

Communications background

Communication Training for
CENTRAL EUROPE Programme
15-16 June 2010, Gdansk



Why are we here?



- To learn about of the principles of strategic communications
- To develop practical ideas and applications for communications at the beginning phase of a project

Background



- Communication is integral to the Central Europe projects
- Show those who benefit and those who make funding decisions
 - Evidence of success
 - Value for money
- Show that interregional cooperation is an important tool



Communication strategy



Strategy is a driving force in any business or organisation. It's the intellectual force that helps organise, prioritise and energise what they do.

No strategy; no energy.

No strategy; no direction.

No strategy; no momentum.

No strategy; no impact.

Jim Lukaszewski

Step 1: define project communications aims



- **Raising awareness** of an issue, policy, programme or activity
- **Changing opinion** among key stakeholders
- **Changing behaviour** among key audiences



Good aims....



To favour dialogue & awareness of local SMEs of products/services typical of alpine heritage for the need to develop common innovative production chains to increase their territories' growth

Define water quality and apply GIS protocols in order to define all different uses or aspects of the resource

Improve forest fire prevention in the Alpine territory with the creation of a common forest fire danger warning system based on meteorological condition affecting fire potential

To achieve high level of safety for passengers crossing alpine road tunnels

Not so good...



To specify target groups to ensure that communication will be targeted and efficient

To be in touch with different partners and share information in order to be up-to-date and ensure information flow

To meet our project aims

To get press coverage about our project

Exercise 1



Identify 2
communications
aims for your
project

Are they realistic
and do they link
with your project's
overall objectives?

Step 2: Identify key stakeholder audiences



Exercise 2



List all possible stakeholders for your project

- Be as specific as possible, for example:
- Teachers at secondary schools
- MEPs on the environment committee
- Parents of children under the age of 12
- Mayors of communities where the project is running
- Environmental officials within local authorities/councils

Remember: the media are a tool for you to reach your stakeholders!

Step 3: Conduct stakeholder research



- **Familiarity:** how much do stakeholder audiences know about your project or key issues?
- **Favourability:** do they feel positive, neutral or negative about it?
- **Opinion drivers:** what do your stakeholder audiences feel most strongly about?
- **Channels of influence:** which sources and channels of information do they use and trust?



Step 4: create messages



- 3 key project messages
 - What does your project do?
 - Why is it doing it?
 - Why is this important?
- Tailor messages for your stakeholder audiences
 - Message - audience matrix is a useful tool



Examples: good



Baltic Sea Labour Network is an extraordinary transnational “learning by doing together” initiative of 26 partners from 9 countries in the Baltic Sea Region. Never before have employees, employers, politicians and governments worked together to create sustainable regional labour markets in Europe.

BRISK offers the first overall risk assessment of shipping accidents for the Baltic Sea area.

Not so good...



Supporting fast growing SMEs.

Promotes sustainable use of biomass and other renewable energies.

Exercise 5: message - audience matrix



Stakeholder audience	Think now	Should think	Basic message	Proof
Local council officials				
Users of public transport				
Parents of children in primary school				
DG Regio officials				

Step 5: identify communications channels



Different media and different journalists have different audiences and different interests

Different stakeholders care about different issues and use different sources of information

Different issues interest different media and different audiences

Step 6: identify communications tactics



Media

- Press releases
- Media interviews
- Press conferences
- Case studies
- Letters to the editor
- Features
- Thought leadership through spokespeople
- Linking project to current news items
- Press trips

Non-media

- Events
- Roundtable discussions
- Project briefings for officials
- Meetings with policy makers
- Publish research
- Familiarisation trips
- Information materials for stakeholders

Online

- Website
- Search engine optimisation
- Blogs
- RSS
- Wikis
- Social media:
 - LinkedIn
 - Facebook
 - Twitter
 - You Tube
 - Flickr

Examples



NO: Project's public events

YES: project conferences (kickoff, mid-term and final), panel discussion with politicians, 2 x town hall meetings with residents

Examples



NO: articles in the media

YES: planned articles in Environmental expert, etc.
(name your target media)

Step 7: plan communications activities



	week	week	week	week	week	week	week	week	week	week	week
Activities	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Brief journalists											
Familiarisation trip											
Participate in DG REGIO 'Open Days'											
Organise event for EC SME week											
Lunch briefing for regional offices											

Step 8: set measurement criteria



- Identify how you will evaluate your communications success
- Have your communications aims been achieved?

