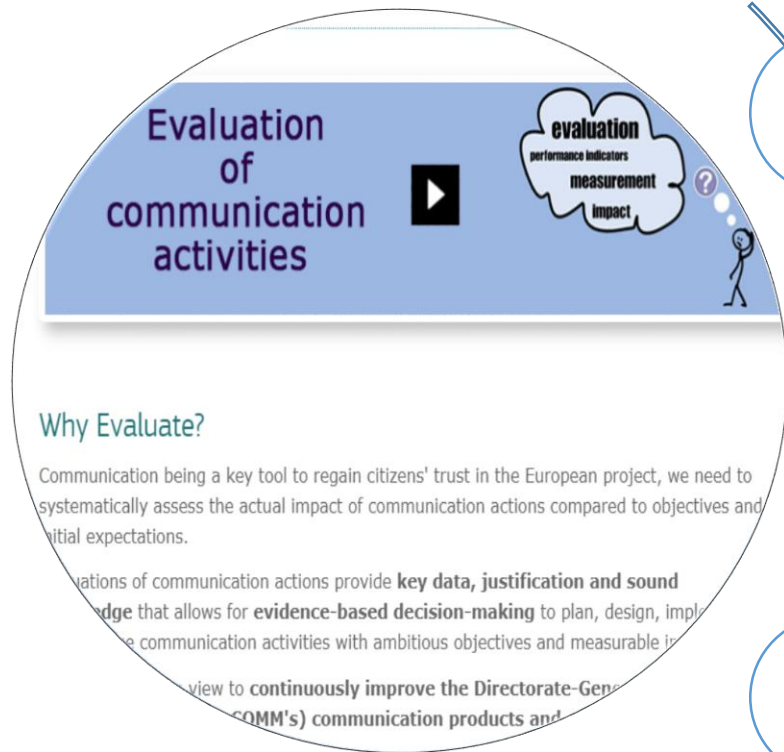
INFORM NETWORK

25 May 2023

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EC – DG COMM.D1

Who we are
Our services – support and guidance

Evaluation support function at the service of all directorates-general of the European Commission.

Evaluation framework contracts – management and support to users.

Methodological support and **Resource Centre** for the evaluation of communication.

Training courses and projects to improve monitoring and evaluation of communication activities in the Commission.

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Why communicators need indicators?

- For ***assessing the real results of our communications***, we need ***good monitoring systems*** to collect relevant data and to provide objective feedback. ***High quality and relevant indicators are the main element of monitoring systems***.

- To choose relevant indicators, you should go back to your ***(SMART) objectives*** and determine what, in your own view, defines a ***successful activity*** and pick the right indicators that should allow to check:

  - ✓ <u>Physical progress </u>(means, activities, obtained results) and quality of the process

  - ✓ <u>Financial progress </u>(budget and expenses)

  - ✓ <u>Preliminary reactions/</u> feedback after initial activities performed (evolution of knowledge,   perceptions and attitudes)

- The indicators chosen for each activity should be ***proportionate*** to the scale and possibilities of data collection of this activity.

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Which communication indicators we use in the Commission?

- Since 2018, following a series of presentations, discussions and meetings, we used **a common set of communication indicators** for 8 communication activities.

- During these 4 years, they have been used by Commission services to **plan** – they were distributed for the first time by the Secretariat-General for the Management Plan 2019 exercise - **monitor and evaluate** their communication activities and contributed to the **professionalisation** of our domain.

- In 2022, it was decided **to review and update** these indicators in a similar participatory process to **adapt them to the developments** taking place in the industry (social media, influencers, advertisement) and to the new context (pandemic, digitalisation).

