

Final report

CAPACITY BUILDING FOR
EUSAIR COMMUNICATION

JANUARY 2020





EUSAIR FACILITY POINT



EU Strategy for the
Adriatic and Ionian Region
EUSAIR

Disclaimer: This document has been compiled by an EUSAIR Facility Point Lead Partner external expert, as a follow up to capacity building for EUSAIR communication. The strategic project "EUSAIR Facility Point - Supporting the governance of the EU Strategy for the Adriatic-Ionian Region (EUSAIR)" is funded by INTERREG V-B Adriatic-Ionian Cooperation Programme 2014-2020. The content of this document is the sole responsibility of its author and can under no circumstances be regarded as reflecting the position of the European Union, EUSAIR Strategy, ADRION programme authorities or the EUSAIR Facility Point project.

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Executive summary

The EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR) is a macro-regional strategy adopted by the European Commission and endorsed by the European Council in 2014 aiming to address common challenges through cooperation in four thematic Pillars: Blue Growth, Connecting the Region (transport and energy), Environmental Quality, and Sustainable Tourism.

The EUSAIR is structured in two main levels: the coordination level represented by a Governing Board, and the implementation level represented by Thematic Steering Groups of eight participating countries. Operational support to both levels is provided by the EUSAIR Facility Point strategic project.

After five years of its conception, the EUSAIR is still at an early stage of development. While some progress has been made, there is a variety of challenges hindering a more rapid implementation. One of those challenges includes EUSAIR communication, which is lagging behind in a number of aspects.

This report explores the current state of play of the EUSAIR communication and offers recommendations and action points for the future. It will be presented to the EUSAIR Governing Board in February 2020 for discussion about possible developments to strengthen the communication side of the Strategy. In this respect, it addresses the strategic and operational aspect of EUSAIR communication and established processes as well as activities and organisational structures that are currently used in the EUSAIR implementation.

The report findings are based on background research and official documentation but also on one survey, a set of interviews and two workshops with EUSAIR implementers carried out as part of this exercise. Both workshops provided a wider picture of the EUSAIR challenges while at the same time served to increase capacity building on communication for EUSAIR governance structures. The first workshop aimed to identify ways for communication to contribute to the overall EUSAIR goals, and to understand the potential of strategic communication within the framework of the EUSAIR. The second workshop addressed concrete cases with a more focused and practical approach on one of the Pillars.

A common understanding of the EUSAIR is the first step towards a successful implementation of communication activities. The main added value of the EU macro-regional strategies lies on the idea of collaboration in a multi-level governance system. A change of mindset is required to be able to mobilise and facilitate stakeholder dialogue, and bring people and skills together to improve policy making at macro-regional level.

Therefore, for the EUSAIR to succeed, there is a need to work collectively towards a common goal in a multi-agent setting with an array of different actors from different countries. This typically results in a recurrent collective action problem: when the group is heterogeneous and the number of actors is high, it is increasingly difficult to carry out activities in cooperation. More specifically, this is linked to the issue of multi-organisation sub-optimisation or the inability of actors to find optimal choices in a multi-level governance system due to the lack of synergies and work in cooperation.

In order to overcome this challenge, a mission and vision for the EUSAIR needs to be clearly defined. This was one of the main topics addressed during the first workshop. Expert feedback is given in this report including a proposal for a EUSAIR mission and vision for further consideration. This suggestion is based on the current stage of the EUSAIR implementation. More specifically, it is stated that the current focus of the EUSAIR should be on strengthening links between stakeholders and building a common understanding of the idea of cooperation and collaboration in a multi-level governance system. In the future, the EUSAIR might want to consolidate this approach to ensure a functional multi-level policy dialogue in the region.

The second challenge lies on the ability to raise awareness and increase visibility of the EUSAIR. In this respect, areas for improvement analysed more in detail along this paper include: development of communication strategies for each of the Pillars; production of key messages and stakeholder maps for use at national level; defining roles and responsibilities for EUSAIR communication; and strengthening internal communication among EUSAIR implementers. It is for these reasons that it is decisive to continue supporting capacity building in communication, possibly with tailor-made methodologies and approaches for specific EUSAIR governance structures.

18 SEPTEMBER 2019
PORTOROŽ, SLOVENIA

EUSAIR communication workshop

Introduction

Since 2017, many steps have been taken towards establishing a sound and consistent EUSAIR communication. To actively facilitate the process, the EUSAIR Facility Point Lead Partner has drafted a Communication Strategy adopted by the Governing Board in 2017. In cooperation with the EUSAIR Facility Point project partners, the communication plans are adopted annually. In 2018, the Lead partner issued a Communication manual for EUSAIR governance structures and organised two capacity building events in Tolmin and Kobarid respectively in order to reinforce the capacities of National coordinators, Pillar coordinators, Thematic Steering group members and Facility Point project partners.

The Council conclusions of 2017 on macro-regional strategies highlighted the need to strengthen communication and increase the visibility of the strategies (Council of the European Union, 2017). Later on the Council conclusions of 2019 reflected the need for development of communication strategies and communication activities such as organisation of events (Council of the European Union, 2019). Consequently, the EUSAIR Facility Point project partnership expressed a wish to build communication capacities with a purpose to better promote the EUSAIR Strategy. Following this initiative, the EUSAIR Facility Point Lead Partner organised the first tailor-made workshop on strategic communication dedicated to all EUSAIR governance structures.

Capacity building

The EUSAIR communication workshop took place on 18 September 2019 in Portorož, Slovenia and was organised by the Government Office of the Republic of Slovenia for Development and European Cohesion Policy (EUSAIR Facility Point Lead Partner, 2019a). The aim of the workshop was to have a wider and realistic discussion on the state of play, future needs and how to get there in terms of EUSAIR implementation and exploring how communication can best assist and contribute towards the EUSAIR implementation potential, purpose and goals. The second objective of the workshop was to build capacities for the EUSAIR governance structures in the field of strategic communication in order to better equip them in creating a more inclusive, consistent, and visible communication about the added value and importance of the work done in the framework of the EUSAIR Strategy.

At the end of the workshop, participants are expected to have an understanding on key approaches of strategic communication and the necessary skills to recognise and take advantage of communication opportunities as well as manage communication challenges in the EUSAIR. Participants are also expected to build upon their corresponding roles

and responsibilities to implement communication practices at their home countries, their respective thematic areas or their project more efficiently and effectively.

The workshop addressed the following domains:

- Mission and vision
- PESTLE and SWOT analyses
- Stakeholder mapping
- Key messages

In order to prepare for the workshop, a survey was prepared and circulated beforehand among the workshop participants and some other key stakeholders. The aim of the survey was to develop an understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the EUSAIR communication and to build capacity based on the results. The survey findings were analysed, presented and discussed during the workshop. The survey and workshop outcomes, together with previous research and official documentation, are the basis for recommendations for the future to strengthen EUSAIR communication (see Recommendations in this chapter).

Survey results

A survey for the EUSAIR communication was carried out on 5-13 September 2019. The main idea behind this action was to better understand the main challenges in EUSAIR communication after five years of its implementation. At the same time, the survey findings helped shape the topics for the EUSAIR communication workshop on 18 September 2019 in Portoroz, Slovenia. The survey consisted of 29 questions distributed in 9 different sections. They included topics related to allocation of resources, understanding of the EUSAIR, knowledge of communication and communication tools per se as well as level of cooperation achieved for communication activities.

All in all, 50 responses were collected during the opening period. Respondents included National Coordinators, Governing Board members, Pillar Coordinators, Thematic Steering Group members, Facility Point partners and European Commission employees among others. The answers were thoroughly analysed and the survey findings eventually presented during the EUSAIR communication workshop.

In the survey findings, there is a mix of positive and negative outcomes including issues like roles and responsibilities, resources, understanding of the Strategy etc. The good news about EUSAIR communication revolves around the following issues: the support from the Facility Point is very much appreciated; to some extent there is cooperation with other actors to boost communication but it is not mature and consolidated; the digital presence on social media and web is highly valued; the interactions, learning and networking during events was one of the most highlighted aspects; the fact that the EUSAIR has facilitated and encouraged stakeholder involvement, and raised some awareness about cooperation.

On the minus side, the main weaknesses identified in the survey results include: the understanding of the EUSAIR direction differs from some actors to others; different understanding of the EUSAIR importance and its message; cooperation in communication should be improved; unclear roles and responsibilities on communication; communication skills are below average; lack of knowledge and use of storytelling and media relations; and lack of resources both human and financial. Some of these weaknesses coincide with the findings of previous research as it will be elaborated later on. Other findings such as challenges in internal communication flows will need to be explored with more qualitative and quantitative information in the near future.

The understanding of the direction of the EUSAIR taking seems to be something where implementers hold very different opinions. It is of utmost importance to fully understand what the EUSAIR is trying to achieve and where

Understanding of the EUSAIR

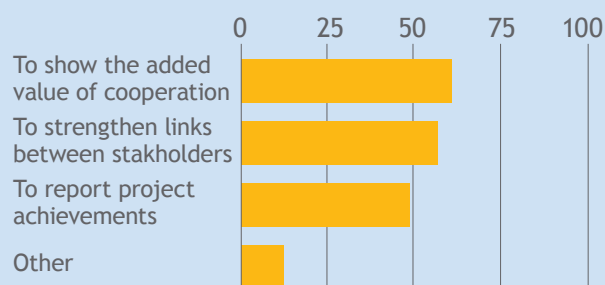
Is it clear to you what the EUSAIR is trying to achieve and where it is heading?

On average



In your opinion, how can communication best contribute to the EUSAIR?

% responding



Surveyed on 5-13 Sep 2019

it is heading. That is one of the reasons why a workshop exercise on EUSAIR mission and vision was carried out. Having a clear view of what the EUSAIR is and where it is going is absolutely essential for future decision-making. On a scale from 1 to 5, respondents rated the clarity of the EUSAIR direction as 3,5, still above average.

