

The North Sea Region Programme 2007–2013



"A web based video can be communicated globally at virtually no cost or environmental impact."

NEW MEDIA AND SOCIAL MEDIA [WEB 2.0]

New media is the future of communications. Media solutions such as web based videos are accessible, user friendly and sustainable. Once produced a video can be communicated globally at virtually no cost or environmental impact.

Web videos and other new media are effective and accessible measures to share results with a wide audience. Like every other communications measure they should be carefully planned: Take production and maintenance costs into account and analyse the suitability of the planned measure for the target group that should be reached.

Projects under the North Sea Region Programme are advised to consider web based solutions as a standard approach.

SUSTAINABILITY IN COMMUNICATIONS

Sustainability is a key topic addressed by the Programme. Sustainability is also being addressed as a strategic issue for the future on policy level in the European community. It is strongly recommended that projects incorporate sustainability into their Communication Plan. Sustainable communications will help to protect the environment and save money.

There is significant added value in being sustainable and communicating it – but this will be scrutinised by media and stakeholders so it needs to be well thought through and consistent!

A holistic approach will include

- To be web based
- Use Print on Demand and Just in Time principles in production
- The use of sustainable materials for publications and give aways
- To support organic and local produce whenever possible, i.e. for conferences and events

CONTACT INFORMATION

More information about the North Sea Region Programme 2007–2013 and the North Sea Programme 2000–2006 can be found on the Programme website.

Web based videos about key concepts and strategic projects of the Programme are also available on the website.

The Communication Plan of the Programme, an extensive set of logos including a graphic profile, a Communication Plan Guidance and other relevant communications documents can also be found in the Downloads Section of the website.

Do not hesitate to contact the Secretariat if you have any questions regarding the Programme and its communications, any of its projects or the content of this leaflet.

The North Sea Region Programme 2007–2013

Jernbanegade 22
DK 8800 Viborg
Denmark

Telephone +45 87 28 80 70
Fax +45 86 60 16 80

www.northsearegion.eu

Effective Communications and Publicity

Making Transnational
Projects Really
Count

*Investing in the future
by working together for a
sustainable and competitive region*

“Communications is a tool to increase efficiency and overall results. It will help to make people committed to the aim of the organisation. It is a very powerful business tool.”

BACKGROUND TO EFFECTIVE AND RELEVANT COMMUNICATIONS

- Communications is a key business tool
- Communications will add value and increase output and results
- Communications is a long term success factor

Communications is key in the fast moving and global community of today.

Many of the concepts and steps to consider in communications are generic and the better they are understood, the more leverage communications will produce!

Communications and publicity is a way to add value to organisations and projects, on all levels – be it local or regional, transnational or international. Well communicated projects attract attention, additional funding and talented people.

Communications goes well beyond information: Instead of providing a one-dimensional flow of information, it aims to get the audience involved and committed to what the project is trying to achieve.

Communications is therefore not only a matter of the communications department, but a long term success factor for the entire organisation or project.

Complex but great potential

In the European Commission there is a growing awareness of the added value of communications. This is reflected in the many initiatives in communications on a strategic level as well as in the different regulations referring to communications.

In the North Sea Region Programme communications is a separate work package for all projects, and all projects have to draft a Communication Plan. This is a way to put focus on communications and clearly demonstrate that it should be an integral part of the work carried out.

“The Communication Plan is the Business Plan for communications. It is the platform and the key to success.”

THE COMMUNICATION PLAN

- The Communication Plan is the backbone for effective communications
- The Communication Plan will provide structure
- The Communication Plan will save money on communications

A long term Communication Plan is the backbone of effective communications. It is the Business Plan of communications – it provides the framework for all communications activities and helps to structure, simplify and speed up the daily work.

The first step to developing a Communication Plan is to get the support of top management as well as the committees and boards. This is needed to achieve the platform and budget for successful long term communications and publicity. It is the most important task of any Communications Manager.

For (transnational) projects co-funded by the European Commission the contribution of the project activities to current aims and strategies on the European level should be highlighted. Long lasting and tangible results should also be at the forefront.

All projects under the North Sea Region Programme 2007–2013 must have a Communication Plan. A Communication Plan Guidance and other relevant documents and information can be found on the Programme website.

A Communication Plan should at least address the following

- Background
- Aim and Objectives
- Target Audience
- Strategy
- Methods
- Measures
- Budget
- Responsibilities
- Evaluation



“A lot of money is being spent... So there is a need for informing the people of what is happening.”

KEY CONCEPTS IN COMMUNICATIONS

- Communications and marketing are closely connected
- Building a brand is a very effective way of securing recognition and attention over time
- You need to understand your target group and the most relevant message

Budget

The budget for communications should be an integral part of the overall budget. It needs to be realistic in relation to the communications measures planned. Evaluate over time and move budget posts if necessary – the media landscape is fast changing and communications need to adopt accordingly.

Branding and Graphic Identity

Branding is a process by which the overall recognition and value of an organisation or project is increased. A clear message – including a graphic profile, a logo and a tagline is a valuable tool to promote what the project does and the values it represents. Strong brands are built over time by consistent and long term communications and marketing.

Messaging

A message is a short and focused statement about the organisation or project. It connects the audience to the vision behind the project, aiming to attract attention and stakeholder involvement. The message should be part of the overall Communication Plan.

Relevance and consistency are the keys for a successful message. Make it simple and positive. Especially for international partnerships – as in the case of the North Sea Region Programme – it is essential that all project partners use the same message to make their voice heard.

Target Groups

Depending on the project, relevant target groups may vary widely. The target groups and their characteristics should be defined carefully before planning the communication measures accordingly. Not all measures are suitable for all audiences. It is therefore essential to analyse, by which measures the relevant groups can be reached most effectively.

PR and Press Contacts

Imagine you have a good story to tell and nobody wants to hear it. Building good contacts with stakeholders and the media helps to get your message across. Find an angle to your project that is of interest to the general public. Good selling points might be financial matters, the creation of new jobs, conflicts of interest or a connection to current topics in the media.

Be short, relevant and objective. Do not send out press releases unless you have something really important to say. Always remember to mention the North Sea Region Programme and the European Commission.