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2022 EC Communication indicators
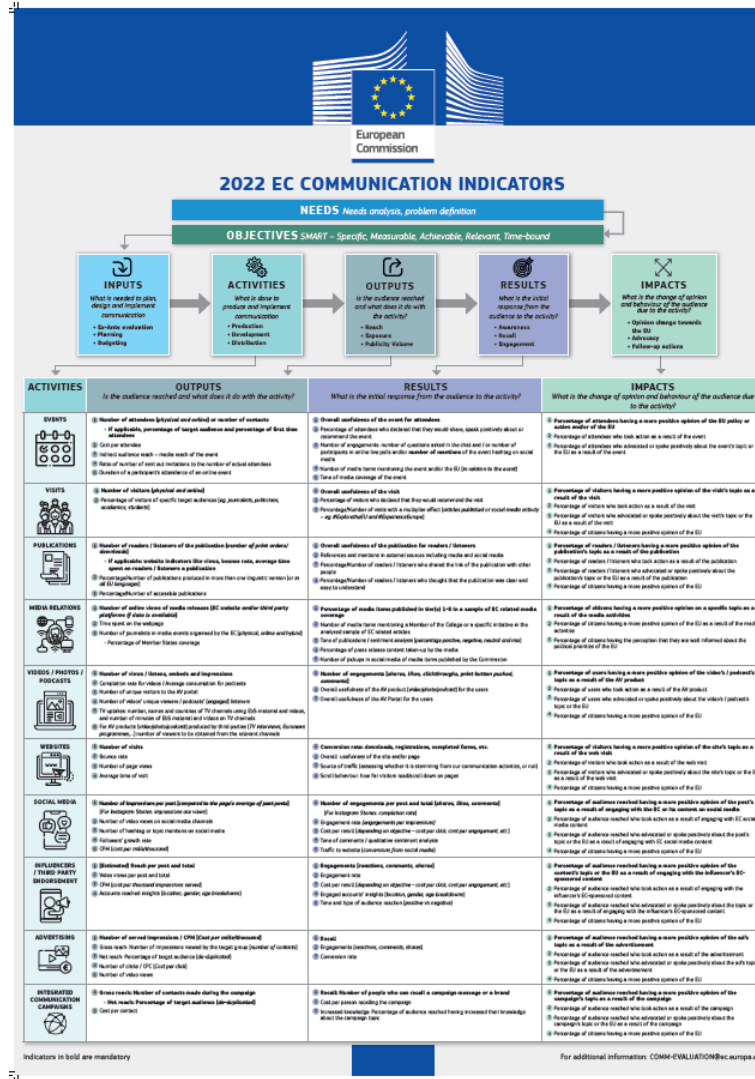
What changed with the new list?

- **_3 new communication activities included_**: <u>visits</u>, <u>influencers</u> and <u>advertisement</u> – reflecting recent developments in the media landscape and new Commission communication campaigns:

  - **_Visits_** – opening of Brussels visitors' centre (Rond-Point 14) and enlargement of the Europa Experience to more Representations

  - **_Influencers_** – increasingly important and more used by Commission services

  - **_Advertisement_** – more and more used by Commission services in particular in the corporate communication campaigns

- **_Network indicators deleted:_** their communication activities are covered by other indicators

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What changed with the new list?

- ***The definition of impact was revised*** to include change of opinion about the activity's topic (and not only about the EU).

- ***Examples of revised indicators***:

    o Specific indicators on measuring podcasts (eg. Average consumption of podcasts);

    o Specific indicators on measuring online events (eg. Duration of a participant's attendance of an online event);

    o Redefinition of indicators to measure growth and not absolute numbers (eg. Followers growth rate vs number of followers).