Communication is obviously a huge contributor to the EUSAIR goals. Surveyees were therefore asked to express their opinion about the best way for communication to support the EUSAIR. Since the EUSAIR understanding does not seem to be clear for all, not surprisingly answers to this question differ substantially. There is still a number of EUSAIR implementers who think about the Strategy as a project-based initiative, while some others think of it as a framework to bring together stakeholders to improve policy dialogue. The former is considered the first phase of macro-regional development, while the latter is the next step of the process when a functional multi-level governance is in place with consolidated synergies between actors (COWI, 2017). The EUSAIR seems to be somewhere between the two.

The issue of roles and responsibilities within the EUSAIR also raised a number of remarks. First of all, there is a

belief in a reasonably big amount of EUSAIR implementers that communication should be concentrated in the EUSAIR Facility Point. Some others think that National Coordinators should have a bigger role. Others think that the Lead Partner should be the responsible one. However, communication is everyone’s responsibility. All EUSAIR implementers should be involved in communicating even if they are not communication specialists. Capacity building in communication is necessary for efficient implementation and for raising public awareness (European Commission, 2014).

Secondly, the question of who coordinates needs to be answered. The EUSAIR Facility Point has diligently

steered some communication efforts in harmonising approaches but it does not have enough capacity to do all the coordination work on its own. Some answers pointed out the possibility to have a specific body appointed for this purpose. This lack of ownership both at communication and coordination levels is certainly hampering the EUSAIR efforts to take communication forward. Building and maintaining a sense of ownership for EUSAIR through stronger cross-sector coordination is one of the largest challenges of the EUSAIR (OECD, 2019).

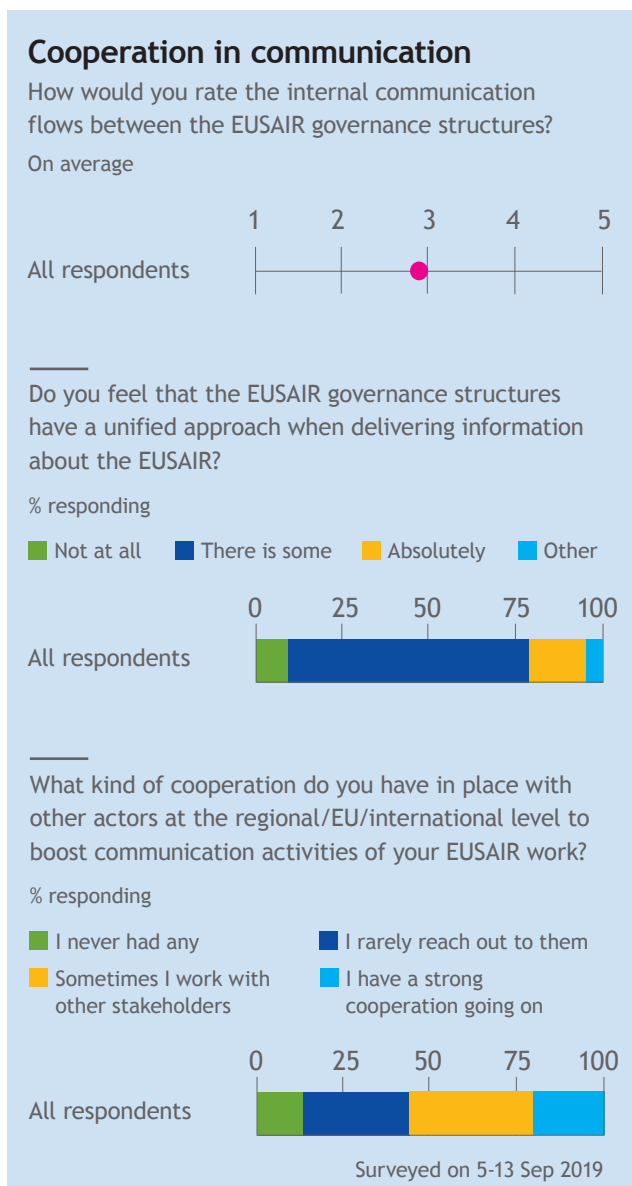
Concerning the ability of the EUSAIR to cooperate with other stakeholders in order to boost their communication activities, the survey findings reflect that only a 20 per cent of EUSAIR actors claim to have a strong cooperation in place. Around 36 per cent of them have some sort of cooperation in place. Only. The other 44 per cent does not seem to have a functional cooperation network for cooperation. The change of mindset towards a thinking based on macro-regional collaboration in a multi-level governance system seems to be necessary in order to create synergies for EUSAIR communication.

Internal communication is also one of the main concerns raised by EUSAIR implementers. On a scale from 1 to 5, respondents rated the quality of internal communication flows as 2,9. This is undoubtedly an issue that needs to be strengthened in order to ensure a suitable and smooth flow of information between EUSAIR governance structures. Rather than relying on a set of tools, clear processes should be set in place to break silos and improve the internal communication needs.

It has been highlighted that the EUSAIR governance structures should have a common approach in delivering messages with one voice (EUSAIR Facility Point Lead Partner, 2018). However, 78 per cent of the respondents think that the EUSAIR governance structures do not have a unified approach when delivering information about the EUSAIR. This deficiency is certainly tied up to the understanding of the EUSAIR. Different understandings of the EUSAIR and a flawed internal communication lead to faulty efforts in trying to speak with one voice.

Resources and skills

A recurrent challenge for all the EU macro-regional strategies is the lack of resources. As a matter of a fact, they all operate within the boundaries of the three no’s principle: no new EU funds, no additional EU formal structures and no new EU legislation. A 90 per cent of the EUSAIR implementers use their existing resources for EUSAIR activities. This undeniably impacts the involvement in the EUSAIR. Over 80 per cent of the surveyees claim to devote



Knowledge of communication

How would you rate your general expertise in communication?

On average



What is your main communication strength? Select up to three options

% responding



Surveyed on 5-13 Sep 2019

the EUSAIR, especially considering that communication should be embraced and owned by all actors. At the same time, communication is particularly relevant in the early stage of any organisation and extremely important for the EUSAIR purposes when it comes to raise awareness about the importance of cooperation.

The main communication strength highlighted by EUSAIR implementers was events management. Other skills such as corporate communication or public affairs were also highly voted. However, relevant communication expertise on media relations and storytelling was rather low. Media relations was addressed during the EUSAIR communication workshop in Portorož, Slovenia. In the same vein, storytelling will certainly make a good topic for upcoming workshops. Building capacity on the construction of suitable narrative with compelling storytelling and the ability to effectively approach the media should be in the to-do list for future EUSAIR communication workshops.

one day a week or less to the EUSAIR. Considering that the EUSAIR is a side task for most implementers, the implementation of actions is very likely to take a substantial amount of time and results will only be visible after a long period. Ensuring that human resource needs are met could certainly increase the EUSAIR capability to make progress and advance (OECD, 2019).

Concerning the specific skills on communication, EUSAIR actors seem to be slightly below average. On a scale from 1 to 5, survey respondents have rated their communication expertise as 2,8. Capacity building on communication is paramount to boost the communication side of

Mission and vision

The participants of the EUSAIR communication workshop in Portorož, Slovenia were introduced to the 'big picture' in communication. This approach is based on a strategic pyramid for communication that includes mission and vision, analysis and strategy, and activities and tools.

The first step of this pyramid is the mission and vision which is the basis for the implementation of the other two steps. The analytical and strategic part builds on the mission and vision and serves as guidance for the choice of communication activities and tools. The definition of the mission and vision is arguably the most important part in the early development of any organisation. It is the *raison d'être* and provide the long-term direction. It also serves as a guide for creating strategies and content within the other two steps. Something extremely relevant about the mission and vision is that they are meant to bring a unique aspect of the organisation. This is called unique selling point. Successful organisations usually manage to have their unique selling points to stand out from the rest.

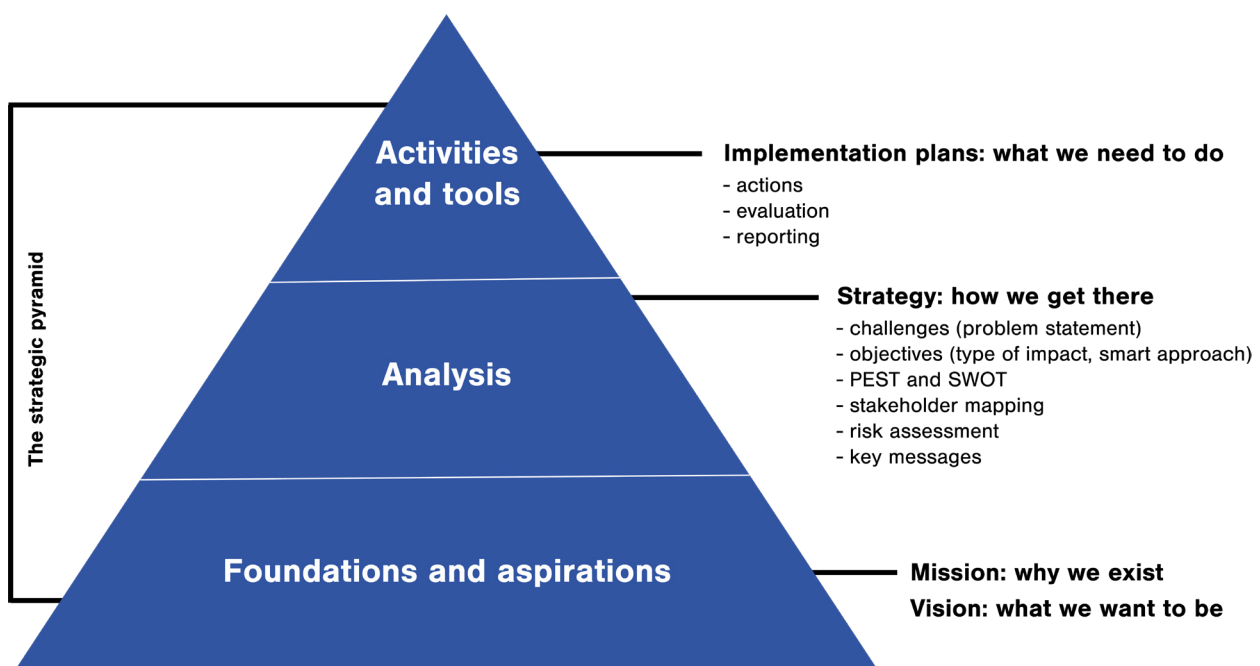
The mission answers the question of why the organisation is here and now. It is about the present and the what the organisation focuses on. Instead, the vision addresses the future. It answers the question of where we are heading, where we want to be in a few years, what our 'realistic dream' about the future is. The mission and vision should be clearly distinguishable. If the two are similar, it creates confusion and the goals of the organisation will be harder

to accomplish. Lastly, it is worth noting that the mission and vision evolve over time.