At the beginning of the project citizens living near the sea did not know about the impact pollution was having on the environment

How: telephone survey of 200 people

Half-way through the project 200 people re-surveyed:
20% increase of awareness
(as a result of communications work)

End of project 200 people re-surveyed:
A total of 55% of those surveyed are now aware of impact of pollution

Indicators



- Just listing indicators is not enough
- Set targets and explain how you will measure them
- Do not explain output indicators of the project
- Be realistic, but not modest

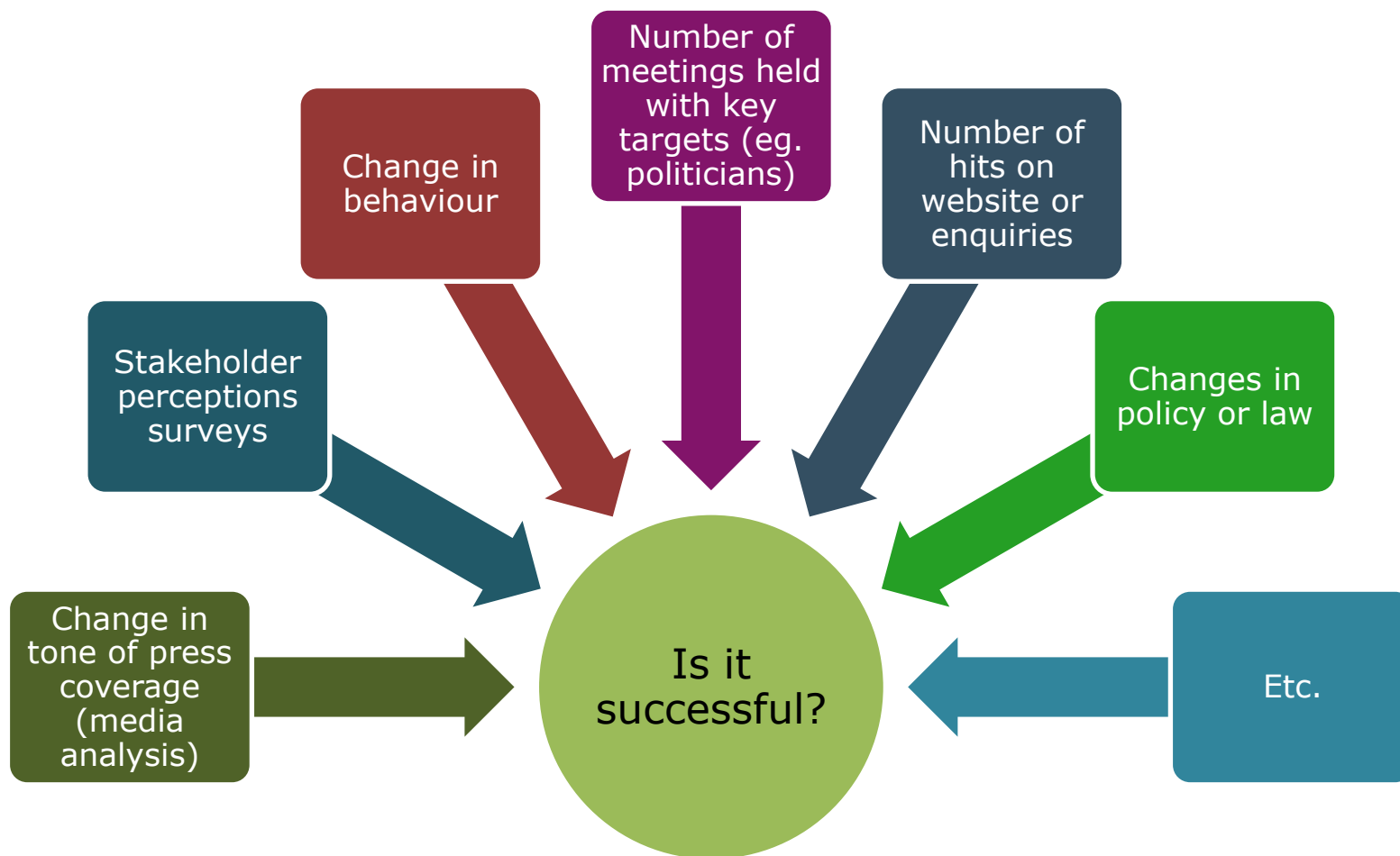
Example: good



The communication plan will be evaluated at mid-term and at the end of the project. It will be done through a survey sent to all partners via e-mail; interviews with the WP leaders and an e-mail questionnaire sent to the main target groups to evaluate project communication work internally and externally. Afterwards the plan will be revised accordingly.



Measurement



Exercise 6: measurement



Create a plan for measurement

- How would you determine if your project aims have been met?
- What are your key performance indicators (KPIs)?
- How will you measure these?
- How often will you measure them?

Step 9: budget



- Budget all activities listed in the comms plan
- Look at price of activity vs. return on investment (eg. a video that costs €50,000 might not be the best use of project money)
- Get three price quotes: balance quality & price
- Anticipate 15% contingency

Step 10: execute, evaluate and update



Commission
research

Evaluate
stakeholders and
channels regularly to
track progress and
gain insight

Keep messages
fresh: review and
refresh regularly

Update action plan
quarterly

Every three months,
roll forward the
detailed activity
schedule for the next
quarter

Review strategy
annually