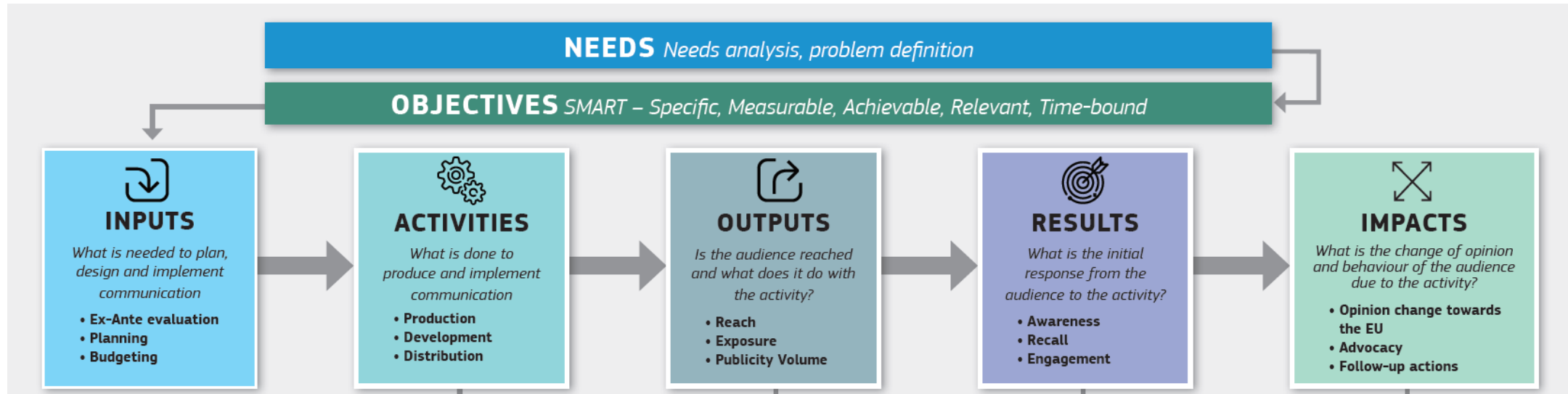European Commission

Indicators for communication activities

- *Planning*: Common indicators facilitate the planning of communication activities in management plans; they were distributed for the first time by the Secretariat-General in the context of the Management Plan 2019 exercise.

- *Contracting out*: When contracting out campaigns and other communication activities, operational units are advised to request contractors to collect data based on the EC Communication indicators.

- *Monitoring/Data collection*: EC Communication indicators should become a common basis for collecting data on a systematic and consistent way.

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Please remember…

- When contracting out communication activities, always ***define the KPIs*** of the activity and allow the tenderer to propose additional indicators (preferably from the EC Communication indicators)

- Indicators from the list are to be used if they are ***relevant and proportionate***

- An ***external impartial assessment*** of success is always preferred

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Commission's Communication evaluation model

NEEDS *Needs analysis, problem definition*

OBJECTIVES *SMART – Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound*

INPUTS

What is needed to plan, design and implement communication

- Ex-Ante evaluation
- Planning
- Budgeting

ACTIVITIES

What is done to produce and implement communication

- Production
- Development
- Distribution

OUTPUTS

Is the audience reached and what does it do with the activity?

- Reach
- Exposure
- Publicity Volume

RESULTS

What is the initial response from the audience to the activity?

- Awareness
- Recall
- Engagement

IMPACTS

What is the change of opinion and behaviour of the audience due to the activity?

- Opinion change towards the EU
- Advocacy
- Follow-up actions

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Commission's Communication evaluation model

NEEDS *Needs analysis, problem definition*

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Needs identification

- The identification of the needs requires an exercise both in needs analysis and problem definition.

- It is very important **to define as clearly as possible the target audience.**

- Tools such as Eurobarometer or national/regional statistics can be very useful to provide context indicators capable of validating your needs.

- Nevertheless, cross-check points of view with different data:

  o Evaluations
  o Previous reports
  o Literature review
  o Benchmarking, case studies, etc.