Considering that the understanding of the EUSAIR differs from some implementers to others (see Survey results) and that no mission and vision has been clearly set for the EUSAIR, it is of utmost importance to identify that as a starting point for the future implementation of strategies and activities. The EUSAIR mission and vision should be the guiding principles for future actions. Having a clearly defined mission and vision will help the EUSAIR to achieve its goals. At the same time, all the communication strategies and actions should be in line with the mission and vision in order to meet the main organisation's purpose.

The participants of the EUSAIR communication workshop were given a theoretical approach to the mission and vision. Examples were given on how communication activities meet the mission and vision. Two more remarks were highlighted: the mission and vision are usually short and to the point; and there are always keywords in the mission and vision that define extremely well the organisation's goals.

The participants worked in groups to develop a mission and vision for the EUSAIR under the following parameters: be short and concise; focus on keywords; bring in the unique aspect of the EUSAIR; mission-why, vision-future. Based on these inputs, background research and survey results, a consolidated mission and vision was prepared by the external expert for further assessment at the EUSAIR Governing Board.



Strategic pyramid for communication planning

Mission and vision

Development of both mission and vision for the EUSAIR

Per group

■ Mission ■ Vision

Group 1

■ We contribute to building one cohesive European region by sharing actions and solutions for sustainable development.

■ An instrument for multi-level policy dialogue between decision makers and the civil society-citizens.

Group 2

■ We work together to overcome the same challenges in the Adriatic-Ionian region.

■ Joint initiatives and actions to develop and protect the lives of the citizens and natural resources in the Adriatic-Ionian region.

Group 3

■ We raise awareness with joint forces across countries of the region so that challenges are better addressed and the region is better integrated and stable.

■ Main structure bringing people together, seeking common solutions for a prosperous, cohesive and integrated region.

Group 4

■ EUSAIR facilitates cooperation beyond its borders to make the region a better place to live.

■ To create opportunities and growth for communities across the region.

Group 5

■ Connecting people and using opportunities to address common challenges and plan for the future in a smart and effective way.

■ A healthy, prosperous, connected and safe Adriatic and Ionian macro-region –the pearl of the Mediterranean.

Group work on 18 Sep 2018

Expert feedback:

Arguably, the biggest challenge for organisations is to find their unique selling point. In order for the EUSAIR to stand out, it is important to understand what is that unique aspect that differentiates it from the rest. In addition, there should be a clear distinction between mission and vision. If they are too similar, it will create confusion and thwart future actions. The outcomes from the exercise exemplify these problems.

The EUSAIR is a framework for cooperation. Its strength lies on the potential ability to assure a functional multi-level governance system in the macro-region. Since the EUSAIR is still at an early stage of its development, its mission should focus for now on changing people's mindset to fully understand the benefits of cooperation work as well as strengthening links between stakeholders. Its vision should go towards consolidating a multi-level governance system.

Proposal for a consolidated mission and vision:

Mission: To connect people and build a common understanding of the idea of cooperation and collaboration for an integrated and sustainable region.

Vision: We want to be the reference for multi-level policy dialogue in the region, bringing people and skills together.

PESTLE and SWOT

Once the mission and vision are defined, the analytical and strategic work starts. This is the intermediate step of the process in between the mission and vision and the activities and tools. This part includes essential topics in the identification of challenges, in understanding the environment, and in defining the communication objectives, the target groups and the key messages. This analytical step is the so-called communication strategy and it is going to point out the direction of the communication activities carried out later on.

Apart from defining a mission and vision, the focus of this workshop was on three specific aspects: understanding the internal and external environment of the EUSAIR, identifying the main target groups and drafting key messages. The first one of the issues above mentioned is arguably the first task to take care of when it comes to work on the strategy. The internal and external environment are extremely important for the development of strategic approaches and future activities. Understanding the organisation's environment is essential: knowing the context is key in strategic planning.

There two popular models that serve to better know the environment: PEST and SWOT. There two popular

models that serve to better know the environment: PEST and SWOT. PESTLE and SWOT are extremely important for communication. Whatever is done on communication has to be adapted to the environment where the organisation operates.

PEST looks at the external environment. It gives an idea of the external environment and the issues that are usually out of the organisation's control. PEST covers the political, economic, social and technological factors that affect decision-making in an organisation. This model has evolved and included two more factors in the picture: legal and environment. The latter is related to natural assets and ecology. This addition has also changed the name of the model into PESTLE.

Political factors include everything related to government and policy such as political stability, policy measures etc. Economic factors are focused on economic indicators such as unemployment, GDP, inflation, interest rates among other things that have a direct repercussion in the economy. Social factors are about attitudes, demographics and social trends such as ageing population, level of education, and religious and cultural issues. Technological factors have to do with emerging technologies and digital

S	W	O	T
STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
Large pool of experts from different countries	Lack of coordination capacity	Capacity building for EUSAIR governance structures	No funding
Network of key implementers in place	Little human resources	Involvement of the Brussels-based community of stakeholders	Administrative burden
Experience sharing among EU macro-regional strategies	Limitations in institutional settings	Boosting involvement of EUSAIR actors	Unclear future of the EU macro-regional strategies
	Different levels of ownership and awareness	Experience sharing among EU macro-regional strategies	
	Lack of priority given from national governments	Joint actions between EUSAIR actors	
	Lack of concrete cases to show the added value of EUSAIR		

Group work on 18 Sep 2019

breakthroughs. Legal factors are actually a branch of political and includes everything regarding laws and regulations. Lastly, the environment is related to natural assets and ecology.

On the other hand, SWOT analyses the internal context. It provides basic but extremely relevant information about the organisation's internal environment. This internal environment affects the organisation's modus operandi. Communication has to adapt to this context as well. The SWOT model details strengths and weaknesses aspects as well as listing potential threats and opportunities.

Concerning the EUSAIR in particular, the external and internal environment are challenging especially considering collaboration between EU countries and non-EU countries: it includes a group of different countries where economic disparities, political changes and cultural differences prevail; and there are limitations in terms of ability to work in cooperation, involvement and institutional support. This is a classic example of collective action problem: the larger and the more heterogeneous the group, the most difficult to carry out work in cooperation (Ostrom, 2009). More specifically, this is linked to the issue of multi-organisation sub-optimisation or the inability of actors to find optimal choices in a multi-level governance system.

During the EUSAIR communication workshop, the participants were asked to develop both PESTLE and SWOT models for the EUSAIR. This was done through an online interactive game where the audience was given an array of topics to be included in the different categories of PESTLE and SWOT. Consequently, the EUSAIR PESTLE and SWOT analyses were revised and a few more topics were included in both models.

<h1>P</h1> <p>POLITICAL</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political transformation in the region • Border controls and security policies • Different political statuses
<h1>E</h1> <p>ECONOMIC</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversified tourism offer • Economic disparities between countries • Lack of connectivity • High unemployment • Brain drain
<h1>S</h1> <p>SOCIAL</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heterogeneous group of countries and cultures • Positive attitudes on environmental protection • Migration flows from Sub-Saharan and Middle East
<h1>T</h1> <p>TECHNOLOGICAL</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital communication • New blue technologies
<h1>L</h1> <p>LEGAL</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EU regulations • National laws
<h1>E</h1> <p>ENVIRONMENT</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Danger of ecosystem loss: overfishing, mass tourism • Climate change: rising sea levels, floods, forest fires

Group work on 18 Sep 2019

Stakeholder mapping

To do an accurate and detailed stakeholder mapping is extremely relevant for the communication strategy.

Once we have defined the mission and vision, and we understand the environment around and the objectives of the organisation, it is the natural step to be carried out as part of our analytical work. The stakeholder mapping helps define the most important target groups for our communication.

It is important to identify the main stakeholders that will have the potential to impact the work of an organisation. This exercise helps understand which stakeholders are more influencing and powerful. The identification and mapping of stakeholders give the answer to the question of who should we talk to.

There are many different models for stakeholder mapping. Some are focused on internal and external target groups. Some detail possible synergies between them. Some rather include internal workflows between different key actors. For the purpose of the EUSAIR, however, the model chosen is one that allows us to classify the different actors in categories according to a number of characteristics.

The power/interest matrix

The model we worked on is based on a power/interest matrix. It helps understand the importance of the various stakeholders within a structure that allows to list them in four different categories:

- Latents
- Key players
- Apathetics
- Defenders

Latents are powerful but lack interest in your organisation. It is important to meet their needs, engage and consult to boost their interest. Key players are powerful and also very interested in your organisation. It is essential to manage these ones closely and engage them on a regular basis to maintain the relationship. The marginal group with low interest and low power includes the apathetics. It is important to monitor this group because at some point target groups might move into any direction. Lastly, the defenders include those groups that have a lot of interest in the organisation but not much power. They are great supporters. It is of extreme relevance to keep them informed and involve them and consult them every now and then.

The attitude

Once we have defined the position of each stakeholder according to their interest and power, we can move to the

next optional step. The stakeholder mapping will certainly benefit from an understanding of the attitude of those target groups. Describing the attitude of each stakeholder gives more information for future communication activities where messages can be better adapted. The attitude is usually divided in three categories: supportive, neutral and resistant.

As soon as we have finalised this bit, we have concluded the work on the stakeholder map. However, it is important to keep in mind that this type of maps are constantly evolving. Sometimes stakeholders move from one segment to another, sometimes stakeholders also move within one segment, new stakeholders may also appear in the picture as time goes by.

