

COMMUNICATION MANUAL

to support EUSAIR governance structures

I'm here to understand
what journalists need to know
to be able to provide
good "stories" for them.

How can we empower
people for bottom-up
communication management?

I'm here to
get new ideas
... and for networking!

We speak different languages,
use different channels and deploy
multiple strategies across
macro-regions. So, how can we
customize communication to reach
different objectives efficiently?

The next time we should
have a workshop on
how to actually implement
a communication strategy!



Disclaimer

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How to use this manual

The idea of providing practical guidance on communication for governance structures of the EU Strategy for the Adriatic-Ionian Region (EUSAIR Strategy) was first brought up during the Conference on EU Macro-regional Strategies, Media and Communication held in September 2017 in Slovenia.

Due to the complexity of the EUSAIR Strategy and its context-specific nature lacking immediate results, the institutions working in the framework of the EUSAIR are facing severe challenges in promoting the aims, added value and achievements of the Strategy.

This is true not only when trying to pass on the message to the media or wider public, but also internally, in the daily work of the actors directly involved in the management and implementation of the EUSAIR Strategy, primarily the Governing Board members, the National Coordinators, the Thematic Steering Group members, and the EUSAIR Facility Point partners, as well as Ministers and ministries from the eight participating countries, relevant EU institutions and other governance actors.

The present Communication manual is dedicated to all of us – sitting in the driving seat of the Strategy – to support us in developing and executing a wide range of communication activities. The manual is part of the effort to improve our understanding of what communication is all about, what its potential in the context of the EUSAIR is and to better define our role and responsibility in the macro-regional communication process.

The manual builds on the experience gained since the Strategy's inception and knowledge acquired through two capacity building events, accompanied by the expertise delivered at the aforementioned conference.

The structure of the manual is as follows:

- Section 1 introduces the topic of communication in the context of the EUSAIR;
- Section 2 focuses on the key elements of successful communication;
- Finally, section 3 provides an overview of communication channels and tools, focusing on relationships with the media.

Each section contains guiding questions which encourage the reader to reflect on the text and explore their own ideas about the topic. The notes taken would serve as a source of reference for future capacity building activities on EUSAIR macro-regional communication.

We expect that over time the manual will be complemented by valuable know-how, innovative approaches and concrete cases. We take this opportunity to invite stakeholders active in the other three macro-regions to join us in the endeavour to make macro-regional communication not only a mere collection of individual practices, but a functional and inspirational reality.

The EUSAIR Facility Point Lead Partner Team



Communication in the EUSAIR

What is communication

As you interact with people on a daily basis, you may experience a variety of communication issues. Whether you are talking to a colleague, presenting at meetings, reporting to your boss, or writing an email, you are communicating – meaning, you are not only passing on information, but passing it on with added value. Along with the message, you are spreading your opinion on the topic, your experience, excitement, or doubts, and receiving feedback on what you are saying. A problem may arise when you assume that others understand you by default. This can leave you feeling frustrated, and you may not be getting the results you want or expect.

“There can be no good
COMMUNICATION STRATEGY
if the macro-regional strategy
behind it is not clear...”

Stojan Pelko

Conference on EU Macro-
regional Strategies Media and
Communication,
Slovenia, Sept 2017





Communication is much more than simply transferring information – it's a dynamic, interactive process between people who each have unique and often very different perspectives. It is a two-way process; any person who is communicating always plays two roles at the same time – as a messenger and a receiver – which adds to its complexity. This is even more challenging in the Adriatic-Ionian macro-region, where we are dealing with an area of 70 million people, involving EU and non-EU countries, each with its own specifics, and where communication spreads across national borders, socio-economic conditions, political situations, traditions and customs, languages and cultures, involving public institutions and stakeholders from various sectors of the economy. Communication in this context requires a specific understanding and approach.

Understanding the value of communication

Communication activity can play distinct roles over a period of time.¹

- **Communication about the results:** to inform, explain and interpret the results/ achievements made through the implementation:

Communication activities in this context are linked to external communication, involving the dissemination, transfer and promotion of the achieved results towards external target groups.

- **Communication contributing to the results:** to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the implementation:

Communication activities in this context are linked to internal communication, involving management-related activities as well as coordination and cooperation tasks in order to push the implementation forward and to contribute to the realisation of the planned results as quickly as possible.

What are the three main strengths and challenges with regard to the EUSAIR communication that should be further built upon?