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Target audiences

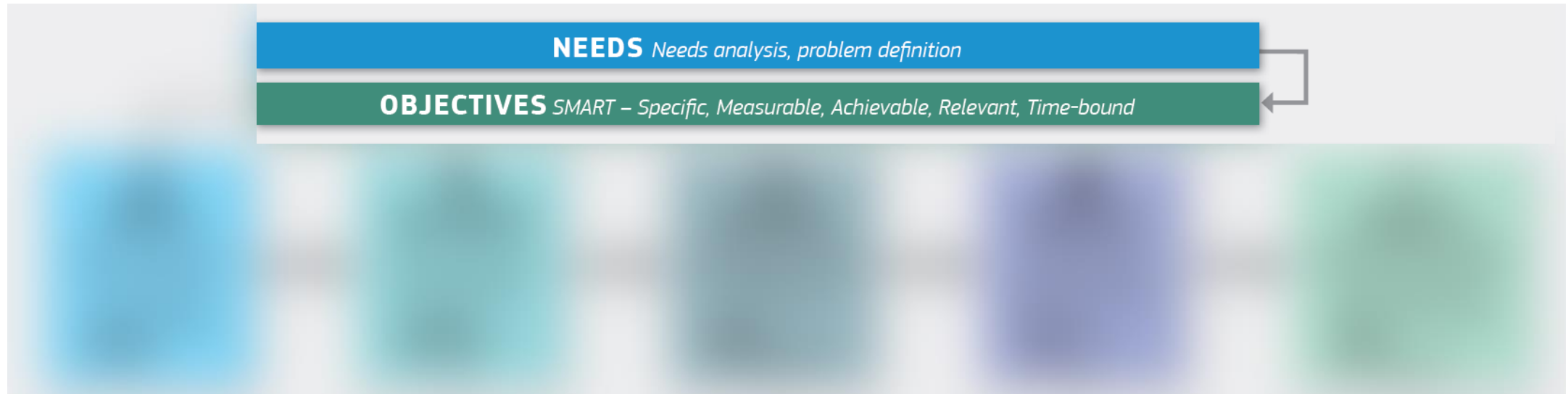*Audience research: what to research?*

- Audience research is a fundamental part of best practice in communication.

- Basic demographic information includes:
  - age
  - gender
  - ethnicity
  - socio-economic status
  - geographic location

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Target audiences

In addition to the basic demographic information, important audience insights that inform communication strategy might include:

- *Existing awareness* related to the topic or issue for communication
- *Past experiences* related to the topic or issue for communication
- *Needs* (e.g., products, services or information that audience members require)
- *Preferred channels to receive information* (which informs media plans)
- *Interests* (what target audience members are interested in and what they want to know about)
- *Desires* (the aspirations, hopes and dreams of audience members)
- *Attitudes* related to the topic or issue for communication (e.g., political, social or cultural views, biases, or prejudices)

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Commission's Communication evaluation model

NEEDS *Needs analysis, problem definition*

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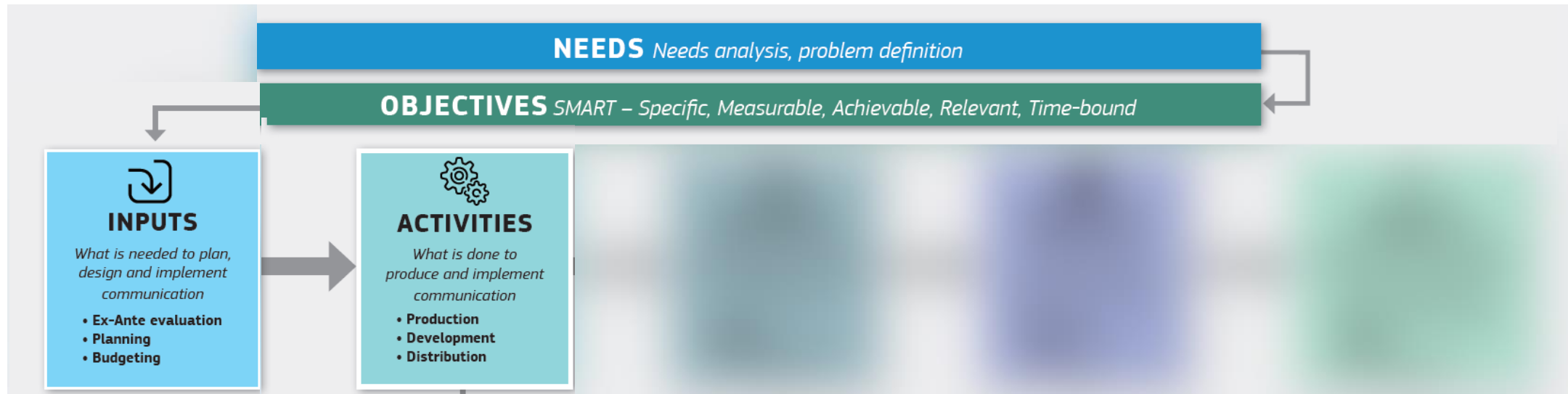
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SMART objectives

First condition to be able to monitor and evaluate communication activities is to set *SMART objectives*

What are SMART objectives?

