Interreg
Alpine Space

EUROPEAN UNION

CommunicationToolKit

Tools to **create** & **implement**
your project communication strategy

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Alpine Space Programme | 01.09.2017

Dear Alpine Space project communication manager,

communication is not valuable for its own sake, as you know, but **we communicate to achieve or change something**. In this communication toolkit you will find a selection of valuable tools to support you in the planning and implementation of a goal-driven and effective project communication.

Two sections compose the toolkit:

o *Section 1 – C*reate! follows the structure of the communication strategy and provides tools to develop each aspect of it;

o *Section 2 - Implement!* provides practical instruments to develop the activities that your communication strategy may foresee. (coming soon)

This toolkit completes the requirements and guidance documents available on the project communication activities page on our website. For more information, you can contact the JS communication team.

Now let's get our hands on!

The JS communication team

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Section 1:
Create your project communication strategy!

A. Communication strategy: why & how

A project communication strategy is crucial for effective communication. It should not be a long and tedious document, but instead a clear and effective one to be often browsed through during project implementation. It helps you remembering your communication objectives, target groups, and activity timing.

Writing your communication strategy starts with your project application form (AF). The goal is to gather, improve, and time the communication activities included in the different AF sections. The recommended structure is the following matrix (Cf. Factsheet project communication available here, page 4).

This section of the toolkit follows the matrix. Every paragraph will develop one aspect of the communication strategy.

| Communication strategy structure	Toolkit paragraph
Project specific objectives	
Communication objectives (one or more per project specific objective)	**B**
Target group — Target group — Target group — Target group / Outputs — Outputs — Outputs / Approaches — Approaches	**C**
	D
Activity — Activity — Activity	**E**

B. Specific objectives & communication objectives

TOOL 1: SMART objectives for clever communication!

Defining the project communication objectives is the first step towards the development of your communication strategy. In order to achieve high-quality communication, the communication objectives should be SMART.

S   **Specific**

M   **Measurable**

A   **Achievable**

R   **Relevant**

T   **Timed**
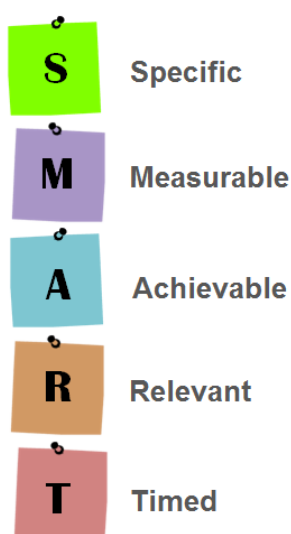
How does it work? List your project communication objectives starting from the information in the AF:

+ internal communication objectives, which can be found in the management work package (WP);
+ communication objectives for the development of outputs, which can be found in the implementation WPs (e.g. the organisation of workshops to develop an output based on stakeholder needs);
+ the communication objectives listed in the communication WP (these can be refined with the information in the boxes of transferability & durability of outputs).

Make sure that all objectives are **SMART.**

Example: <u>Project objective:</u> promote the use of solar energy in public buildings.

<u>SMART objective:</u> Influence attitude by convincing at least 2 decision-makers per Alpine Space country to implement the solar energy sustainability model for public buildings developed by the project in 2 villages by the end of the second project year.

C. Stakeholders & target groups

Think about the audience every time you communicate! This should be a mantra when writing your communication strategy. This paragraph supports you in understanding who are the stakeholders, who are the target groups, and how to interact with them respectively.

What is ...

a stakeholder group?

All actors involved. Both those positively and those negatively affected by the project.

a target group?

The special stakeholder groups addressed by your communication. Each target group has different needs and should be reached via tailored approaches.

TOOL 2: Stakeholders list

Here is an indicative list of possible project stakeholders and/or target groups. You should try to choose and narrow down the most relevant groups for your project as much as possible.

+ Public administration (local, regional, national)
+ Business support organisation, sectoral agency and service provider
+ Interest groups, incl. international organisations and NGOs

+ Education and research

+ Private sector: enterprises, SME

+ General public and/or media

How does it work? Your project stakeholders have already been listed in your AF (in the box: project focus, target groups). However, it is worth taking a fresh look to see if the groups listed are still appropriate. Once the stakeholders are identified, you can start mapping them.