¹ The distinction follows the Interreg Alpine Space Factsheet approach, adjusted to the EU Strategy for the Adriatic-Ionian Region. Retrieved April, 2018, from http://www.alpine-space.eu/project-management/project-implementation-handbook/4.4_factsheet_project_communication.pdf

Communication strengths and challenges of the EUSAIR

To apply the right role with respect to macro-regional communication at a specific time, an understanding about the EUSAIR communication strengths and challenges is needed.²

Strengths

- The four thematic pillars of the EUSAIR offer a wide range of topics through which the EUSAIR can be promoted and communicated
- A functioning network of the EUSAIR Facility Point partnership is established and available to provide promotional and communication services
- Communication infrastructure, channels and tools are in place
- Funding for communication activities is ready to use
- There is a potential to strengthen the involvement of stakeholders in the Strategy's implementation and communication
- Capacity building opportunities for the EUSAIR governance structures are available
- The three macro-regional strategies can serve as a network for knowledge and experience sharing in the field of communication

Challenges

- The existence of several languages, alphabets, cultural and historical differences and socio-economic disparities in the region
- The region is undergoing a significant political transformationLack of coordination and cooperation experience between both EU and non-EU countries
- Limitations in human resources capacity, institutional settings and administrative organisation difference among the participating countries
- Different levels of awareness and ownership of macro-regional processes
- The perceived role of EU macro-regional strategies compared to the Interreg and IPA cooperation programmes, as well as towards other policy frameworks and funding mechanismsAbstract macro-regional terminology, complex governance structures and processes of implementation are an obstacle in explaining the Strategy in simple words, and engaging stakeholders and capturing the attention of the media and the broader public
- Limited involvement of subnational and non-governmental actors

Table 1: Communication strengths and challenges of the EUSAIR

² The "Table 1 Communication strengths and challenges of the EUSAIR" illustrates some of the identified communication strengths and challenges of the EUSAIR. The table is not exhaustive and follows the Interreg South Baltic Programme 2014-2020 Communication Strategy approach, adjusted to the EU Strategy for the Adriatic-Ionian Region. Retrieved April, 2018, from <https://southbaltic.eu/documents/18165/106300/Interreg+South+Baltic+Communication+Strategy.pdf/67b1502d-a24d-4ef2-b3d8-9fc16dd5f1d8>



2. Governance

Communication flow process

Communication in the EUSAIR is the shared responsibility of all EUSAIR key actors involved in the coordination and implementation of the Strategy. Setting organisational structure and robust internal communication channels is a prerequisite for smooth and effective external communication.

The internal communication flow between the EUSAIR governance structures should go in all directions, for example:

- **Top down** in the case of Ministers communicating to their administrations or National Coordinators communicating to within their country,
- **Bottom up** in the case of Thematic Steering Group members communicating with Pillar Coordinators,
- **Diagonal** in the case of Pillar Coordinators and Thematic Steering Group members communicating with the EUSAIR Facility Point partners, **Horizontal** in the case of National Coordinators communicating between each other.

Within the EUSAIR, the main resources for communication services – human, budget and expertise – are available at the **EUSAIR Facility Point project**.

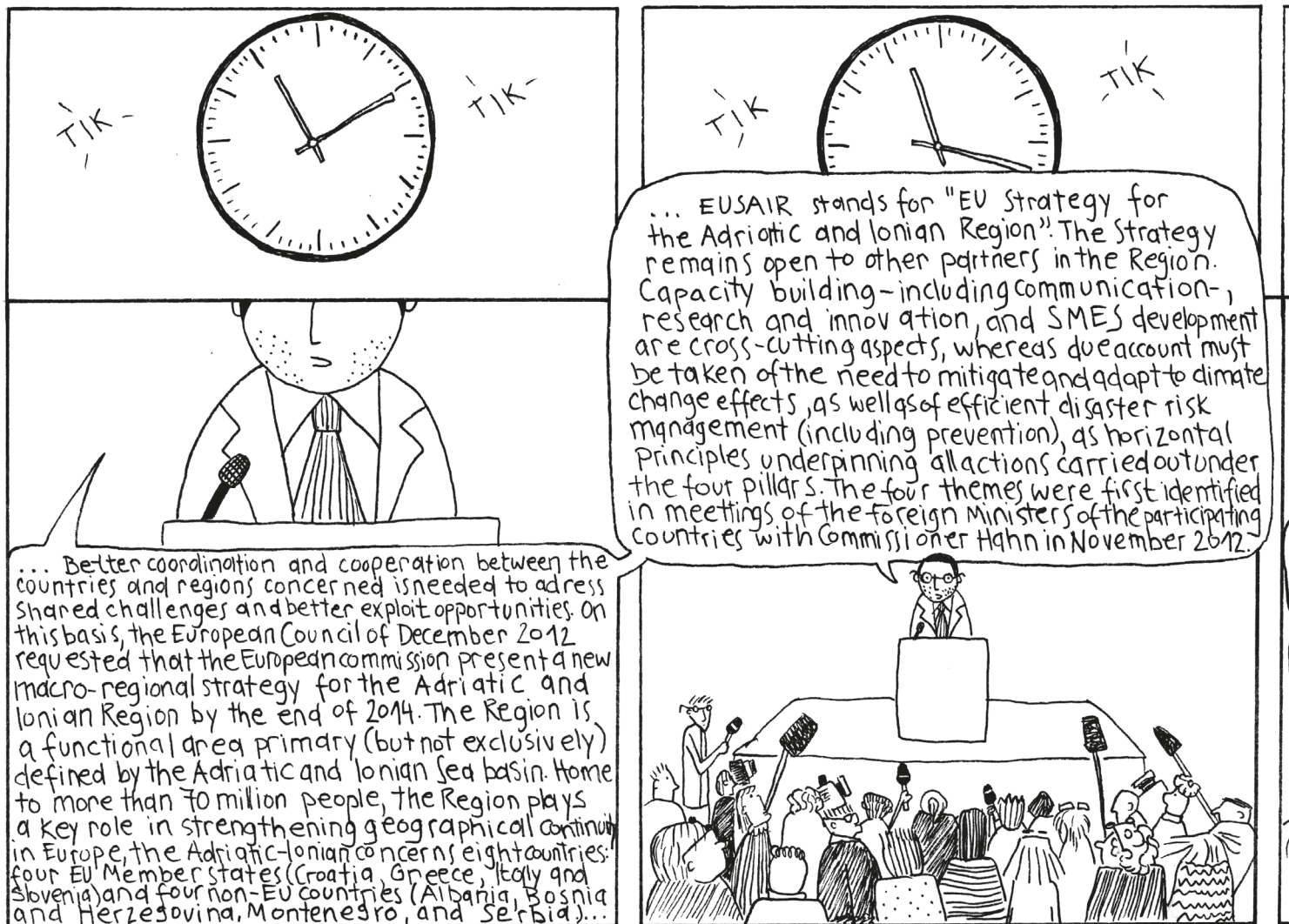
However, the full involvement and proactivity of all the governance structures is a key condition for the efficacy of communication in, out and about the EUSAIR.