At the same time, new maps can be done for specific purposes such as a communication campaign, a thematic event etc. It is also worth mentioning that the general public as such should not be considered as a target group per se. The general public can be the ultimate beneficiary of the EUSAIR actions but should not be targeted as one of the main groups for communication purposes.

During the EUSAIR communication workshop, the audience was given the time to develop a stakeholder map following the following principles:

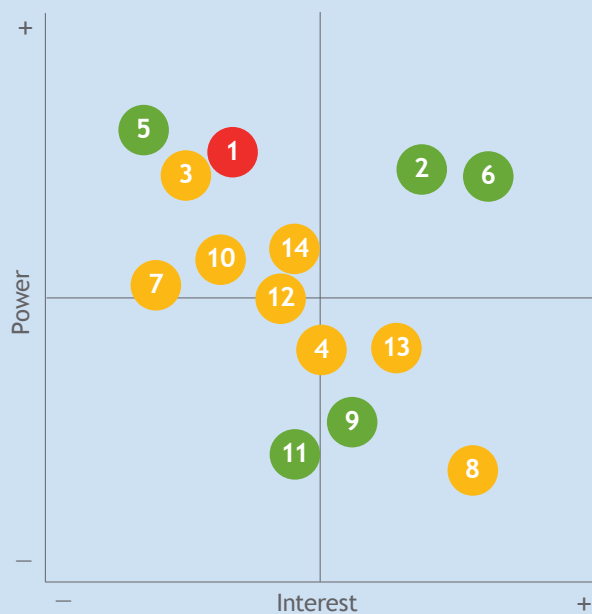
- Internal and external stakeholders should be included
- Think about ideal and realistic target groups
- Think about actors that are usually targeted long-term
- NOT target groups for one-off activities
- NOT the general public

Power/interest/attitude matrix

Creation of a stakeholder map for the EUSAIR following the power/interest model

On average

■ Supportive ■ Neutral ■ Resistant



- 1 ESIF/IPA managing authorities
- 2 EU institutions
- 3 National ministries
- 4 Local and regional authorities
- 5 Politicians
- 6 EUSAIR governance structures
- 7 Media
- 8 Civil society
- 9 Academia
- 10 Financial institutions
- 11 Youth
- 12 International organisations
- 13 Business sector
- 14 EU delegations and agencies

Group work on 18 Sep 2019

Expert feedback:

Other EU macro-regional strategies should be included in the EUSAIR stakeholder map. The experience sharing among EU macro-regional strategies was highlighted as one of the strengths in the EUSAIR SWOT analysis, and therefore it is extremely important to have that group as a key stakeholder. This group probably falls in one of the quadrants on the right hand side since they certainly have a lot of interest in knowledge exchange.

Moving groups to the right. Many powerful groups appear to have little interest. Communication can help to raise interest in this group and gradually move it to the right to increase engagement.

Changing attitudes of ESIF/IPA managing authorities. As the only resistant group in the map, the EUSAIR should make efforts to make this group more interested but also more supportive.

Key messages

The work on key messages is also an essential part of the communication strategy and the analytical work that takes place during the second phase of the communication process, after defining the mission and vision. In addition, there is a need to develop EUSAIR key messages for future use at national level (European Commission, 2019).

The key messages consist of a set of messages that forms the main backbone of the narrative. They highlight the added value of the organization. They have to be clear, credible and concise. Key messages are essential in the three main aspects of where communication can make an impact: raising awareness, attitude-forming and influencing behaviours.

As said, the key messages shall meet the mission and vision of the organisation. They are part of the strategic phase and as such take a rather generic aspect. In order to build key generic messages, there are some relevant steps to go through:

- take existing articulated perceptions
- define what shifts can be made in those perceptions
- identify the elements of persuasion
- ensure that messages are credible and deliverable

Once key generic messages are created, they have to be adapted for different activities, tools or even target groups. This exercise takes place later on during the last phase when working on activities and tools. It is very important to understand this concept since the work done for communication activities will be based in part in those key generic messages.

In this last phase, the message creation responds to a variety of different elements that need to be taken into

consideration in order to succeed and get the information across:

- Format: how to wrap up the content in an attractive and credible way e.g. images, font
- Tone: choice of language e.g. mood, style
- Context: external environment surrounding the dissemination of information
- Timing: when the message can create the strongest impact
- Repetition: the more often a credible message is repeated, the more likely it is to be picked up. Steer clear of overload of information

A quick dive into the last phase of the communication structure took the EUSAIR workshop participants to be rapidly introduced to the work on media relations, one of the communication aspects where the EUSAIR is lagging behind (see Survey results). Media work is especially important for the influence that media has on the public opinion.

The media is more likely to create a public when the information is negative but there are some tips that can help make it to the news:

- Look for the unconventional
- React to the thing of the moment
- Reinforce the ideas of who is already convinced

Lastly, the EUSAIR workshop participants were asked to create three key generic messages for the EUSAIR following the below advice:

- Base your message on the organisation's vision and mission
- Be direct and to the point

MISSION AND VISION

KEY MESSAGES

ADAPTATION OF KEY MESSAGES

FINAL OUTPUT

Key messages

Creation of EUSAIR key messages for future adaptation

Per group

Group 1

- We work with you
- Yes, we can
- Stop us now
- Don't stop EUSAIR now

Group 2

- EUSAIR for us. We for the Adriatic-Ionian future
- EUSAIR cooperation is regional innovation. It cannot be done in isolation
- We work together. Future generations count on us
- We work together on our potentials so we can protect our future generations

Group 3

- Together we make our region stronger
- We integrate our region prosper
- EUSAIR future is our future, let's work together

Group 4

- We work for you. Join us to create a better future EUSAIR
- We move together for a better tomorrow
- We create opportunities for growth and development, and to make our region a better place to live

Group 5

- We are bridging the gaps towards a better future of the Adriatic-Ionian macro-region
- EUSAIR: we work together to preserve the pearl of the Mediterrean
- EUSAIR – overcoming differences, building opportunities!

Group work on 18 Sep 2018

Expert feedback:

The main weakness identified in the group work revolved around the conception of key messages as ready-made messages for final outputs. When working on key messages for the communication strategy, they should be rather generic for internal strategic purposes. Messages such as 'EUSAIR for us' or 'We work for you' sound like messages already adapted for a purpose or even taking the form of a motto. Being that said, the inputs provided showcased nevertheless the added value and uniqueness of the EUSAIR.

Recommendations

The set of recommendations mentioned below aim to boost the communication side of the EUSAIR in the near future. It is for this reason that a focus should be on some of the weaknesses displayed throughout this paper including previous research and official documentation, and the survey and workshop outcomes carried out as part of this exercise. In order to deal with these challenges, the EUSAIR should consider the rapid implementation of strategic actions to ensure that the following recommendations are taken forward as soon as possible.

Spreading and developing a common understanding of the EUSAIR

Since EUSAIR implementers differ about the goals and direction of the EUSAIR (see Survey results), a common understanding of the EUSAIR based on a consolidated mission and vision should be spread. Not only that will help to work towards a common goal and communicate effectively but also to reinforce the idea of collaboration in a multi-level governance system for all implementers involved in the EUSAIR.

Improving EUSAIR ownership by defining roles and responsibilities for communication

It is unclear for EUSAIR implementers who should communicate and who should coordinate communication activities. First of all, it is necessary to spread the message that communication is everybody's business. At the same time, the EUSAIR should explore the possibility to assign clear roles and responsibilities on communication to the different bodies, following the example of the EUSBSR (Interact, 2013). Lastly, the possibility of having a coordination body for the communication of the EUSAIR should be also considered.

Continuing to build capacity on communication

Since the level of communication expertise in EUSAIR implementers is below average (see Survey results), it is of an utmost importance to keep on building capacity on communication. Capacity building in communication is necessary for efficient implementation and for raising public awareness (European Commission, 2014). Targeted communication workshops for specific groups of stakeholders should be considered. They can be topic-based for pillars or based on the needs of other bodies such as National Coordinators.

Updating the EUSAIR communication strategy

Once the mission and vision is clear, the existing EUSAIR communication strategy adopted in 2017 should be updated taking into account the outcomes from the survey and the workshop included in this report. In this sense, it is

especially important to include a consolidated mission and vision, the stakeholder map and to update the current key messages.

Providing support to develop specific communication strategies

Communication strategies can be developed for specific purposes such as the rotating presidency, individual pillars, a communication campaign or a thematic event. New messages and stakeholder maps among other things can be elaborated in relation to this. This analytical part is essential for the EUSAIR to succeed in its communication efforts and reflected in the latest Council conclusions (Council of the European Union, 2019). It is important to continue building capacity in providing the know-how for the creation of communication strategies.

Having the ability to create a narrative through storytelling

Regions should be able to communicate the results accomplished by the EU macro-regional strategies in order to increase their visibility (Council of the European Union, 2017). Sessions on storytelling and media relations, two of the aspects where EUSAIR implementers are lagging behind (see Survey results), should be strongly considered.

Knowing impactful communication tools

In order to make an effective and appropriate use of communication tools, it is extremely important to understand which ones fit better the EUSAIR purpose. Having an understanding of the latest communication trends will certainly put EUSAIR implementers in a position to succeed. In this respect, it is paramount to get familiar with the digital tools currently making a communication impact. Capacity should be built in this respect.

Getting familiar with evaluation

The evaluation of the communication activities is necessary to understand if targets have been met and to identify problems that can be overcome in future actions. In this respect, EUSAIR implementers would certainly benefit from having the ability to set up smart communication objectives, baseline values, targets and KPIs. In addition, how to report evaluation findings through, for instance, data visualisation and other attractive means is essential in this respect.

18-19 NOVEMBER 2019
BELGRADE, SERBIA

EUSAIR TSG2 Transport communication workshop

Introduction

The 2nd EUSAIR Communication workshop was held on 18-19 November 2019 in Belgrade, Serbia and focused on EUSAIR Pillar 2 Transport related topics (EUSAIR Facility Point Lead Partner, 2019b). The EUSAIR TSG2 Transport subgroup was chosen as a pilot project for building capacities on strategic communication in 2019. This workshop aimed to test how the methodological approach established at the communication workshop in September in Portorož, Slovenia works in practice and see how it can be applied to Transport issues of the EUSAIR macro-regional strategy. In addition, this event brought a practical perspective into practice with the introduction of topics such as storytelling and the experience from a practitioner.