TOOL 3: Stakeholder map

As the project resources are limited, you need to give priority to stakeholders that can have an influence on the project's likelihood to achieve its goals rapidly and efficiently. Stakeholder mapping supports you in achieving this understanding.
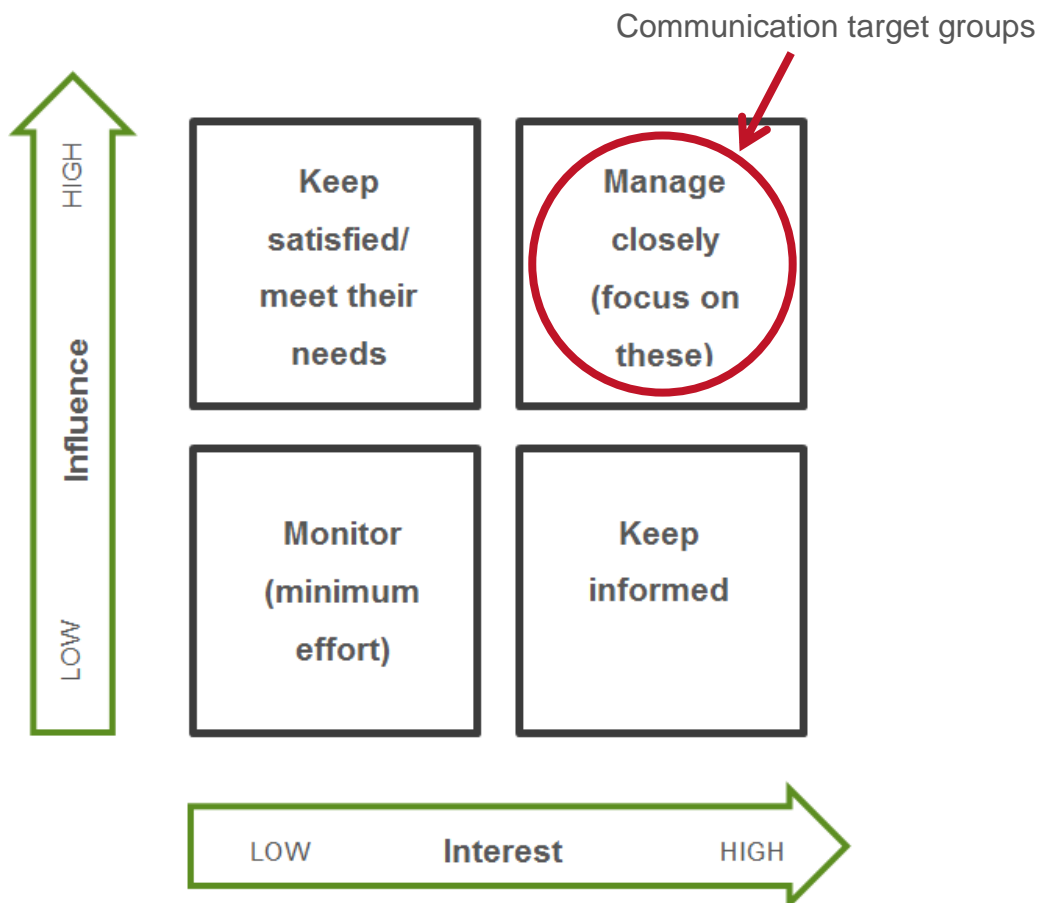
How does it work? Get your project team together and look at the list of stakeholders that you have previously prepared. Use the map above to sort the stakeholder groups in terms of the strength of their interest and the degree of their influence. On the top right corner you should find your communication target groups.

D. Approaches

What is...

a communication approach?

"Approaches refer to the different types of interaction between communication players (all project participants) and the audience. The same approach might be relevant for several objectives, while one objective could also be reached through the implementation of several approaches."
Factsheet project communication, page 3

Not all your project target groups might be reached with the same approach. It is important to choose the right approach to get the most out of each communication activity.

TOOL 4: List of approaches

Here is an indicative list of possible project communication approaches.

+ Branding
+ Storytelling
+ Hand facts & figures dissemination
+ Practical guidance

+ Trainings
+ Networking
+ Child education/entertainment

How does it work? The communication approaches are already defined in the communication WP of your project AF. Writing your communication strategy should be an opportunity to refine and better target these approaches.