The Lead Partner of the EUSAIR Facility Point project plays a horizontal role in coordinating activities, giving guidance, developing conceptual facilitation, building capacities, and promoting a common understanding and knowledge. The Lead Partner also manages communication tools and channels. When carrying out communication activities, the Lead Partner cooperates with EUSAIR Facility Point Project Partners at the national level.

At the same time, the Governing Board members, National Coordinators, Pillar Coordinators, and Thematic Steering Group members are responsible to identify the relevant areas, needs and opportunities in their respective field where better visibility and promotion of the expected benefits of the Strategy to the relevant stakeholders would foster the overall implementation of the Strategy's goals, while the supporting structures should find the best solution to meet these goals.

Communication should be seen as a crucial element by the key actors involved in the management and implementation of the EUSAIR, since efficient communication is an instrument to attract the critical mass of stakeholders to take part in the implementation of the Strategy. It is a tool to achieve change, bring added value to the cooperation, strengthen the ownership of the Strategy, and effectively position the EUSAIR within the macro-region.

In the next 3 months I will do to enhance the visibility of the EUSAIR.



3. Elements of efficient communication

The main challenge, be it at the project, institutional or macro-regional level is: **Why, what, and to whom** to communicate in order to attract interest and achieve the expected results.

Having a clear answer to these questions is the basis of any good communication and a precondition of laying out appropriate communication activities, channels and tools.

Aims and objectives

The first questions that you should ask yourself when communicating are: Why is your information relevant and for whom? Why should anyone care? What do you want to achieve by sharing your information?

The relevance of the information is closely connected to the target group.

Target group

Who do you want to reach with your information? Who do you want to influence? Who do you need to start, continue, or finish a certain activity? Who needs you? This is your audience or your target group.

