



**CENTRAL
EUROPE**
COOPERATING FOR SUCCESS.



EUROPEAN UNION
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DEVELOPMENT FUND



Communications Guidebook

CENTRAL EUROPE PROGRAMME - COOPERATING FOR SUCCESS



EUROPEAN UNION
EUROPEAN REGIONAL
DEVELOPMENT FUND

Materials prepared by Pinnacle Public Relations for CENTRAL Europe Programme

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Editorial

This communication guidebook is a resource for ideas and practical advice to help Central Europe projects to get the best results and value from their information and publicity activities over the course of their projects.

This guidebook includes materials that will be covered in the communications seminar and also additional sections on presentation skills, updated information on communications planning, press release writing, event organisation, media interviews and non-media communications skills.

The content provided in the seminar and communication guide is for your information only and does not represent the views of the Central Europe Joint Technical Secretariat, the Managing Authority or the European Commission.

When following advice given in either the seminar or the communication guide please refer to section 3 COMMUNICATION, DISSEMINATION AND KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT of the Central Europe Implementation Manual. For operation activities to be eligible for funding, partners must demonstrate that their expenditure was necessary for the success of the operation and that the funds have been spent efficiently and effectively.

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Communications strategy

CENTRAL EUROPE Programme projects all have good communication skills. As effective partnerships, we must have strong internal communications. Most of us also have good experience with external communications: conveying information through the media or directly to the public and other audiences. Communication comes naturally.

As the projects are at an early stage we have a precious opportunity to make the most of our communications skills and knowledge at a time when strong external communications can give practical support to our implementation and outputs. To do this, we need to think strategically: what are the ingredients for good communications?

It may help to look at examples of other European territorial cooperation projects. Many have been extremely successful with external communications in their closing delivery phase, using it to achieve practical goals like influencing policy and changing behaviour. Others have been disappointed. What makes the difference?

A few themes emerge:

	Successful projects...	Disappointed projects...
Objectives	Communicate with a clearly stated goal in mind	Communicate for broadly defined or unclear objectives
Audiences	Communicate to clearly defined groups of people	Communicate without first defining and understanding the people who should listen
Messages	Communicate a small number of clear, concise, consistent and memorable ideas	Communicate a large number of different ideas, without sufficient focus, and inconsistently

There are three ingredients for well-planned communication: objectives, audiences and messages

Objectives

Communication needs to be goal-driven. We do not communicate for its own sake: we communicate to achieve or change something. PR tactics such as press releases, events and media relations activities can be straightforward to organise; the skill lies in ensuring that something useful happens as a result.

A universal mistake in external communications is neglecting to define communications objectives properly in advance. This happens in almost all kinds of organisations, and CENTRAL EUROPE Programme projects are no exception.

For instance, it is not sufficient for a project to define its objectives as “to raise awareness” or “to communicate our activities and results”. Communications objectives need to be clearly defined, detailed, achievable and measurable.

So that project should take it a step further. Why raise awareness or communicate its outputs? What views or behaviours does it want to influence? Perhaps one of its ultimate goals is to influence or inform public policy on a particular topic in order to improve public services; or advance technical knowledge on a certain issue and so to improve people’s quality of living.

Well-defined objectives give guidance and structure to all dimensions of public relations activities. The starting point is to understand what you want to achieve.

**Define your objectives by asking:
What do I want to happen as a result?**

Audiences

All CENTRAL EUROPE Programme projects need to communicate with a number of different groups of people each with different characteristics and needs. These groups are called “target audiences”. It is important to define target audiences that are directly relevant to helping you achieve your communications objectives.

Think about the audience every time you communicate

To communicate effectively and in a results-driven way, CENTRAL EUROPE Programme, projects need to understand their target audiences.

Different aspects audiences have different motivations and demographics; they respond to different approaches and means of persuasion. Different audiences are reached by different tactics and different media. Different aspects of a project will be relevant and interesting for different audiences – local communities as opposed to businesses, for instance. Different groups of people will help you to achieve different objectives, if you identify, understand and communicate with them effectively.

