



Low Carbon Regions in the North Sea Cluster Project (LOWCAP)

Communication Plan



1. Background

This communication plan sets out how Low Carbon Regions in the North Sea (LOWCAP) cluster project will provide information and publicity on carbon reduction and energy efficiency projects in the North Sea Region (NSR).

Information sharing between partners, key stakeholders and citizens including sharing results and lessons learned, is vital to the success of the project. Strong clear lines of communication need to run across all work packages to maximise the benefits of partner projects and assist improvements in carbon reductions and energy efficiency.

The communication plan will consider the LOWCAP project in its two main areas –

- Publicity and Engagement
- Policy & Decision Making

The information and publicity in the communications plan LOWCAP Interreg IVB programme will be conducted in accordance with the commission regulation (EC) No 1828/2006.

2. Aims and Objectives

The aim of the communication plan is to create awareness and maximise publicity on the aims, benefits and outcomes of the LOWCAP cluster project at local, national and international level throughout the span of the project and beyond. Demonstrating the added value of EU funding and opportunity for trans-national co-operation and information sharing.

Aim	Objective
Create awareness of the projects distinctiveness and the unique values it will bring to regions development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communicate the results and outcomes of partner projects - Keep stakeholders informed and engaged with the planning and implementation of the project
Maximise publicity for the LOWCAP project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure stakeholders are aware of cluster project findings - Ensure consistency of communication measures
Highlight the role of the NSR in carbon reduction and energy efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure beneficiaries are aware of the assistance provided by EU funding - Attend and participate in high profile NSR & EU conferences and events



3. Target Audience

Aim is to reach a wide audience to create awareness of reasons and benefits of city projects and overall objectives of LOWCAP.

Target Groups	Level of Influence	Level of commitment Interest	Channel of Communication	Information messages
Partners & their organisations	High	Commitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Website Web forum Meetings Phone calls Emails Web conference E-newsletter E-bulletin Conference/ events 	Transnational exchange of knowledge and experience - creating an open dialogue and disseminating information and achievements on the project.
Other cities	Low	Interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Website Project Report Conference Publications 	Information on project benefits and outcomes to make other cities aware of how outcomes may benefit their own cities.
Other EU projects	Low	Interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Website Conference Meetings Publications Reports 	
Public bodies - NGOs Regional Development Agencies	High	Awareness/ Understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Briefing packs Publications Reports Memos Emails Briefings Meetings Website Conference/ events 	Targeted through tailored means on the outcomes and benefits from the project.



Political – European Parliament European commission Local & national government	High	Commitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • E-newsletter • Briefing packs • Publications • Reports • Memos • Emails • Briefings • Meetings • Website • Conference/ events 	Their decision making capacity, will be targeted through tailored means on the outcomes and learning from the project. Ensure aware of methods enhancing development opportunities and policy.
Economic Development	High	Interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website • Publications • Reports 	Keep informed.
Environmental organisations	Low	Interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website • Publications • Reports 	Keep informed.
Developers	Low	Interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website • Publications • Reports 	Keep informed.
Planners	Low	Interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Briefing packs • Publications • Reports • Memos • Emails • Briefings • Meetings • Website • Events 	Keep informed.
Education & research Institutions	Moderate	Interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publications • Reports • Website • Sponsorship 	Exchange of knowledge and experience
Internal staff involved & working on projects	Low	Awareness/ Understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Briefings • Information sheets • Displays • Presentations 	Staff engagement and understanding so they buy into the process
Media	Moderate	Awareness/ Understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Press releases 	Important role disseminating the



			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Press packs • Invitations to events • Site visits • Interviews 	project's actions and achievements. Build good dialogue to ensure they support.
General Public	Low	Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newspapers • Website • Plaques • Publications • Displays • Reports 	Engagement on the project including why the project is happening and how it benefits them.