Message

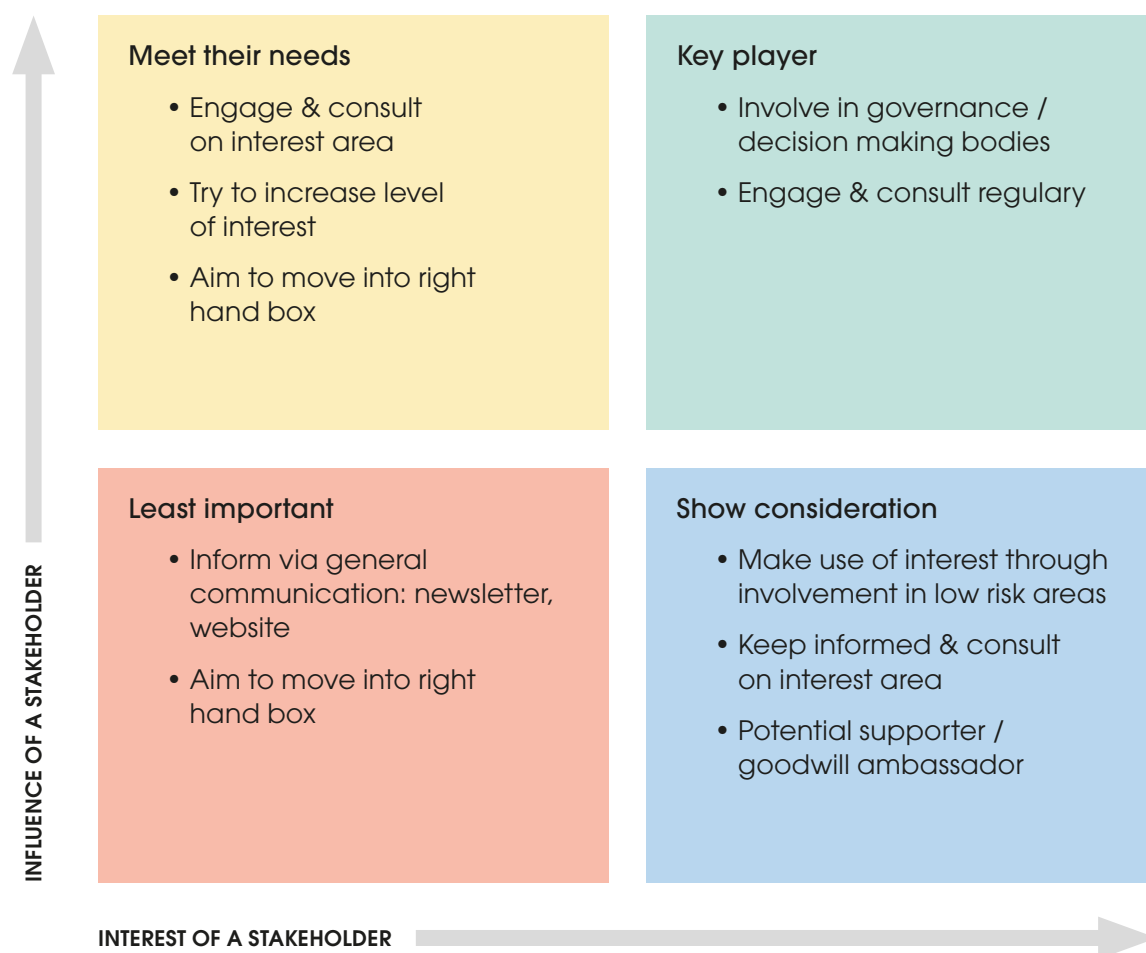
Once the objective and target group have been identified, you can design **the content or message** you want to deliver. Try to predict **What** kind of information your audience is interested in, what do they care about, and what their problems, needs and expectations are, and adapt your message accordingly. Tell what your audience wants to hear, in a way that will appeal to them and trigger the response you need in order to achieve your goal. To get your message across, you should support your target group in solving their problem.





Stakeholder analysis

The stakeholder analysis or stakeholder mapping helps with understanding the roles and interactions between the key players and your relationship with them. We usually map the stakeholders – your target group or your audience – on two essential criteria: the level of influence/power the stakeholder has over the topics that we deal with; and the importance of the stakeholder, which means how important the active involvement of the stakeholder is for the achievement of the project objectives. This can be one or several groups of a certain age, profession or gender, or even projects, programmes, or institutions.



Picture 1: Stakeholder mapping grid

In order to assess the importance and influence of a stakeholder you should take into account:

- The power and political, social, and economic status of the stakeholder;
- The importance of the stakeholder to the success of the project or strategy;
- The organisational complexity of a project;
- The control the stakeholder has over strategic resources;
- How much does the stakeholder already know?
Where do they get information?
- The informal influence of a stakeholder (personal connections).

Remember, the most important stakeholder you should interact with most, is the one for whom the result or impact of your action will be most apparent and most immediately relevant. Note that we can influence the level of interest of a stakeholder, but we cannot change a stakeholder's level of influence.

As a rule, your key player is not the general public – you communicate with the public when you have concrete results that affect people's daily lives. Your most important stakeholder is the one who will help you achieve the result you want **to showcase to the public in the fastest and most efficient way possible**. For example, the EU Commission is considered a high interest / high influence target group, and it should be engaged and consulted regularly. Your audience could and should change over time. Some of the audience will be less relevant at different times in the implementation cycle of the strategy

Constantly engage with your stakeholders:
ask, listen, learn and refine your approach
on the basis of their feedback.

Identify your main stakeholders. Who are they? What makes them important / influential? Write down three basic messages that you want to deliver to your key audience.



Context

When harnessing the context and background of the message you want to tell, always try to place your information into a larger picture. Consider how the work you are doing is part of a greater theme. Can you link your work with other developments, initiatives or important events and make it more relevant? What is going on outside the direct work environment of your organisation/ institution? Are there circumstances that make your work more relevant today than it will be next week or next month? Often a good news angle can be found by stepping back and looking at how the story fits into a larger perspective.

The context is also important in terms of viability and credibility, as the message should be grounded in a situation analysis framed by the organisation's intent, given organisational structure, available resources and lifespan.

Another issue that must be mentioned when talking about efficient communication is multipliers.