Following the outcomes of this pilot project, the Facility Point Lead Partner is planning to set-up a model for implementing strategic communication within the EUSAIR Strategy, specifically targeting internal and external communication of Thematic Steering Groups known as Pillars, as the main generators of content, activities, processes.

The idea of this workshop was to further strengthen communication and build capacities of the EUSAIR governance structures -specifically the implementation level, represented by Thematic Steering Groups. The purpose was to equip EUSAIR TSG2 Transport members with knowledge and skills on strategic communication aiming at creating a more inclusive, consistent, and visible outreach and dissemination of the added value and the work done within the scope of EUSAIR TSG2 Transport.

The 2nd workshop explored how communication can best assist and contribute towards the Pillar's implementation potential, purpose and goals, taking into account the Action Plan and other relevant strategic and operational documents of the Pillar 2.

During the workshop the following domains were addressed:

- Vision, mission for EUSAIR TSG2 Transport
- Stakeholder mapping for EUSAIR TSG2 Transport
- Transport case study and media relations
- Master Plan communication and Storytelling

The 1st communication workshop offered an opportunity to address strategic opportunities and process weaknesses of the EUSAIR communication while, at the same time, introduced a methodological approach on how to design and execute strategic communication. The 2nd communication workshop aimed to delve deeper. The workshop aimed to narrow down and concretise the findings of the 1st communication, via exploring the underlying substrate of the EUSAIR Pillar 2 / Transport topics. The workshop tried to blend key learning outcomes of the 1st workshop

with concrete case studies of the 2nd workshop and thus contribute to the understanding how the acquired methodological approach can be applied and transferred to the participant's daily work.

This workshop was followed up by a set of interviews with representatives of the Transport working group in order to gather more qualitative information for future decision-making. With the information on hand, plus all the relevant information previously collected, the necessary steps will follow.

A number of recommendations is showcased at the end of this chapter. All the items included tackled the weaknesses identified throughout this process. Further actions points should be taken upon them.

Mission and vision

The first session of the workshop built on two main aspects: the maturity of EU macro-regional strategies and the mission and vision of the EUSAIR and TSG2 Transport in particular.

While four EU macro-regional strategies coexist in Europe, they all mature in different ways. The growth of the EU macro-regional strategies can be broken down in three different stages (COWI, 2017). These stages mostly depend on the level of engagement and modus operandi of the actors involved. The first stage takes place when the first interactions between implementers happen. Routines are established and the first talks about roles and targets begin. The second stage involves external actors as well, especially when it comes to embedding macro-regional strategies into financial frameworks. In the third stage, the multi-level governance can be seen and all actors contribute to the bigger picture.

Understanding the stages of the maturity of the EU macro-regional strategies is important in order to work on a mission and vision for guiding purposes. The EUSAIR

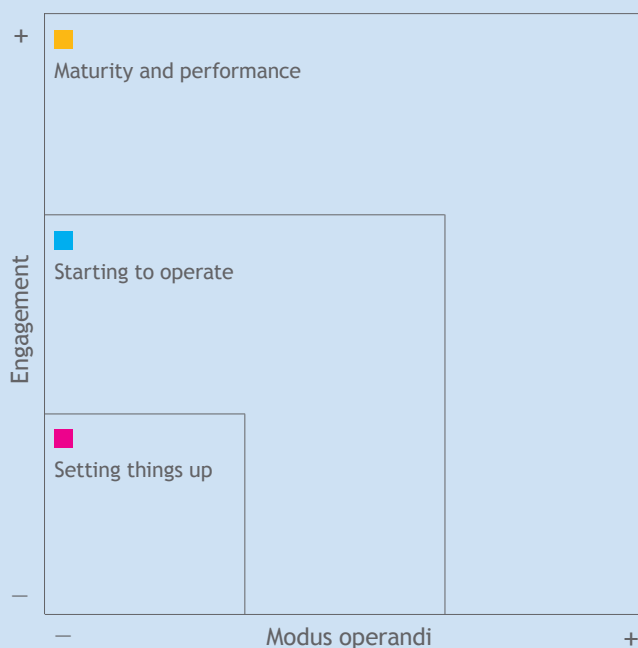
mission and vision suggested to the Governing Board follows the nature of these three stages. It is for that reason that participants were introduced to these three stages before going deeper into the subject. It was noted that EUSAIR TSG2 Transport might be between the first and the second stages at the moment.

The mission and vision provide the long-term direction of an organisation. It is important to clearly define those before proceeding with analytical and strategic work and communication activities. The mission answers the question of why the organisation is here and now. It is about the present and the what the organisation focuses on. Instead, the vision addresses the future. It answers the question of where we are heading, where we want to be in a few years, what our 'realistic dream' about the future is.

The participants of this communication workshop were given a theoretical approach to the mission and vision as well as practical examples of what this means in reality. The mission and vision sits at the bottom of the needs in communication since everything else is built upon those.

Maturity of the EU macro-regional strategies

The three phases of growth since their conception until the multi-level governance system is fully operational



- Multi-level governance is working to a large extent. Mixed working groups and networks. They actively work on new policy recommendations, test new methods and adapt solutions. Implementers and external stakeholders have developed the capacity to implement the Strategy through relevant actions as contribution to the bigger picture i.e. integration and development of the region. ESIF/IPA funding is fully aligned with the Strategy. Results become visible. Monitoring and evaluation activities are running, and there is learning sharing with other macro-regions.
- Internally, home institutions are fully set up for the task. External actors understand the macro-regional setting. Alignment of funding becomes visible. Focus on selected thematic issues aiming at future policy development (base for flagships) including targets and indicators set up, monitoring and evaluation.
- First interactions between internal actors who start meeting, discuss targets and indicators, establish first routines, clarify roles and responsibilities, brainstorm. Early awareness of the added value of EU macro-regional strategies.

Adapted from Study on macro-regional strategies and their links with Cohesion Policy (COWI, 2017)

They are the basic and primary elements that need to be first defined when working on a new project. Strategic and analytical work and communication will follow and be in line with the mission and vision. That is why it is so relevant to have an understanding of how the EU macro-regional strategies mature and what the three stages are. By knowing this, it is easier to define the mission and vision.

A proposal for the EUSAIR mission and vision was suggested to the Governing Board following the capacity building workshop on communication that took place in Portorož, Slovenia in September 2019 (See Mission and vision in EUSAIR Communication workshop). This proposal for EUSAIR mission and vision was shown to the workshop participants and compared to the proposal used by the EUSAIR Transport Coordinators in October 2019. Both suggestions are to be assessed in the near future, adjusted if needed, and eventually approved.

An open discussion followed aiming to understand how they complement each other. Both missions and visions are similar and fully in line with each other and they both rely on the idea of collaboration under a multi-level governance model.

The mission at this stage is focused on connecting stakeholders and clarifying the added value of the Strategy. In this very first phase, strengthening the internal network and raising awareness are extremely important. The vision is however much more demanding and focuses on having a multi-level dialogue in the near future. It aims to contribute to policy development while engaging a multiplicity of actors. Here is where mixed groups of actors are functional and the level of engagement is high.

Proposal for EUSAIR mission and vision:

Mission: To connect people and build a common understanding of the idea of cooperation and collaboration for an integrated and sustainable region.

Vision: We want to be the reference for multi-level policy dialogue in the region, bringing people and skills together.

Proposal for EUSAIR TSG2 Transport mission and vision:

Mission:

- Contribute to build up one cohesive and connected European Region, sharing actions and solutions for sustainable transport.
- Stimulate policy dialogue between decision-makers, industries, universities and the civil society in the Adriatic-Ionian Region.

Vision:

- An instrument for policy makers to listen to the needs of territories.
- A place where stakeholders' and citizens' mobility needs shape the political vision.
- An instrument for creating, testing and adapting solutions to the mobility needs of the Adriatic-Ionian region.

Stakeholder mapping

One of the key parts of a communication strategy is the stakeholder mapping. Identification of the main stakeholders with a potential to impact the work of an organisation is extremely important in order to better target your communication. In addition, this exercise helps understand which stakeholders are more influencing and powerful.

In this second session of the workshop, participants were introduced to the basics of stakeholder mapping including different models to identify target groups. As previously done in the first workshop, the model chosen is one that allows us to classify the different actors in categories according to a number of characteristics.

The model we worked on is based on a power/interest matrix. The stakeholder map created for the EUSAIR during the workshop in Portorož, Slovenia in September 2019 was presented to the participants. It was acknowledged that it

Identification of the main stakeholders with a potential to impact the work of an organisation is extremely important

New stakeholder maps can be done for particular purposes such as a communication campaign or a big event

gives a pretty good picture of the main target groups and their power and influence in the current EUSAIR structure. This map served as a basis for further explanations about this model and how it works. In this respect, it helps understand the importance of the various stakeholders by dividing them in four different categories:

- The powerful but with little interest in your organisation. It is important to meet their needs, engage and consult to boost their interest.
- Key players are powerful and also very interested in your organisation. It is essential to manage these ones closely and engage them on a regular basis to maintain

the relationship.

- The group with low interest and low power should be monitored because at some point target groups might move into any direction.
- The defenders include those groups that have a lot of interest in the organisation but not much power. They are great supporters. It is of extreme relevance to keep them informed and involve them and consult them every now and then.

For the purpose of the EUSAIR TSG2 Transport, the focus is not on the attitude of the stakeholders. It was made clear by the workshop participants that, in this case, the attitude of each stakeholder group should be assessed on an individual basis. Even if most groups might have neutral approaches, in some issues it is important to understand whether groups can be resistant or supportive.

As soon as we have finalised this bit, we have concluded the work on the stakeholder map. However, it is important to keep in mind that this type of maps are constantly evolving. Sometimes stakeholders move from one segment to another, sometimes stakeholders also move within one segment, new stakeholders may also appear in the picture as time goes by.