Each project needs a clear view of who its target audiences are. This analysis will enable an effective tailoring of messages, materials and public relations tactics for the greatest impact.

Most projects will already have thought about their audiences and how to communicate with them – they may even be defined in the original application form. Still, it is worthwhile at this stage to take a fresh look to see whether these audiences are still appropriate, whether they have changed over time, and whether you have any new insight about how to reach them.

List and review all of the audiences that you want to reach out to through communications activities.

Examples of CENTRAL EUROPE Programme audiences

Programme-level audiences

Below is a list of CENTRAL EUROPE Programme primary target audiences at programme level:

- Regional & local authorities who are already partners of CENTRAL EUROPE Programme operations
- Regional & local authorities who are not partners of CENTRAL EUROPE Programme operations
- City authorities
- Public equivalent bodies
 - Regional Development Agencies
 - Universities, Research institutes
 - Chambers of Commerce
 - NGOs
- Brussels regional offices
- European Commission
- European Parliament
- Committee of the Regions
- Member States
- Specialised EU networks (Eurocities, ICLEI, EURADA)
- General Public

Project-level audiences

Projects themselves will likely share many of these key audiences, but will no doubt also have different key audiences. For instance, your audiences might include:

- ❖ Regional and local authorities
- ❖ Managing Authority of CENTRAL EUROPE Programme
- ❖ Economic and social partners
- ❖ City authorities
- ❖ Trade and industry
- ❖ Public equivalent bodies
- ❖ Regional development agencies, Universities, Research institutes, Chambers of Commerce, NGOs, etc.
- ❖ General public
- ❖ Regional communities
- ❖ Schoolchildren
- ❖ Families
- ❖ EU institutions
- ❖ Brussels regional offices
- ❖ European Commission
- ❖ European Parliament
- ❖ Committee of the Regions
- ❖ Member States
- ❖ Relevant ministries
- ❖ Other relevant national bodies
- ❖ Specialised EU networks

You should promote the benefits of your project and the programme on a targeted local and regional level.

Messages

Messages have a special meaning in public relations. A message is not the same as an advertising slogan or a marketing line; a message is a simple and clear idea that acts as a guiding principle for all kinds of communications, from the content of leaflets, brochures and websites to the agenda for a media interview, to conversations with stakeholders.

Messages are a solution to three basic constraints on the way people take on new information.

Problem:	Solution:	Goal:
	Make your message...	Ensure that people...
Information overload People are frequently faced with more information than we can handle.	Distinctive Few in number	Notice
Objective limits People can only take on a limited amount of information at once	Clear Concise Simple Consistent	Understand Remember
Subjective limits People only take on new information when they are interested and motivated	Interesting Relevant Personal	Care Act

Distinctive

A good message will be immediately appealing to its target audience: it should be strongly worded to stand out from everything else that is competing for their attention.

For instance, a journalist who receives several hundred press releases by email or fax every day is much more likely to write a story based on a press release where the message is powerful and immediately obvious. Otherwise, he or she is likely to discard your project press release and look at the next one instead.

Few

CENTRAL EUROPE Programme projects all have a great deal to say, because they are all doing useful things. Having a lot to say can be a problem, though. If you try to communicate dozens of ideas at the same time, your audience will suffer from “information overload” and end up failing to grasp any of these ideas properly at all. Too many different messages cause confusion, and you risk losing focus.

For instance, if a project website contains dozens of unfocused messages on different topics competing for attention, readers are unlikely to take away a clear view of the project’s benefits. Or if an influential policymaker receives an invitation to a CENTRAL EUROPE Programme end-of-project event, he or she is less likely to accept if the letter contains many different competing messages.

“Less is more.”

Do not use more than three messages at any time.

Concise, clear and simple

Communication will never get results if it is delivered in a form that requires your target audience to sit down with a strong cup of coffee, a dictionary, a table of acronyms and a calculator just to understand it. The simplest messages are the best. They require no effort to understand.