Multipliers are actors that can potentially amplify the key messages, bringing greater visibility to your activities and reaching the widest possible audience. They are intermediaries who are capable of reaching your stakeholders more efficiently.

Multipliers are organisations, collaborative partnerships, consortia, associations, influential figures or opinion makers who recognise the added value of your work and are motivated to disseminate its benefits further, as they might have a stake in the action or be affected by it. Multipliers will help you get your message across faster and more efficiently, because of the power and influence they have.

All these decisions are unavoidably related to **so-called corporate communication and brand promotion**, where the main challenge to the competitive positioning of any organisation or company is the perception of benefits and added value for the stakeholders. Stakeholders constantly evaluate what experience and gains they get from cooperating and collaborating with an organisation or company.

It is essential to **understand the strategic position** of the EUSAIR in comparison to other peer EU strategies, policy frameworks, initiatives and funding programmes, and come up with a clear answer on what it is that makes the EUSAIR unique and different. The answer is a "value proposition" or a "competitive advantage" of the EUSAIR.

"When communicating a macro-regional strategy, a consistent message about its purpose and added value should be embedded into a local and national context."

Dana Spinant
Conference on EU Macro-regional
Strategies Media and Communication,
Slovenia, Sept 2017

What are the three key advantages of the Strategy that makes it unique and valuable in comparison to other initiatives, funding programmes or policy frameworks?

Storytelling: the art of narration

Whatever you would like to express, whether in free speech, a press release, a presentation or a brochure, your communication aspirations will be much more effectively accomplished if you deploy at least some storytelling approaches and techniques.

“...Go for emotions, go for storytelling. Tell stories ABOUT PEOPLE, something that resonates with people's concerns...”

Dana Spinant
Conference on EU Macro-regional
Strategies Media and Communication,
Slovenia, Sept 2017

Storytelling is a creative process in which you present your topic as if you were telling a story.

Ingredients for a good story:

- It contains a moral perspective;
- It has a recognisable main message;
- The reader can identify with the characters;
- It has an interesting narrative point of view;
- The story's structure: exposition → inciting incident (how we begin the story, create suspense and attract attention) → rising action → crisis → climax → falling action and resolution.

Each story is addressed to a specific audience and is told by a specific storyteller. Whenever we avoid subjectivity in our communication, we threaten its clarity and identification and potentially blur the story's moral perspective. In other words, we are not clear where the message comes from, who is the receiver of the information, and who is responsible for what.



DOs and DON'Ts tips

To keep the audience's attention when talking or writing follow these DOs and DON'Ts tips:

DOs

- Keep it short, say one thing per sentence.
- Use clear, plain language, and explain a complex topic in simple words.
- Get your audience interested and inspired – why should anyone be interested in your story?
- Be precise. Whenever you introduce a character – a person or an institution – give the full name, function and role. Show who is the accountable person in the action you are reporting about.
- Help readers browse for more information; use hyperlinks and references.
- Communicate only what you know and what is true.
- Share your opinions and views but be clear on what is a fact and what is your personal experience.
- Always try to reach the emotions of people, their concerns, needs, and aspirations.

DON'Ts

- Avoid the passive voice as much as possible.
- Avoid funding information, duration, or project partner names at the beginning of a text.
- Avoid using too many logotypes.
- Avoid bureaucratic language and specific terminology.
- Avoid using acronyms and abbreviations excessively. If you must use them, explain them.
- Sub-headings and bullet points can be useful to help make information easier to digest.
- Use quotes to provide insight, not information.
- Avoid excessively heavy e-mails.

Table 2: DOs and DON'Ts tips

“Try imagining the four macro-regions as kingdoms in the Game of Thrones series – the Danubians, the Alpines, the People from the Sea, the Baltics... we have wars between those kingdoms, but also intrigues AND STORIES...”

Stojan Pelko
Conference on EU Macro-regional
Strategies Media and Communication,
Slovenia, Sept 2017

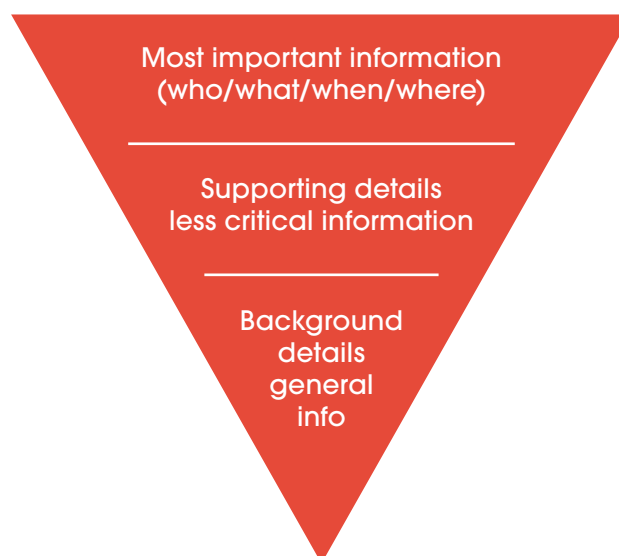
“...at the same time, you don't want to know every little detail from the Game of Thrones series – what kingdoms do and why, how they conquer the territory. Strategy is for people who have an interest in the strategy. You don't talk about the strategy of everything. DIFFERENT AUDIENCES HAVE DIFFERENT NEEDS. Napoleon didn't talk about his strategy to all of his soldiers, he talked to his generals...”