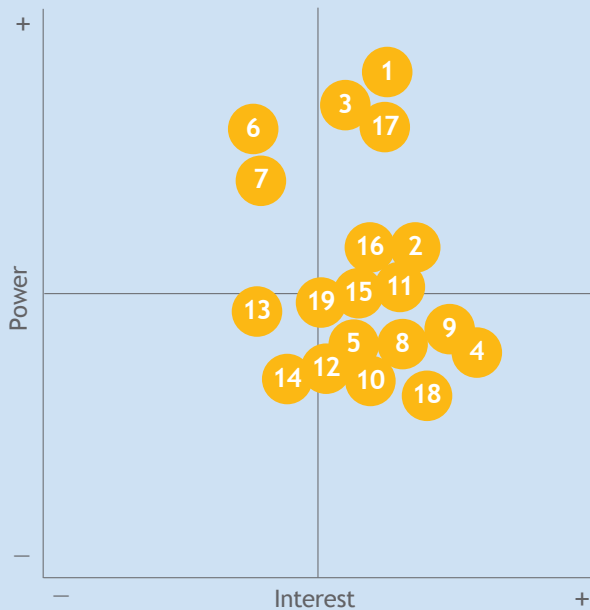
Therefore, new maps are constantly done and they can also be done for particular purposes such as a communication campaign, a big event etc. It is also worth mentioning that the general public as such should not be considered as a target group per se. The general public can be the ultimate beneficiary of the EUSAIR actions but should not be targeted as one of the main groups for communication purposes.

Lastly, the participants built a stakeholder map through an online interactive tool. The target groups presented were specific for Transport but also included a cross-sectoral for health and environment.

Power/interest matrix

Creation of a stakeholder map for EUSAIR TSG2 Transport following the power/interest model

On average



- 1 EU institutions
- 2 Local and regional authorities
- 3 National policy makers
- 4 EUSAIR implementers and other stakeholders
- 5 Other EU macro-regional strategies
- 6 ESIF/IPA managing authorities
- 7 Financial institutions
- 8 Academia and research
- 9 EU project beneficiaries in the field of transport
- 10 NGOs working on transport issues
- 11 Transport/health/environmental journalists
- 12 Local journalists
- 13 National/international media and press agencies
- 14 Trade unions
- 15 Sector-specific business organisations
- 16 Major transport operators including state-owned
- 17 Health/environmental policy makers
- 18 Civil society dealing with health/environment
- 19 Businesses in the field of health/environment

Group work on 18 Nov 2019

Expert feedback:

Assess the attitude of your target groups before carrying out your communication activities. Depending on the issue, some groups might be slightly more resistant or supportive and that will affect your communication activities dramatically.

Move managing authorities and financial institutions to the right. These two powerful groups seem to have little interest. Through your targeted communication, try to raise the added value of your work and how it can benefit them.

Engage and consult regularly the EU institutions and national policy makers including those dealing with transport, health and the environment.

Keep an eye on the groups colliding towards the middle. These 10-15 groups seem to have some interest and power. Consider to update/monitor them regularly. If they gain power at some point, they might be great ambassadors of your work.

Storytelling

Once your strategic and analytical part is done, you can go ahead with your communication activities. However, one of the things that lies between the strategic part and the communication activities is storytelling. Storytelling is a powerful method to structure your narrative and build emotional connection with your audience. In this sense, the ability to tell stories through your communication activities will put you in a position to succeed. That is the reason why storytelling is so important when building capacity on communication. It is worth noting that it works for both results and expected results.

Storytelling was the last topic of this workshop and included some theory and a practical exercise. The theoretical part tackled the main five weaknesses when communicating and three storytelling techniques. The exercise addressed the communication of the EUSAIR Transport Masterplan by appropriately using one of the three storytelling techniques.

The three storytelling techniques presented are used to build the main skeleton of the story. This skeleton is important for the following reasons: it builds the summary of your story; it is an effective way to deal with the writer's block; you can always go back to it if you feel secondary elements are affecting your story.

The 5 Ws

The 5 Ws technique tries to always first answer the five questions: who (is it about), what (happened), when (did it take place), where (did it take place), and why (did it happen)? When further elaborating the story, you can add the how and have a structure known as the 5 Ws + 1H (EUSAIR Facility Point Lead Partner, 2018).

Freytag's pyramid

The former playwrighter Freytag identified the different elements of a story:

- Introduction: Present the main character/s (someone impacted by an issue, a habitat at risk etc)
- Inciting incident: The problem your organisation is trying to solve
- Rising action: Consequences of the problem
- Climax: problem is/isn't fixed
- Falling action: Show why the solution is a solution, with all the improvements that follow as a result
- Resolution: what happens next

Pixar story spine

Recently, the animation production company Pixar claimed that every single story fits in what they call story spine.

This story spine reads as follows:

The five sins of communication:

Vanity: you can't be the hero of your own story. Self-admiring statements rarely work.

Authority: The more we believe in our facts and figures, the less we remember to make an emotional connection. Many researchers are guilty of this. They roll out the science and forget the story.

Insincerity: Promising something unachievable.

Sensationalism: Bringing to the audience some secondary or irrelevant information aiming to attract attention or create a scandal.

Lack of humour: Humour is a universal human emotion. Viral hits are a combination of a good story, told in a smart way with humour. Dull content avoids emotional connection.

Storytelling is a powerful method to structure your narrative and build emotional connection with your audience

- Once upon a time
- Every day
- Until one day
- Because of that
- Because of that
- Until finally

Communication in practice

Article written by Morena Pivetti, transport journalist

Transport is not an easy topic to communicate about: it tends to be technical and usually attracts media attention when bad news occur, for example public transport strikes or natural catastrophes damaging critical infrastructure in the country. At second sight, transport has a tremendous communication potential as it plays a crucial role in everyone's life. We all experience its sufficiency or inadequacy in our daily lives, when commuting to work, having a weekend trip or taking vacations. Transport attracts attention, the challenge is how to make this attraction a positive one.

Geostrategic and geopolitical reasons: Media are full of news about the United States-China confrontations over the control of terrestrial and maritime routes, with the aim to gain access to consumer markets, raw materials and natural resources. Some media insist that the New Cold War has already begun. The Chinese Belt and the Arctic Sea Route opened by Russians and Chinese intend to move goods from Asia to Europe using a Northern sea route rather than taking a shipping lane through Suez and the Mediterranean. This shows strategic and geopolitical significance of transport and infrastructure in a globally interconnected world.

Connecting places, moving people and goods: Many EU citizens see the freedom of movement of goods, persons, services and capital within the EU as one of the greatest achievements of the European unification project. Transport infrastructure can be communicated as enabler and guarantor of fundamental principles of the EU.

Leverage for economic growth and new jobs: Infrastructure and transport are a powerful leverage for economic development, growth and creation of new jobs.

TEN-T and Adriatic-Ionian Corridor: Europe should continue to support TEN-T Corridors and strive to improve physical and also digital connections. The Adriatic-Ionian Corridor, more than other European corridors, needs investments in infrastructure to improve connectivity between Eastern European and Balkan countries with Central and Northern Europe. The creation of new routes (terrestrial and maritime, railroads, logistic platforms and transport services) to reach Asia and China through South East Europe is crucial for this area's development: either Europe does it or China will, as we already see examples in Greece and Albania.

Communicating Transport in the EUSAIR

The geopolitical frame and strategic need for improved infrastructure in the Adriatic-Ionian region should be kept in mind when developing communication for any regional



From presentation by Morena Pivetti on 18 November 2019



From presentation by Morena Pivetti on 18 November 2019

strategy. In the case of EUSAIR Pillar 2 Transport, highlight that the EUSAIR brought 8 or 9 countries to work together to overcome complex transport challenges in the Adriatic-Ionian region, and that the Transport Masterplan has a potential to strengthen commercial and business ties among Adriatic-Ionian countries and with Asia.

When communicating a long-term strategic plan like the EUSAIR Transport Masterplan, clearly define:

- advantages the plan bring to affected communities;
- how the plan will improve economy of the area;
- how the plan will create new business opportunities, attract companies and venture capital;
- the positive impact the plan will have on environment, such as reducing emissions and making manufacturing and trade more sustainable;

Target groups

Map stakeholders, create networks of stakeholders and use the networks to inform about your communication plan



From presentation by Morena Pivetti on 18 Nov 2019

- and last but not least, be clear on what you want to tell and believe in what you are saying/selling.

How to begin?

First, make sure you build a working team capable to implement the plan, from induction to its completion; engage people who are dealing with the dossier in your administration and keep them updated. Second, map stakeholders, listen to their proposals and involve them in the construction of the Masterplan. Third, take advantage of the expertise of journalists, external communication consultants and marketing agencies to build a specific communication strategy focusing on your Masterplan.

Stakeholder mapping is a decisive step towards a successful communication strategy. When mapped realistically, stakeholders can be your best allies and your multipliers. The stakeholders active in Transport and Infrastructure can be categorised in groups:

- 1) single players: national transport and logistics champions, companies, professors, experts;
- 2) national organisations: business groups, trade unions, interest groups;
- 3) European organisations.

Groups 1 and 2 should be involved at a national level (or a local one, if your communication strategy includes local media), while Group 3 should be involved at the EUSAIR level by Thematic Pillar or the Governing Board. Group 3 organisations lobby the EU institutions and could be a good source of information and connections. Lobbyists

are important when deciding on new legislation, such as the new multiannual financial framework 2021-2027. It is good to involve European organisations when planning your activities at the European level as they might be of valuable support, when trying to get finances and investment fundings.

After the stakeholder mapping is done, create a stakeholders' network according to their roles and profiles. Keep networks informed and engaged in your activities. Lastly, use these networks to disseminate information and expand the knowledge and awareness about your Masterplan.

Case study: Connecting Italy

In 2016, the Italian Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport developed a strategic communication plan to inform about the Masterplan on infrastructural and transport projects to be carried out in Italy by 2030. A communication group was set up and the plan was branded as 'Connecting Italy'. At first, regular meetings were held with stakeholders to gain support. Connecting Italy was launched via public conference and attended by the media. Separate conventions with stakeholders were also held in different cities. The Masterplan's results were disseminated through various communication tools and channels: a book, public meetings, stakeholders' conventions, social media, audio and video materials broadcasted on TV and radio.