Specific	Objectives should be precise and concrete enough not to be open to varying interpretations by different people
Measurable	Objectives should define a desired future state in a measurable terms, to allow verifications of their achievement
Achievable	Policy aims should be set at a level which is ambitious but at the same time realistically achievable
Relevant	The objectives should be directly linked to the problem and its root causes
Time-bound	Objectives should be related to a fixed date or precise time period to allow an evaluation of their achievement

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Commission's Communication evaluation model

NEEDS *Needs analysis, problem definition*

OBJECTIVES *SMART – Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound*

INPUTS

What is needed to plan, design and implement communication

- **Ex-Ante evaluation**
- **Planning**
- **Budgeting**

ACTIVITIES

What is done to produce and implement communication

- **Production**
- **Development**
- **Distribution**

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Activities

- Each channel has its own characteristics which can help or hinder your message reaching your audiences.

*Aspects to be considered
when selecting your activities*

Reach
- How many?

Who
- Who uses it, are they all the right people?

Context
- How is it consumed?

Moment
- When does it reach them?

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Activities

- Based on the Communication evaluation model, activities imply: production, development and/or distribution

Activities vs organisational indicators vs communication output indicators

Activities	Organisational indicators	Communication indicators
Events	Number of organised events	Number of attendees Cost per attendee Duration of a participant's attendance of an online event
Social media posts	Number of social media posts	Number of impressions per post Number of video views on social media channels Number of hashtag or topic mentions on social media

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Commission's Communication evaluation model

NEEDS *Needs analysis, problem definition*

OBJECTIVES *SMART – Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound*

INPUTS

What is needed to plan, design and implement communication

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- Planning
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What is done to produce and implement communication

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OUTPUTS

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- Follow-up actions

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RACER indicators

And in order to monitor and evaluate communication activities we need *RACER indicators*

What are RACER indicators?

Relevant	… closely linked to the objectives
Accepted	… by staff and stakeholders
Credible	… for non-experts, unambiguous and easy to interpret
Easy	… to monitor
Robust	… against manipulation

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Baselines

- A baseline is *a measurement of the situation before the action starts* (could be zero if a new action)

- It is used to measure change and monitor progress

- It is advisable to define a baseline for all your indicators before the start of the action

- Use existing data where possible, but check reliability

- If you need to collect your own data, collect baseline data early in order to use the info in the planning phase

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Targets

- A target is the desired end point for each indicator

- It is necessary to have a reference value (baseline)

- SMART approach remains valid for setting good targets

- Where possible –quantity, quality, time should be specified

- Targets should be as realistic as possible

- Imply a rhythm of progression (and accountability)

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Defining reporting needs

When defining your indicators, you could take into consideration:

Name	easy to understand
Definition	as precise as possible – define words, calculation, measurement unit, etc.
Use	to which question does the indicator intend to answer? who will use this indicator and for what?
Frequency	to be documented and analysed each: month, semester, year? and set-up the cut-off date
Source/ provider	where will we find the necessary data? who will document it? how?
Indicator break down	do we need specific sub-indicators?
T0	what is the indicator level before the beginning of the programme/ regulation?
Target	which level do we wish to reach and when?
Other comments	any comment that help to understand some specificities, limits, acceptability, etc.

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Intervention logic

- Show your intervention logic in a diagram

- ***Based on this logic, the indicators should allow to check:***

  o If implementation is on track

  o If context elements have evolved

  o How to collect the data we need to evaluate/measure whether the activity has achieved its objectives