Charlelle Jourdan
Conference on EU Macro-regional
Strategies Media and Communication,
Slovenia, Sept 2017

DO also

When writing, reveal the key information in the opening paragraph in no more than 20-30 words. Use an appealing headline, reflecting the essence of the story. Put the most important facts first, and background/additional information later. Highlight what is new, unusual or unique – this is your value proposition, and it makes you different from the others. Follow the inverted pyramid style and use the **5W + 1H approach**:

- **Who** is the topic about?
- **What** is the topic about?
- **Why** does it matter?
- **Where** does the information occur?
- **When** did it occur?
- **How** did it happen?



Picture: The Inverted Pyramid style of writing used in journalism.
Retrieved April, 2018, from <http://www.interact-eu.net/library/handbook-eni-communication-guide/pageflip>.

When trying to create a story using a storytelling technique, BE CREATIVE. Follow current trends in society, daily life, or politics. Be familiar with what is popular and hyped, and make analogies.



4. Communication channels and tools

How do the media work?

No matter how important your story is, you must promote it, if you want to make it known to a wider audience. Attracting media coverage is an effective way of reaching out; however, competition for such publicity is fierce. When engaging with the media there are some rules to follow.

Have the right story: having a good story is of paramount importance when approaching the media. **Tell the story right:** when you are certain that your story is worth hearing, identifying and presenting the news angle for a particular media outlet is crucial.

The media gravitate towards the dramatic, the novel, and the weird, but also to the different, innovative and special. Reaching out to the media is usually done on the occasion of major events, when important changes are happening in society. Your piece of information should be newsworthy, meaning it should be relevant to the media audience and, in the best-case scenario, have a unique, never-seen-before perspective. Note that media depend on their customers, so they must deliver what their audiences want to read, hear or watch.





How to attract journalists' attention

- Before reaching out, **do your research**. Find out who the relevant journalists in your respective field are. Search for recently published articles on your topic to gain insights and understanding. Familiarise yourself with the journalists' type of reporting – What is their standpoint? What aspects are they most likely to be interested in? – and customise your message accordingly.
- Identify the **right media**. Do you want to convey your message to a daily newspaper, TV/radio, a website, or niche media such as specialised magazines and blogs? Do you want to reach the local, national or European media? Before you begin sharing your news, you must determine the types of media outlets you are targeting. The answer to this question is closely connected to the stakeholder group you want to reach, e.g. which newspapers your stakeholder group reads.
- **Journalists have little time**. They gather the key elements of a news item on the go and jump from one topic to another depending on the daily issues they have to cover. This stressful professional routine requires extra effort from the institution or person that sends information out to them. Never make unexpected phone calls; rely on advance messaging, emailing and follow-up calls.
- **Keep it simple**. When writing for the media, the key concept is to make your message clear and simple. Journalists appreciate understandable information. Don't overload an article with complex information; be short and to the point.
- **Use straightforward language**. Avoid jargon and acronyms. Expressions such as "territorial cooperation", "work packages", "thematic pillars" and "macro-regional strategy" need to come with an understandable, people-friendly explanation. This terminology is mostly known to people dealing with the EU cohesion policy, but not to outsiders. Be aware of the project's technicalities – explanations of budgets and long organisation names are often the least interesting things to a journalist.
- **Think like a journalist**: Present a story that the media and society can identify with – after all, journalists are reporting on news that sells newspapers. Abstract concepts are good for background articles, but not for headlines. Tell the journalist why the story is important for their audience. Frame your story in a way that will appeal to the tastes and interests of the audience, e.g. show what kind of impact your project or initiative has for the people in the city/region they live in. Concentrate on practical benefits and focus on the issues of everyday life. Complement your message with evidence based on facts and figures.
- You should **get the journalist's attention** with an interesting headline in the first 20 words. Journalist want to have the "5 W + 1H" in the opening lines. Check daily newspapers for examples of great first lines. The length of a text for a journalist should be no longer than 300-400 words (short news item).
- **Timing** is important: pitch the journalists at the right time. **Link your piece of information to current topics in the media**, such as high-level business or political events, launched initiatives, conferences, or current socio-economic developments. Is your project/ initiative helping to solve a certain problem?
- Does your work have a link to events or campaigns that have already achieved visibility at the national, regional or EU level, e.g. European Mobility Week, Europe Day, European Week of Regions and Cities, or European Cooperation Day? This is an opportunity for stronger promotion of your work.