Consistent

You stand the best chance of determining what impression your audiences will take away of your project if they hear the same message from different sources and on different occasions. Without consistent messages, communication lack clarity and focus.

When different activities say different things about your project, the effect is diluted. When they all say the same thing about your project, the effect is multiplied.

A good public relations programme will approach its key audiences in many separate ways: by generating newspaper coverage for news events like launches, by promoting case studies and features to magazines, by placing a project profile in a trade publication, by lobbying policymakers – and dozens of other potential approaches.

If a policymaker who is among your key audience reads a magazine profile about an aspect of your project, then sees a letter to the editor in a newspaper about the same aspect of that project, and is then called on the telephone to be lobbied about the same thing, she can’t fail to get the message. That’s the power of consistency: the whole is more than the sum of the parts.

Say nine things – they remember none
Say three things – they remember one
Say three things three times – they remember all three

Simple

There is a strong “bottleneck effect” in most public relations activities: no matter how much you say, only a small amount of information will make it to your audience. You can only write 500 or so words on a press release before people stop reading. You can only talk for 20 minutes in a speech before your audience lose interest. A 30-minute television interview may be edited down to 30 seconds.

Messages help to ensure that the important information makes it through the bottleneck. By making messages simple you remove all secondary, less important information that you can afford to live without. Simplicity is especially important in the world of European Territorial Cooperation programmes, where it is a challenge to explain the ideas and structures behind inter-regional cooperation – before we even start talking about projects themselves.

What does a message look like?

- ✦ A message is a statement, idea, or assertion. E.g.
 - “(x) is a problem and (y) is the solution.”
 - The work of project (x) is valuable because (y) and (z)
 - “It is essential to share knowledge among regions on the issue of (x) because...”
 - “(x) must take action on the issue of (y) otherwise (z) will happen.”
- ✦ Messages are based on facts and information.
 - Messages are unlike marketing, advertising, or media “sound bites”.
- ✦ Messages must align with the project’s overall goals.
- ✦ Few:
 - Maximum three messages in total
- ✦ Concise:
 - Ideally one sentence per message; maximum two sentences;
 - Maximum 25 words per sentence.
 - One idea per message
- ✦ Simple
 - Easy for anyone to understand
 - Free from jargon
- ✦ Strong, active, positive language
- ✦ Interesting
- ✦ Credible

Making messages

Begin by generating a large, unorganised mass of information– everything you want to say – then select and refine only the most essential, powerful and effective ideas remain.

Brainstorm

Get together a broad range of people who are involved with your project for an open discussion about what you want to communicate and to whom. Together, list your target audiences. For each audience, state your objectives – what you want to achieve by communicating with them – and also what ideas and information you need to convey to achieve those goals. This is the raw material for your messages.

Look for themes

Usually similar objectives and ideas will appear across several audiences. Group these together under thematic headings. Each of these may be the basis for a key message.

Rank and select

List your draft messages and decide which are the most important. If you could only say one thing, what would it be? If you could say two things, which other message would you choose? And so on.

Refine the language

Can you say the same thing in fewer words? Remove all unnecessary words. Can you say the same thing using simpler words? Remove any complicated vocabulary. Look at each word and ask whether it would be understood by someone who is not fluent in your language, or who knows nothing about the EU, or who knows nothing about the subject matter of your project.

Eliminate overlap

If you find the same basic ideas repeated in more than one of your messages, shift the ideas around between messages so that nothing is repeated. This will make space to say more. Make every word count.

Think media

What media will reach your key audiences? What would be the best possible headline about your project that you could imagine being published in those media? The answer is a good pointer towards a key message.

Think impressions

For non-media tactics such as meetings and lobbying, think: what three things would I like the audience to remember and tell someone else about my project later?

Test them out

Show your messages to people outside your project. Friends and family will do, but journalists or people close to your target audiences are better. Do they understand? Are they interested? If not, try again.