How to communicate a strategic plan?

The best way to communicate strategic plan is to divide

a plan in consecutive implementation steps and reach out when specific step is completed. At the beginning, engage stakeholders' networks to inform about your strategic plan. Stakeholders have a great interest in seeing the plan moving forward: they can lobby the media (and politicians!) to gather consensus.

Ideally, media should be involved when a specific implementation step has produced concrete results. In the case of a strategic plan for transport, the outreach can be done when a final project or action for a certain mode of transport is ready i.e. railroads, ports, logistics. Each step of the plan has a potential to be communicated. Look at the European cycloroutes: when a stint is completed it can be communicated to the media, involving cyclists' associations to spread the news.

Based on the current implementation stage of the EUSAIR Pillar 2 Transport, the most effective communication strategy would be to select few journalists and build good, regular working relationships with them, on a one-to-one basis. These journalists can be a 'Trojan horse' in the media: they are seeking unique news and they know best how information at stake will find its way to the interested public. It is also advisable to keep an eye on the mainstream media and campaigns, and see if and how your news fits in. Bear in mind that press releases and press conferences should be used when clear results are achieved.

What tools to use?

When communicating transport and infrastructure, it is useful to resort not only to words but to facts and visuals:

maps are very effective tool as they tangibly show where new connections will be built or existing facilities modernised. Bear in mind, that many journalists are generalists and are not specialised in Transport issues. Therefore, keep it simple, don't get over technical and provide explanatory background information. Tables, charts, graphs, figures are a 'must do' when working in the field of transport & infrastructure. When having interaction with a journalist, compile data sheets, and keep them updated so that information is easily available to you when journalists ask for specifics. Also make use storytelling: a person story or community story can better explain the advantages of a new project if an emotional component is involved.

National or local communication, paper or web?

At the moment, it is advisable to keep communication on EUSAIR Pillar 2 Transport at a national level, rather than at local one. Transport topics are inherently part of a national interest and national media have a major interest in it. In more advanced phases, news can be spread to the local communities. The European media seems 'a shot too far', unless you can engage a powerful key players having ties with European media. Press agencies and web portals deal with clear, solid news. Newspapers are better at narrating stories, while magazines are specialised in longer investigative reports. Radios and TVs are a popular, quick and concise tool. Available minutage for news is around 60 to 90 seconds. They are used when information is in wider public interest, when running interviews or when direct contact needed with the public.

Tips and tricks

Define what you are going to communicate, your communication objective and your media target

It must be something new or unique

Believe in what you are selling

Keep it simple: don't get over technical

Build good ties with people in the administration who work on the dossier

Organise internal meetings, keep people in the administration updated

Stakeholders are your best allies

Have a journalist talking to journalists

Build good relationships with selected journalists

Keep data sheets, figures at hand and updated

Use 'visual' subsidies: maps, charts, graphs

Use press releases when results/steps are reached

Organise conventions, meetings, events with stakeholders/communities

Use the expertise of marketing agencies and communication consultants

Interview outcomes

In order to better understand the overall picture of the EUSAIR TSG2 Transport, a set of interviews was carried out with five members of this group. This way, the amount of qualitative information gathered would complement observations from the workshop as well as the previously collected information based on background research and surveys.

One of the main issues identified during the preliminary phase of the EUSAIR capacity building on communication was that implementers had different views about who holds the responsibility for communicating (see Survey results). Considering that communication, whether it is internal or external, is everyone's business in every organisation, it is important to understand what the situation is for EUSAIR TSG2 Transport. When asked about their role in communicating, the general feeling is that there is no coordinated process, allocation of responsibilities is missing and there are different levels of involvement. Though some are trying to do their best in communicating the EUSAIR in different ways: raising awareness during events, contacting local/regional actors, disseminating project expected outcomes or reaching out internal actors.

Concerning the EUSAIR mission and vision, it is being made clear that they are the guiding principles for future strategic work and communication activities. Specific mission and vision for EUSAIR TSG2 Transport were created fully in line with the mission and vision proposed to the Governing Board (see Mission and vision). This mission and vision is based on the idea of a multi-level governance system where actors work together collaboratively. All interviewees believe in this approach while they still think that some additional work needs to be done in order to convince every single implementer about this logic.

In order to reach this level of engagement, the amount of meetings and interactions should be regular, not only with EUSAIR TSG2 Transport members but also with other implementers as well as external stakeholders. According to the interviewees, meetings happen twice a year within this group but contact within this group, other EUSAIR actors and other external stakeholders should be substantially improved.

In this sense, some silos in internal communication remain within Transport. Key information should be delivered internally, ensuring that it reaches everyone in the group. In relation to this, it seems that the online tool called Stakeholder platform, built specifically to improve contact and knowledge and information sharing between internal actors, is underused at the moment.

Regarding connection with other EUSAIR bodies, other sectors and other EU macro-regional strategies, Transport

is lagging behind as there does not seem to be a high amount of contact with external actors. Strengthening cross-sectoral coordination is one of the largest challenges for EU macro-regional strategies (OECD, 2019). This type of mixed network would definitely boost the multi-level policy dialogue and would be an essential step towards a multi-level governance system.

In terms of external communication, some EUSAIR TSG2 Transport actors are extremely active in communicating but the level of involvement differs from some implementers to others. When asked about the main challenges in disseminating information about the EUSAIR, it seems that raising awareness about the Strategy and engaging

Engaging stakeholders, raising awareness and communicating the added value of the EUSAIR are considered the main challenges

A joint communication strategy for Transport would be of great guidance, clarify the approach and set up objectives

stakeholders are the primary concerns. The ability to present the EUSAIR in an easy-to-understand language has been identified as one of the main issues. Most interviewees generally have difficulties in communicating the added value of the EUSAIR as well as the meaning of the macro-regional approach. Lastly, it was noted that it would be important to design an organigramme or some sort of infographic to explain the governance levels within the Strategy.

Future needs

The Council conclusions of 2019 reflected the need for development of communication strategies and communication activities (Council of the European Union, 2019). As already expressed during the workshop, there is a common perception that the development of a common

communication strategy for EUSAIR TSG2 Transport would substantially help in communication. Interviewees feel that a joint communication strategy would be of great guidance, clarify the approach and set up objectives. There is also a need to develop key messages for future use at national level (European Commission, 2019). This need would fit well as part of a common communication strategy.

The development of well planned communication activities for external communication is another need encountered. Among those activities, it was highlighted the possibility to design a communication campaign to disseminate information about the Transport Masterplan with the support of a communication expert. In this respect, the need to plan how to reach the media was also one of the topics highlighted.

Interviewees also show their willingness to continue to build capacity in communication. Capacity building in communication is essential for efficient implementation and for raising public awareness (European Commission, 2014). The learnings from communication workshops so far have been found extremely valuable, especially the work on mission and vision, stakeholder mapping and storytelling. In this sense, it was noted that regular workshops would help to continue the work done hitherto and prepare for upcoming communication activities.

Lastly, there is a need to solidify the current Transport group, where every single actor is on the same page and there is a common approach and a 'single voice'. In this respect, it is also important to start expanding the network, reach out other pillars and external stakeholders such as other EU macro-regional strategies and other relevant sectors.

Interviews in a nutshell

Views of representatives of the EUSAIR TSG2 Transport

■ Strong points ■ Weak points

Roles and responsibilities

- General understanding of the principle 'communication is everyone's business'
- No allocation of roles and responsibilities in communication

EUSAIR mission and vision

- Willingness to implement it and understanding of the importance of a joint approach
- Not everyone is on the same page yet

Internal communication

- Regular interactions
- Communication silos
- Online tool Stakeholder platform is underused

External communication

- Some active players
- Level of involvement differs from some implementers to others
- Difficulties to explain the macro-regional approach and the EUSAIR added value in a simple way

Main challenges

- Engaging stakeholders
- Raising awareness of the EUSAIR among decision makers

Future needs

A joint communication strategy for TSG2 Transport
 Development of communication activities
 Continuous capacity building on communication
 Strengthening/Expanding of the network

Interviews with members of EUSAIR TSG2
 Transport took place on 27 Nov - 6 Dec 2019

Recommendations

The following recommendations are meant to boost the communication work of the EUSAIR TSG2 Transport. They are based on the two communication workshops carried out so far, background research and surveys and interview results. In order to deal with these challenges, there should be a mandate specifically focused on the development of a communication strategy for EUSAIR TSG2 Transport during 2020. This paper should include how to overcome most challenges and weaknesses identified in this set of recommendations. These recommendations might also well be extrapolated to the other pillars and adapted if needed.

Strengthening cross-sector coordination

EUSAIR TSG2 Transport meets some of the characteristics of the stages one and two of the maturity of EU macro-regional strategies (see Mission and vision). However, missing contact with external actors prevents from building an effective multi-level governance system. Expanding the network is paramount to success.

Spreading the mission and vision developed for EUSAIR TSG2 Transport

While it seems that there is a common understanding of the idea of multi-level governance for EUSAIR implementation, some actors have highlighted the need to continue spreading the mission and vision built for the EUSAIR TSG2 Transport (see Interview outcomes). In order to be able to 'speak with one voice' and to have common goals, it should be made clear that the mission and vision are the guiding principles for all the work done within this group.

Clarifying roles and responsibilities for communication

The level of involvement in communication activities differs from some actors to others within the EUSAIR TSG2 Transport (see Interview outcomes). Most of the communication activities revolve around the need to explain the Strategy and also about internal communication. It should be made clear who and what tasks are involved in the communication of the EUSAIR for this group. Assigning roles and responsibilities would strengthen ownership and improve visibility.

Improving internal communication

While the EUSAIR TSG2 Transport meets regularly every half a year, some silos should be broken (see Interview outcomes). The internal tool for communication Stakeholder platform seems to be underused and connections with EUSAIR internal actors are missing.