4. Strategy

- 4.1 The communications plan will adopt a profile strategy for the project. Involving raising awareness and understanding of the overall project and cluster projects at local, national and international level and ensuring effective dissemination of the project's outcomes and achievements across all partner cities, other North Sea Region member cities/ regions and the wider public.
- 4.2 The communications plan reflects a strategic approach to communication measures ensuring effective communication of information tailored to target audiences to add value and maximise the projects benefits.
- 4.3 The strategy will focus on different channels of communication and groups of stakeholders at different phases of the project.
- 2012 building awareness and stakeholder buy in to the project
 - 2013 communicating best practice & project outcomes
- 4.4 Information on transparency of source and use of funding is a vital part of the communications plan; ensuring interested parties are made aware of EU funding opportunities.

5. Methods

- 5.1 Target messages will demonstrate that changes are possible in relation to carbon reduction and energy efficiency and create awareness of the cluster projects that are trying to achieve this.

- 5.2 Several communication tools will be produced these will be produced in the most suitable format, quantity and time frame for relevant target groups.
- 5.3 A variety of measures will be adopted to ensure expectations of target groups are met. Emphasis will be on sustainable communication methods including electronic publishing and just in time production of publications to ensure little wastage.
- 5.4 Electronic communications will be regularly updated.
- 5.5 Communications network set up with partner cities appointing a contact with each partner to effectively disseminate and update on information and maximise publicity opportunities.

6. Measures

The information and publicity in the communications plan LOWCAP Interreg IVB Programme will be in accordance with the commission regulation (EC) No 1828/2006.

Website	<p>The website will be a key measure in terms of trans-national communication. Providing a fast and effective communications, the website will be regularly updated as the project progresses and act as project communications hub.</p> <p>The website will be a window to the project and document information on the project, on partners and main outcomes & events.</p> <p>To provide the most efficient means for internal and external communications the website will be created in the early stages of the project including information on-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project background • Partner details • Partners project information • Links • Discussion network – with beneficiaries encouraging feedback from wider stakeholders. Debate on policy input from opinion leaders will bring credibility and help raise the profile of LOWCAP. • Map • Partner Login area
----------------	---



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy Information • News • Project publications, papers, etc • Events <p>When launched ensure the link is available on all relevant websites, resources, portal links for each nation. The website will be used for publishing papers and linking to relevant material on news and policy and using the website will ensure information accessible across the North Sea Region and EU member states.</p>
Publications	<p>Publications planned include-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaflets with general information on the LOWCAP project – online versions of these will be available and JIT printing will ensure more efficient print runs • E -Newsletter – Aimed at partners/ major stakeholders to update on LOWCAPs projects and progress and maintain the project’s momentum. This will be distributed every 6 months. • Final report for LOWCAP published in 2013 • Conference materials • An internal e-update bulletin will be sent on a three monthly basis to all beneficiaries. This will ensure partners are up to date with overall progress • Publications will contain appropriate reference to the EU assistance and funding received as per regulation (EC) No1828/2006
LOWCAP logo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LOWCAP logo and message with accompanying identity guidelines on use of the logo & message and EU logo and messages. A copy of this will be provided to all beneficiaries. This will include templates for LOWCAP letterheads etc which will be updated as necessary during the course of the project. • The guidelines will make it clear that communication measures must contain appropriate reference to the EU assistance and funding received as per regulation (EC) No1828/2006

<p>PR</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project will require ongoing press release at local, national and international level and relevant industry press to mark at project launch and major project milestones and events. • PR messages will be targeted to suit relevant audiences • PR will ensure a local element to national and regional news stories • Put in place processes to deal with crisis/ negative PR • All press releases contain reference to EU as per regulation (EC) No1828/2006
<p>Display</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Display – roll up display for each of the partner cities. This would create awareness and could be used at any relevant events and conferences deemed suitable to attend. • Fly the flag of the European Union for one week in May. • Display material will contain appropriate reference to the EU assistance and funding received as per regulation (EC) No1828/2006
<p>Conference/ Events</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WP3 Conference to bring together and disseminate results from WP3 to partners and stakeholders • Thematic workshops & partner events • Final conference on project outcomes and achievements. This will invite experts & stakeholders from across EU to input into the project, exchange ideas and demonstrate forward thinking. • The high profile nature of these events should generate positive media coverage.
<p>Two way communication</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetings <p>Use of non face to face communications to reduce carbon impact of travel –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emails • Telephone calls