Needs   Objectives   Activities   Outputs   Results   Impacts

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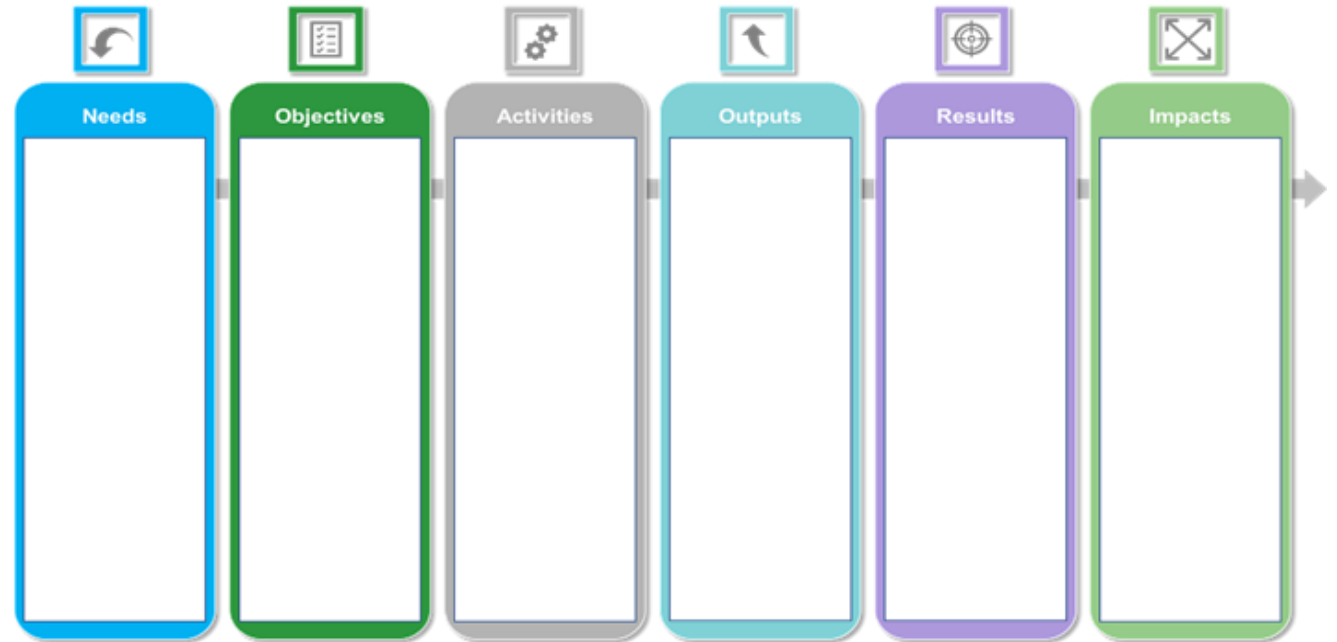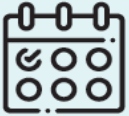
Thank you

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Events

ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS *Is the audience reached and what does it do with the activity?*	RESULTS *What is the initial response from the audience to the activity?*	IMPACTS *What is the change of opinion and behaviour of the audience due to the activity?*
EVENTS	1 **Number of attendees [*physical and online*] or number of contacts** • **If applicable, percentage of target audience and percentage of first time attendees** 2 Cost per attendee 3 Indirect audience reach – media reach of the event 4 Ratio of number of sent out invitations to the number of actual attendees 5 Duration of a participant's attendance of an online event	1 **Overall usefulness of the event for attendees** 2 Percentage of attendees who declared that they would share, speak positively about or recommend the event 3 Number of engagements: number of questions asked in the chat and / or number of participants in online live polls and/or **number of mentions** of the event hashtag on social media 4 Number of media items mentioning the event and/or the EU [*in relation to the event*] 5 Tone of media coverage of the event	1 **Percentage of attendees having a more positive opinion of the EU policy or action and/or of the EU** 2 Percentage of attendees who took action as a result of the event 3 Percentage of attendees who advocated or spoke positively about the event's topic or the EU as a result of the event

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Visits

ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS *Is the audience reached and what does it do with the activity?*	RESULTS *What is the initial response from the audience to the activity?*	IMPACTS *What is the change of opinion and behaviour of the audience due to the activity?*
VISITS	① **Number of visitors [*physical and online*]** ② Percentage of visitors of specific target audiences [*eg. journalists, politicians, academics, students*]	① **Overall usefulness of the visit** ② Percentage of visitors who declared that they would recommend the visit ③ Percentage/Number of visits with a multiplier effect [*articles published or social media activity – eg. #ExploretheEU and #ExperienceEurope*]	① **Percentage of visitors having a more positive opinion of the visit's topic as a result of the visit** ② Percentage of visitors who took action as a result of the visit ③ Percentage of visitors who advocated or spoke positively about the visit's topic or the EU as a result of the visit ④ Percentage of citizens having a more positive opinion of the EU