- **Realistic messages are essential.** Do not rely excessively on press releases, which most journalists don't consider to be actual news. Instead, ensure you are sending the right proposal to the right reporter.
- Instead of a "selling" approach, **rather share your insights and knowledge** – this will create trust and help develop a meaningful interaction. When talking to the media, you are in the position of an expert. **Express your opinion**, and preferably have a strong one. Highlight exciting developments. **Be credible**, open and honest and help the journalist do a good job, which is to create relevant content for their readers.
- **Sustain the relationship:** stay in touch; ask journalists what they are interested in; invite them to your events; arrange one-on-one briefings; arrange special press trips; update your media contact list regularly.
- **Build a win-win partnership** with the journalist. You and your institution are not the only ones seeking the accomplishment of an objective – to have the information published. The journalist is also looking to get benefits from this partnership: an interesting story, attractive or powerful images, and the possibility of including sources that are valuable for their media. Cater to journalists' needs: offer introductions to other relevant people, connect them with ideas and links, and offer resources (photos, interview opportunities, etc.).
- Say you are available, **be truly available** and remain available! This means you are available not only until the publication of your article, but also if the journalist contacts you again for further or new information.

Which media sources are most reputable and relevant to your area of expertise?



EUSAIR tools and channels

To communicate effectively, you must use the right communication tools and channels.

This can sometimes be a very challenging task. As a general rule, the decision on which communication channels and tools to use should be based on the profile of the audience you want to reach, the message that you want to convey, and the cost-effectiveness of the channel.

The tools and channels most used by the general public are the internet, TV and radio. The EU barometer from June 2017 shows that national TV remains the main source of information about EU co-financed projects, although the internet is also on the rise.³ For smaller specific target groups we recommend using direct communication channels, such as email, the delivery of well-designed informative materials, or the organisation of thematic events.

The table below shows the channels and tools available in the EUSAIR.

	Stakeholder	Media	Wider public
Website	• •	• •	• •
Newsletter	• •		•
Stakeholder platform	• •	•	
Seminar / training	• •	•	
Press		•	•
Conferences / public events	• •	• •	• •
Annual Forum	• •	• •	•
Promotional materials	• •	• •	• •
Social media	•	• •	• •
Audiovisual materials	• •	• •	• •
Communication campaigns	•	• •	• •

Table 3: The table summarises tools and channels available in the EUSAIR and their relevance according to target groups. Retrieved April, 2018, from <http://www.interact-eu.net/library/handbook-eni-communication-guide/pageflip>

If you have general news to share, you can use the EUSAIR website. If you want to express your opinion or viewpoint, write a blog at the EUSAIR website or write an article for the EUSAIR newsletter. If you think that the work you are doing within, for example, the Thematic Steering Group deserves more publicity and visibility, get in touch with the EUSAIR Facility Point to organise a tailor-made event or prepare a promotional video or campaign. Finally, follow the EUSAIR social media channels.

³ Flash Eurobarometer 452, Citizens' awareness and perceptions of EU regional policy, June 2017. Retrieved April, 2018, from <http://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/Survey/getSurveyDetail/instruments/FLASH/surveyKy/2145>

The best way to reach out to the media is via **public events**. Be proactive in your approach and invite the media to attend your event. If they do, make sure they are well taken care of. Appoint someone to be responsible for introducing the journalist(s) to people to interview, and acting as a contact point if they require more information.

Shortly before the event, sending out a **press package** including brief background information about the event and other useful materials can help journalists correctly understand and reflect your event. This should be complemented by additional information and event visuals delivered to the journalists after the event.

Always try to involve the media in your events addressed to an external audience. Try to attract the media through a personal story behind the project. Have a relevant actor (politician, or representative of a public authority, business, or financial institution) participate in your event. This will reach the media's attention and your event will be more likely to be published in newspapers, digital websites, and so on.

Press releases are used to inform the media and the wider public about programme news and events. A **press release is usually**

considered as an alert about your existence, especially when you are organising an event.

The ideal length of a press release is about one side of A4. Any text should not be much longer than one page, and even more complex stories should not extend over much more than 3500 characters. Don't send an email that has clearly been sent simultaneously to 100s of journalists, or a text that is too long, does not express concrete benefit and is without pictures. A press release should be sent in advance, not when everything is already over.

It is important to explain the main focus of your press release at the beginning. The journalist should get the main idea of what it is all about when reading the headline and the first lines. You should distinguish a formal press release from less formal forms of pitches to journalists, which are equally important in their form and content. Any systematic communication campaign will never skip a press release, although you should be aware of its limitations. Above all, journalists do not consider it to be real "breaking" news. A press release can become outdated when it is trapped into endless internal alignment, especially within hierarchical organisational structures, which can eventually result in late timing and irrelevance.