Continuing to build capacity on communication

There is nearly unanimity in the EUSAIR TSG2 Transport that communication is extremely important and that building capacity in this respect is key (see Interview outcomes). In this respect, the ability to engage stakeholders, raise awareness and communicate the added value of the Strategy was one of the most relevant points mentioned. The main issues identified to deal with in the near future include:

- **Developing a specific communication strategy for EUSAIR TSG2 Transport.** While this group has already developed stakeholder maps and PEST and SWOT analyses, a fully-fledged communication strategy would provide guidance and objectives. Setting up communication objectives and defining key messages are an extremely important part of this exercise. Expert support in creating this should be provided.
- **Improving the ability to communicate with plain language.** According to the interview outcomes, one of the main challenges encountered by members of the EUSAIR TSG2 Transport is to communicate effectively with jargon-less approaches (see Interview outcomes). The ability to steer clear of technical terminology can be boosted through Plain language (or English) exercises. Plain language is a storytelling technique to communicate in a simple and clear way without the need to resort to jargon.
- **Understanding digital tools to communicate.** In the digital era, one of the critical failures experienced by many organisations is to exclusively stick to traditional tools. While some of those are still effective e.g. events, it is necessary to increasingly think digital. Lengthy papers can be replaced by videos, paper brochures by interactive digital brochures etc. A dive into new and trendy communication tools is needed for EUSAIR TSG2 Transport.

Action points for the EUSAIR in 2020

The Council conclusions of 2017 on macro-regional strategies highlighted the need to strengthen communication and increase the visibility of the strategies (Council of the European Union, 2017). There is also a need to develop EUSAIR key messages for future use at national level (European Commission, 2019). Later on the Council conclusions of 2019 reflected the need for development of communication strategies and communication activities (Council of the European Union, 2019).

How to meet these needs is paramount to the success of the EUSAIR. Throughout this report, an exploration of the EUSAIR main communication strengths and weaknesses has taken place, with a specific dive into EUSAIR TSG2 Transport. It has been done through desk research work, surveys, interviews and the facilitation of two capacity building workshops on communication. Needs have been identified and a set of recommendations made available in previous sections of this paper. The overall recommendations have been slimmed down here below to a number of action points to be executed as soon as possible and hopefully during 2020.

Before anything, a mission and vision for the EUSAIR has to be approved as the guiding principle for future work. The mission and vision will be the basis for the development of strategic actions and communication activities. As such, the mission and vision is the first step of this process. The proposed mission and vision follows the model of multi-level governance previously explained more in detail in this report.

Consequently, it is essential to continue to support capacity building on communication for two main reasons at this stage: to develop communication strategies for each Pillar and to improve the ability to disseminate information about the EUSAIR effectively. The former will provide solid analytical work and specific inputs to each Pillar to impact future communication activities. The latter would help in communicating the EUSAIR in an efficient manner –with jargon-less approaches and compelling stories through the most suitable tools.

Lastly, there is a critical need to boost internal communication workflows. To breakdown silos, EUSAIR implementers should efficiently share relevant information internally on a regular basis. The organisation of meetings should be complemented with the dissemination of key information to internal actors through accessible means. Apart from increasing knowledge sharing, this exercise can also help to improve ownership and accountability.

Action points

For the EUSAIR Governing Board:

- To approve the EUSAIR mission and vision suggested in this report (see Mission and vision) or adapt it and swiftly approve it. This action should take place as soon as possible since the work of EUSAIR implementers should be in line with the EUSAIR mission and vision. Consequently, it is important to understand if this decision might lead to a revision of the EUSAIR Action Plan or any other operational documents.
- National Coordinators, in cooperation with national Facility Point partners, should map national stakeholders and develop key messages for use at national level. A workshop with relevant actors can be organised in the fringe of the 5th EUSAIR Annual Forum.

For the EUSAIR Facility Point:

- To continue the support on capacity building on communication for the EUSAIR through the organisation of workshops or any other appropriate methods. This applies specially to Pillars where support is required to build communication strategies and also to increase knowledge in storytelling and tools.
- To update the overall EUSAIR Communication Strategy with the learning outcomes from the workshop held in Portorož, Slovenia in September 2019. That should at least include a stakeholder map, PEST and SWOT analyses and the mission and vision of the EUSAIR. Information about this upgrade should be passed on to the obvious players.
- To reflect on the current design of the communication structure. Establishing a specialised communication body with representatives of all participating countries and a clear division of roles and responsibilities might be an option.

For Pillars:

- To create a communication strategy for each Pillar with the support of an expert if possible. This document would contain the guiding principles and analytical approach for the future development of communication activities. Among other things, specific stakeholder maps, key messages and communication objectives should be part of this exercise.
- To improve internal communication by regularly giving updates about essential information that all implementers should be aware of. This can be done in the form of e-newsletters, emails or by using the online tool Stakeholder platform.

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Survey questions

1. What is your role within the EUSAIR governance structure?

- Governing Board member
- National Coordinator
- Pillar Coordinator
- Thematic Steering Group member
- Facility Point partner
- Other (please specify)

2. To what extent are you involved in the EUSAIR communication activities?

- Very little, it is a side task for me
- All in all, I can only work around one day a week
- I devote 50 per cent of my time
- Most of my time goes to EUSAIR communication
- It is full time job for me

3. What resources do you use to carry out EUSAIR communication activities?

- Existing human/financial resources
- Additional human/financial resources
- Other (please specify)

4. Is it clear to you what the EUSAIR is trying to achieve and where it is heading?

Not clear at all

Completely clear

5. In your opinion, how can communication best contribute to the EUSAIR?

- By raising awareness about the value of cooperation
- By strengthening links between EUSAIR stakeholders
- By disseminating information about project achievements
- Other (please specify)

6. List up to three positive and three negative aspects of the current EUSAIR communication.

7. What organisations do you usually approach in relation to the EUSAIR implementation and communication? Select up to five.

- EU institutions and agencies
- EU programmes and projects
- EU delegations, national embassies in foreign countries and permanent representations to the EU
- National ministries and other national governmental institutions
- Existing EUSAIR governance structures
- ESIF/IPA managing authorities
- Interreg programmes
- International organisations
- Politicians
- Regional and local authorities
- Civil society and chambers
- Sector specific associations
- Businesses (SMEs)
- Science and Technology Parks
- Financial institutions
- Potential beneficiaries
- Media
- Academia and research
- General public
- Other (please specify)

8. What is the geographical scope of your EUSAIR communication activities?

- Local
- Regional
- National
- EU
- International

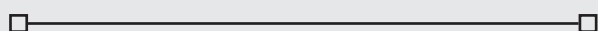
9. When communicating with your audience, what do you highlight as the added value of the EUSAIR? Select up to three options.

- Contribution to coordination between policies and pillars
- Achievements or potential achievements of transnational projects
- Cooperation between the EU and non-EU countries
- Goals and objectives of the EUSAIR
- Awareness of hot topics such as environment, sustainable tourism etc.
- Alignment of funding
- Value of finding solutions for common challenges in the region
- Importance of cooperation among the stakeholders
- Exchange of knowledge/experience among countries
- Other (please specify)

10. List up to three existing initiatives/strategies similar to the EUSAIR Strategy. Please avoid mentioning other EU macro-regional strategies.

11. If not being professionally involved in the EUSAIR, what would be your main motivation to be interested in the EUSAIR Strategy? Shortly describe.

12. How would you rate the internal communication flows between the EUSAIR governance structures?

Non existent

Extremely efficient

13. Do you feel that the EUSAIR governance structures have a unified approach when delivering information about the EUSAIR? This is also known as 'Speak with one voice.'

- Not at all. There is no coordination process
- There is some coordination but many actors within the governance structure do not follow a common approach
- Absolutely. Key implementers speak with one voice
- Other (please specify)

14. What kind of cooperation do you have in place with other actors at the regional/EU/international level to boost communication activities of your EUSAIR-related work?

- I never had any
- I rarely reach out to them
- Sometimes I work in cooperation with external stakeholders
- I have a strong cooperation going on with other actors

15. In your opinion, who should be responsible for the EUSAIR communication within the current governance structure?

16. Do you set up communication objectives in your communication activities?

- Yes
- No
- Other (please specify)

17. What ways do you consume information nowadays?

Digital tools (news, social media, online videos, podcasts)

- Hardly ever
- Occasionally
- Sometimes
- Often
- Most of the time

Traditional tools (TV, hard copy newspapers, radio etc.)

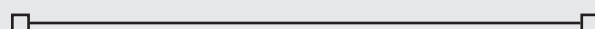
- Hardly ever
- Occasionally
- Sometimes
- Often
- Most of the time

18. What are the main communication tools that you use to disseminate information about the EUSAIR?

- Digital communication: website, social media, video, emailing
- Media relations
- Public affairs
- Events
- Other (please specify)

19. List up to three tools, not currently in sufficient use within the EUSAIR, that would make dissemination of information about the EUSAIR more efficient.

20. How would you rate your general expertise in communication?

Not experienced

Fully experienced

21. What is your main communication strength? Select up to three options.

- Corporate communication
- Internal communication
- Digital communication: website, social media, video
- Events management
- Storytelling/Copywriting
- Publications management
- Media relations
- Public affairs
- Brand and marketing
- Other (please specify)

Interview questions

1. One of the main conclusions from the EUSAIR report on capacity building on communication was that communication is everyone's business. How do you see your role in communicating the EUSAIR?
2. Do you feel that the EUSAIR mission and vision proposed to the Governing Board is in line with the current and future work plans of TSG2 Transport?
3. You have participated in at least one of the workshops on capacity building for EUSAIR communication. What have been the main learning outcomes for your work?
4. During the last couple of workshops, most of the main elements of a communication strategy have been presented and worked on. Do you feel that a joint communication strategy for EUSAIR TSG2 Transport would help in raising the visibility of your work?
5. How often do you meet with your counterparts on a yearly basis? Do you have regular dialogue with managing authorities in the region and other pillars, other sectors or other EU macro-regional strategies?
6. What is the main challenge encountered when communicating internally/externally?
7. In your opinion, what is needed in communication in the near future e.g. capacity building, activities are needed to present the work done within EUSAIR TSG2 Transport?
8. Is there anything else you want to add?