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Publications

ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS *Is the audience reached and what does it do with the activity?*	RESULTS *What is the initial response from the audience to the activity?*	IMPACTS *What is the change of opinion and behaviour of the audience due to the activity?*
PUBLICATIONS	1 **Number of readers / listeners of the publication [*number of print orders/ downloads*]** 　• **If applicable: website indicators like views, bounce rate, average time spent on readers / listeners a publication** 2 Percentage/Number of publications produced in more than one linguistic version [*or in all EU languages*] 3 Percentage/Number of accessible publications	1 **Overall usefulness of the publication for readers / listeners** 2 References and mentions in external sources including media and social media 3 Percentage/Number of readers / listeners who shared the link of the publication with other people 4 Percentage/Number of readers / listeners who thought that the publication was clear and easy to understand	1 **Percentage of readers / listeners having a more positive opinion of the publication's topic as a result of the publication** 2 Percentage of readers / listeners who took action as a result of the publication 3 Percentage of readers / listeners who advocated or spoke positively about the publication's topic or the EU as a result of the publication 4 Percentage of citizens having a more positive opinion of the EU

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Media relations

ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS — Is the audience reached and what does it do with the activity?	RESULTS — What is the initial response from the audience to the activity?	IMPACTS — What is the change of opinion and behaviour of the audience due to the activity?
MEDIA RELATIONS	1. **Number of online views of media releases [*EC website and/or third party platforms if data is available*]** 2. Time spent on the webpage 3. Number of journalists in media events organised by the EC [*physical, online and hybrid*] • Percentage of Member States coverage	1. **Percentage of media items published in tier(s) 1-6 in a sample of EC related media coverage** 2. Number of media items mentioning a Member of the College or a specific initiative in the analysed sample of EC related articles 3. Tone of publications / sentiment analysis [*percentage positive, negative, neutral and mix*] 4. Percentage of press release content taken-up by the media 5. Number of pickups in social media of media items published by the Commission	1. **Percentage of citizens having a more positive opinion on a specific topic as a result of the media activities** 2. Percentage of citizens having a more positive opinion of the EU as a result of the media activities 3. Percentage of citizens having the perception that they are well informed about the political priorities of the EU

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Videos / Photos / Podcasts

ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS *Is the audience reached and what does it do with the activity?*	RESULTS *What is the initial response from the audience to the activity?*	IMPACTS *What is the change of opinion and behaviour of the audience due to the activity?*
VIDEOS / PHOTOS / PODCASTS	1 **Number of views / listens, embeds and impressions** 2 Completion rate for videos / Average consumption for podcasts 3 Number of unique visitors to the AV portal 4 Number of videos' unique viewers / podcasts' [*engaged*] listeners 5 TV uptakes: number, names and countries of TV channels using EbS material and videos, and number of minutes of EbS material and videos on TV channels 6 For AV products [*video/photo/podcast*] produced by third parties [*TV interviews, Euronews programmes,…*] number of viewers to be obtained from the relevant channels	1 **Number of engagements [*shares, likes, clickthroughs, print button pushed, comments*]** 2 Overall usefulness of the AV product [*video/photo/podcast*] for the users 3 Overall usefulness of the AV Portal for the users	1 **Percentage of users having a more positive opinion of the video's / podcast's topic as a result of the AV product** 2 Percentage of users who took action as a result of the AV product 3 Percentage of users who advocated or spoke positively about the video's / podcast's topic or the EU 4 Percentage of citizens having a more positive opinion of the EU

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Websites

ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS *Is the audience reached and what does it do with the activity?*	RESULTS *What is the initial response from the audience to the activity?*	IMPACTS *What is the change of opinion and behaviour of the audience due to the activity?*
WEBSITES	① **Number of visits** ② Bounce rate ③ Number of page views ④ Average time of visit	① **Conversion rate: downloads, registrations, completed forms, etc.** ② Overall usefulness of the site and/or page ③ Source of traffic (assessing whether it is stemming from our communication activities, or not) ④ Scroll behaviour: how far visitors read/scroll down on pages	① **Percentage of visitors having a more positive opinion of the site's topic as a result of the web visit** ② Percentage of visitors who took action as a result of the web visit ③ Percentage of visitors who advocated or spoke positively about the site's topic or the EU as a result of the web visit ④ Percentage of citizens having a more positive opinion of the EU