Think about recent television news coverage and imagine you have only three minutes to pitch your work to a journalist. Explain what you are doing to help solve a specific problem reported in the media.



Other approaches to get a journalist's attention: A direct email from the project leader;

- An invitation to visit the project site;
- A VIP contact at the ministry or a politician to explain the reasons behind the project;
- An online webinar to answer any questions;
- A video case study of about 3 minutes explaining the problem the project or activity is solving;
- Video interviews of people who have benefited from e.g. a project;
- Website with information;
- An infographic with data evidence;
- A press kit with pictures/ videos/ articles;
- Professional photographs.

If you want to build a long-lasting relationship with the media, you should also consider using the following tools:

- A **press conference** seldom represents an effective and attractive approach to breaking the news in the digital era; however, it can be a good choice when the institution has to deliver comprehensive information to a wide range of media at the same time, especially when you are organising a high-level event. It always requires thorough preparation with a number of pre-event and post-event activities, such as the choice of setting, rehearsals, preparation of visual materials and handouts or press releases, and a follow-up meeting with journalists.
- A **media briefing** is an altered form of press conference, often used to deliver a focused insight on a particular complex issue to selected invited media. Usually it takes place one day before the event. Specific rules can be set, such as no

recording during the presentation delivery – but be careful, there is no such thing as “off the record”! Whatever you tell to a journalist is basically on the record.

Preparing for a media interview

An **on-camera statement** is a particularly effective approach, especially when a quick and decisive response needs to be addressed to a wider public. Circumstances for an on-camera statement can range from a non-solicited question at a public event, an on-site statement or a visit to a TV studio, to a full press conference statement. Often there is limited or no time for any thorough preparation.

- It requires some practice to become an effective on-camera speaker: **Be yourself**;
- **You are an expert**, that's why they have called you for an interview;
- **Wear clothes that you feel good in**;
- **Keep it short, say only the essentials** (and that's not easy!);
- **Watch your body language**: sit or stand straight and find a good place for your hands so they aren't distracting to viewers. Smile with your eyes, breathe and relax. Look calmly at the camera and use your natural voice;
- **It's how you say it**. You know what you're talking about, so focus on how you deliver the message. If you rush through your text, you throw away your credibility. Avoid slang at all costs. Don't look around, and blink naturally;
- All the rest is about **preparation, rehearsal and your experience**.

Remember, the role of the media in every society is to inform, engage, evaluate, educate, provide transparency, and hold space for co-creation. You have to turn the media into a medium – involve them, and make them part of the whole process from the very beginning.

Social media

One of the most popular ways to connect with an audience nowadays is through social media. They allow us to easily exchange views, opinions and information. To launch them is quite simple and carries no cost. What makes them special is the interaction with the audience as the users are not passive readers. Posting interesting stories, enriched with photos and videos, makes users co-writers and co-creators of the content. The two-way communication and real-time feedback is what makes social media an attraction and a challenge at the same time for institutions to target their audiences and create communities of their own, especially when launching communication campaigns.

Before 'going social', the following aspects should be considered:

- Is your relevant audience online?
- Which social media should be used?
- Are there enough staff assigned to manage social media accounts and create content?
- Once you are online, you are online 24/7, which can be challenging for organisations with fixed working times;
- Is the content attractive enough to catch the eyes of your users? Are you able to post content regularly and interact with the users?
- Plan your activities in advance.

Every beginning is difficult, so when you start posting your content, you should invite your colleagues and your partner organisations to follow you. Remember that regular and interesting content is not enough. Social media is about interaction and social networking. Comment, reply and share the content of your followers. In this way you will show that you listen to and care about your audience, and step-by-step you will see how your community grows.



→ Good visibility of posts, pictures and videos



→ To inform and be informed quickly



→ For professional networking



→ The best known platform for publishing videos



→ Powerful photo and video sharing



→ Photo-centric platform for professional photographers and photography enthusiasts



Many messages, one voice

When writing the present Communication manual, our ambition was to raise awareness that communication in the context of the EU Strategy for the Adriatic-Ionian Region is not an “add-on”, but a fundamental component underpinning the Strategy’s governance, management and implementation and helping achieve strategic objectives faster and smarter.

The manual introduces skills that all EUSAIR governance members and key implementers should possess in order to present a complex macro-regional topic to the target audience in the most efficient and effective way possible. The manual highlights the essential factors for increasing the visibility, generating the media’s interest and engaging stakeholders. It provides practical instructions on how to use communication for the benefit of the Strategy.

We hope that this manual is a starting point that will mobilize EUSAIR governance structures to have a consistent, coordinated and unified approach when delivering multiple messages and empower them to start speaking with one voice.



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I think we need to work on concrete examples of transboundary projects and learn about collaboration from there.

We could create an overall horizontal pillar, stretching across all the macro-regions...!

Sharing concrete examples and creating best practices from our experience is what we need.

How can I identify different target audiences, and for what results...?