TOOL 5: Message/Target group matrix

What do you want your stakeholders to think?

In order to adopt the right approaches and to pair them with the right target groups, it is important to clarify what messages you want to share. This tool will help you to check the consistency of your project communication activities planned in your AF.

	Thinks now	Should think	Approa-ches	Messa-ges	Time frame
Target group 1					
Target group 2					
Target group 3					
Target group 4					

How does it work? Insert your project target groups in the matrix above and fill in the table. Use the targeted messages in all communication activities in a tailored manner.

E. Communication activities and deliverables

What is...

a communication activity?

The concrete implementation of an approach in a specific timeframe.

e.g. final conference

a communication deliverable?

A tangible product, linked to a communication activity.

e.g. informative leaflets

Communication activities and deliverables are listed in the communication WP of your AF, but can also be listed in the implementation WPs (e.g. seminars with stakeholders, etc.). You should identify them and include them in the strategy.

F. Monitoring and evaluation

Are you reaching out to the right target groups?
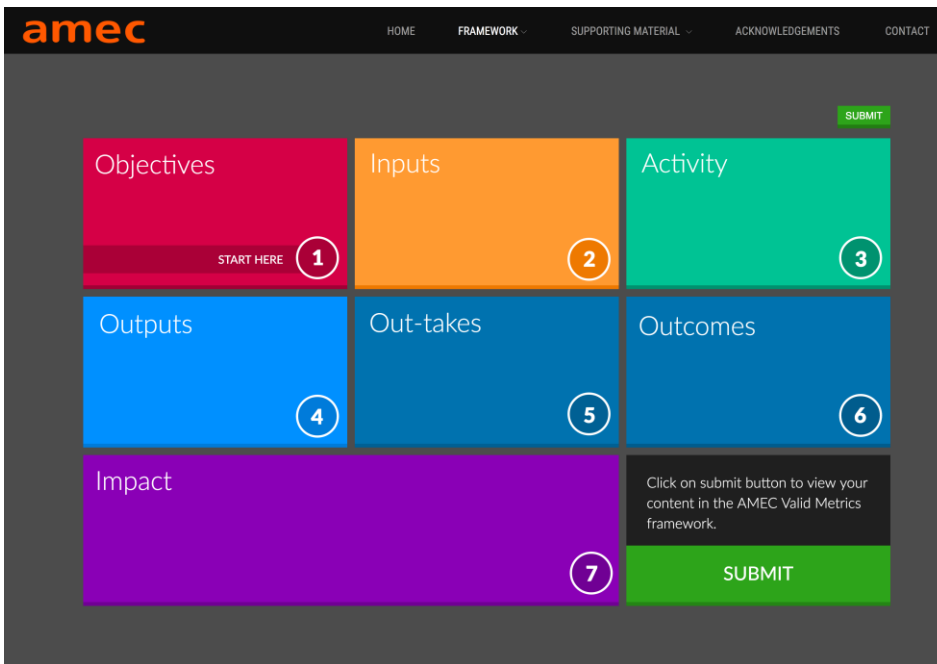*Do they understand clearly what your project is aiming at?*

It is important to evaluate the success of your communication activities in order to learn what is working well and what should be improved in the future. Furthermore, it is crucial not to leave this evaluation on hold until the very last period of your project implementation, but to plan evaluation metrics and goals well in advance.

Evaluation can show the benefits of communication and ensure renewed support from your project partners.

TOOL 6: AMEC evaluation sheet

AMEC (International association for the measurement and evaluation of communication) has developed an easy and user-friendly tool to facilitate the evaluation of communication. This tool is available for free at: http://amecorg.com/amecframework/home/framework/

How does it work? Fill in all requested fields and submit. The website will reorganise the information according to the AMEC system. This will allow you to have a visual overview of what your evaluation goals and metrics are. This tool is therefore useful both for planning your evaluation and during review. Taxonomy of the most important evaluation keywords is also available on the website here.

TOOL 7: Online survey tools e.g. EUSurvey

The evaluation of your activities may require the use of evaluation surveys. Many free or paying tools are available online, one of which is EUSurvey.

How does it work? Information on the use of EUSurvey is available in the online training course.

Section 2:
Implement your project communication strategy!

(Coming soon)