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Social media

ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS *Is the audience reached and what does it do with the activity?*	RESULTS *What is the initial response from the audience to the activity?*	IMPACTS *What is the change of opinion and behaviour of the audience due to the activity?*
SOCIAL MEDIA	① **Number of impressions per post [*compared to the page's average of past posts*]** 　*[For Instagram Stories: impressions are views]* ② Number of video views on social media channels ③ Number of hashtag or topic mentions on social media ④ Followers' growth rate ⑤ CPM [*cost per mille/thousand*]	① **Number of engagements per post and total [*shares, likes, comments*]** 　*[For Instagram Stories: completion rate]* ② Engagement rate [*engagements per impressions*] ③ Cost per result [*depending on objective – cost per click, cost per engagement, etc.*] ④ Tone of comments / qualitative sentiment analysis ⑤ Traffic to website [*conversions from social media*]	① **Percentage of audience reached having a more positive opinion of the post's topic as a result of engaging with the EC or its content on social media** ② Percentage of audience reached who took action as a result of engaging with EC social media content ③ Percentage of audience reached who advocated or spoke positively about the post's topic or the EU as a result of engaging with EC social media content ④ Percentage of citizens having a more positive opinion of the EU

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Influencers / Third party endorsement

ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS *Is the audience reached and what does it do with the activity?*	RESULTS *What is the initial response from the audience to the activity?*	IMPACTS *What is the change of opinion and behaviour of the audience due to the activity?*
INFLUENCERS / THIRD PARTY ENDORSEMENT	1. **[*Estimated*] Reach per post and total** 2. Video views per post and total 3. CPM [*cost per thousand impressions served*] 4. Accounts reached insights [*location, gender, age breakdowns*]	1. **Engagements [*reactions, comments, shares*]** 2. Engagement rate 3. Cost per result [*depending on objective – cost per click, cost per engagement, etc.*] 4. Engaged accounts' insights [*location, gender, age breakdowns*] 5. Tone and type of audience reaction [*positive vs negative*]	1. **Percentage of audience reached having a more positive opinion of the content's topic or the EU as a result of engaging with the influencer's EC-sponsored content** 2. Percentage of audience reached who took action as a result of engaging with the influencer's EC-sponsored content 3. Percentage of audience reached who advocated or spoke positively about the topic or the EU as a result of engaging with the influencer's EC-sponsored content 4. Percentage of citizens having a more positive opinion of the EU

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Advertising

ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS *Is the audience reached and what does it do with the activity?*	RESULTS *What is the initial response from the audience to the activity?*	IMPACTS *What is the change of opinion and behaviour of the audience due to the activity?*
ADVERTISING	**1 Number of served impressions / CPM [*Cost per mille/thousand*]** 2 Gross reach: Number of impressions viewed by the target group [*number of contacts*] 3 Net reach: Percentage of target audience [*de-duplicated*] 4 Number of clicks / CPC [*Cost per click*] 5 Number of video views	**1 Recall** 2 Engagements [*reactions, comments, shares*] 3 Conversion rate	**1 Percentage of audience reached having a more positive opinion of the ad's topic as a result of the advertisement** 2 Percentage of audience reached who took action as a result of the advertisement 3 Percentage of audience reached who advocated or spoke positively about the ad's topic or the EU as a result of the advertisement 4 Percentage of citizens having a more positive opinion of the EU

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Integrated communication campaigns

ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS *Is the audience reached and what does it do with the activity?*	RESULTS *What is the initial response from the audience to the activity?*	IMPACTS *What is the change of opinion and behaviour of the audience due to the activity?*
INTEGRATED COMMUNICATION CAMPAIGNS	① **Gross reach: Number of contacts made during the campaign** 　• **Net reach: Percentage of target audience [*de-duplicated*]** ② Cost per contact	① **Recall: Number of people who can recall a campaign message or a brand** ② Cost per person recalling the campaign ③ Increased knowledge: Percentage of audience reached having increased their knowledge about the campaign topic	① **Percentage of audience reached having a more positive opinion of the campaign's topic as a result of the campaign** ② Percentage of audience reached who took action as a result of the campaign ③ Percentage of audience reached who advocated or spoke positively about the campaign's topic or the EU as a result of the campaign ④ Percentage of citizens having a more positive opinion of the EU

Intervention logic

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