- Web conferencing
- Discussion network

7. Responsibilities

- 7.1 The communications team has responsibility for implementing and monitoring communication measures in the plan to ensure that they comply with legislation and requirements as set out in regulation (EC) No 1828/2006.
- 7.2 To ensure maximum possible awareness and transparency of funding operations-
- Ensure that the EU emblem and reference to EU is included in publicity.
 - Ensure reference to ERDF European regional Development Fund.
 - Inclusion of the statement “Investing in your future”
- 7.3 Communications is responsible for -
- Managing the communications plan.
 - Assessing publicity and information activities initiated by lead partners.
 - Defining a logo, key message and tag line for the project.
 - Liaise with implementing bodies and communications and publicity activities.
 - Develop networks for information sharing.
 - Establish, maintain and update a website.
 - Develop a crisis management approach in the event of negative publicity.
 - Issue press releases.
 - Organise publicity material relating to the project.
 - Establish a bank of images for publicity purposes.
 - Monitor communications activities throughout the course of the project, making adjustments if required.
 - Reporting progress of the communications plan.
 - Appointing a communications lead in each pilot area.
 - In accordance with article 7.2 of regulation (EC) No. 1828/2006.
 - Manage one major information activity a year – presenting achievements, major projects.

- Arrange for the EU flag to be flown for one week as per stated date in front of the premises of each managing authority.
- Publicise operations, beneficiaries and amount of public funding allocated to projects.

8. Barriers to Communication

- 8.1 Language – the project will use English language for key communications, recognising and respecting that this is not the first language for many partners.
- 8.2 Geographic - there are geographic barriers to our communications with reduced time for face to face meetings and lack of knowledge of partners local communication networks.
- 8.3 Technicality – use of plain English language ensure we do not alienate some of our target audience through use of technical terminology.
- 8.4 To assist the communications process throughout the project each partner will nominate a communications contact.

9. Evaluation

- 9.1 Evaluation needs to be ongoing throughout the project to ensure communications are effective and so that steps can be taken to amend the communications package if it does not remain on track. This is to ensure communications continue to reach the maximum target audience.
- 9.2 To assess this, a combination of quantitative and qualitative research will be used.

Quantitative research - to give statistics which can be made available to stakeholders, demonstrating the value and success of the project.

- Media coverage on TV, radio and in press and publications
- Website analysis including web site hits, downloads, pages of interest
- Enquiries
- Conference attendance
- Leaflet reprints

Qualitative research - undertaken by a qualified market researcher and complying with industry legislation and codes of conduct. Monitoring awareness and what people think of the project using questionnaires etc. Feedback from the

conference and communications will also be a useful source of information. As will analysis of the tone of media coverage.

Website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Web site hits • Website feedback
2-Way Communications – telephone calls, emails, meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of telephone enquiries • Number of email enquiries • No of meetings • Tone of enquiry • Complaints received
PR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Column inches • Media coverage and tone
Publications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of leaflets published • Number of enquiries following distribution • Requests for further leaflets • Feedback
Conference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of attendees • Feedback forms • No of workshops undertaken • Increase in requests for information following conference
Launch event	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of attendees • Attendee feedback • Media tone and coverage
Sponsorship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uptake
DVD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number distributed • Number of responses generated
Displays	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number • Audience

- Feedback



Communications Timeline

WP2 - Publicity and Communication	Activity	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J
LOWCAP Website																		
Communication Material	LOWCAP Leaflet																	
	LOWCAP Logo																	
	Display Pull Ups																	
	E - Newsletter																	
	E Bulletin																	
Transnational/international events (Indicative)	2012 NSRP Conference - Bremerhaven																	
	Resilient Cities 2012																	
	3rd World Congress on Cities and Adaptation to Climate Change - Bonn																	



	All Energy - Aberdeen																	
	2013 NSRP Conference - Bremerhaven																	
	2013 Sustainable Energy Week - Brussels																	
2012 Conference																		
Final Conference	TBC																	