Choose the ones

Select the best three messages. Look at the best of the rest and see if they contain any truly essential ideas. If so, can you incorporate these ideas in your chosen three?

Put them to work

Circulate and promote your messages proactively within your project and be sure that everyone is familiar with how to use them. Every piece of external communications should be planned and executed in line with your key messages. Review, revise and rehearse. Monitor output to be sure that this is taking place.

Audit and feedback

Periodically, take a look at any press coverage that has been generated and gauge what messages your key audiences are receiving about your project. Are your messages getting across? You will need to be persistent and should generally not change messages very often, but if they are not working that can be a sign that it's time to think again.

Using messages

- ✚ Don't rush the process. Messages take time and effort to create. Get them right, and ensure everyone involved agrees and "buys in". They need to be universally accepted and used.
- ✚ Deploy the same messages through all of your communication efforts, from press releases and media relations activities to websites, brochures, event themes, and lobbying.
- ✚ Adapt them for different target audiences and occasions, but don't change them fundamentally. For messages to have impact, they have to be repeated over and over again.
- ✚ Support and substantiate each message with evidence and examples ("proof points").

Communications planning

By this stage CENTRAL EUROPE Programme projects should already have a strong communications strategy: you know your target audiences, you well defined communications objectives and clear messages that will help achieve them.

After reviewing and finalising your project communications strategy, the next stage is to use it as the foundation for a detailed a communications plan. You can create a long term communications plan covering all activities until the end of your project, or a short term plan for a specific event or priority. Depending on the scope, a communications plan may be as short as one page, or as long as 20 pages.

A good communications plan defines how the strategy will be expressed through practical public relations activities. It brings together in one document all of the fundamental ideas that should be driving communications, including objectives, audiences, messages, and an overview of how your goals will be achieved. It sets a clear framework for PR activities and allocates roles, tasks and goals to individual members of the team.

Following are the key ingredients for a communications plan:

1. Strategic overview
2. Situation analysis
3. Audiences
4. Objectives
5. Messages
6. Tactics
7. Media
8. Timeline
9. Responsibilities

Section by section: how to develop a communications plan

Strategic overview

For the benefit of everyone who will be part of the plan, explain briefly the importance of taking a structured and strategic approach to communications.

Summarise your project's overall communications strategy: give an overview of why you are engaging in communications activities, and what you hope to achieve.

Then define the scope and purpose of this specific communications plan.

Situation analysis

Perform a SWOT analysis for your project: list all of its Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats in terms of the scope of communications activities covered by this plan. Many organisations of all kinds use a SWOT analysis to audit and assess their current situation as a starting point to determine the best course of action. Use a SWOT to look realistically at your project's communications environment and plan accordingly.

<p>Strengths</p> <p>What are the strengths of your project and its communications activities?</p>	<p>Weaknesses</p> <p>What are the potential weaknesses of your project and its communications activities? What could be damaging or negative?</p>
<p>Opportunities</p> <p>What communications opportunities are there? Is there anything new, different, interesting or unique in your project that you could capitalise upon for publicity?</p>	<p>Threats</p> <p>Are there any potential threats that your project could face? What might go wrong? How could this affect your communications and PR activities?</p>

Objectives

Refine and restate your project's overall communications objectives for the purpose of the particular scope of this communications plan. These should be in short bullet point format and clearly indicate what your communications will bring to the project. It is important to define these objectives in order to be able to measure the success of PR activities afterwards. Set goals that are specific enough to be measured, but broad enough to allow flexibility and room to adapt to changing circumstances.

Target audiences

If you know your audiences, you can tailor your news and messages to coincide with what matters and interests them. If you don't, you might not like the coverage you receive.

Messages

State your key messages (see section above for more details)

Tactics

Define the activities that you will undertake in order to achieve your objectives. How will you go about reaching your audiences? What activities will you undertake to emphasise your messages and meet your

objectives? Potential PR tactics include media relations projects such as press events or publicising newsworthy developments, as well as non-media PR activities such as lobbying and seeking speaking opportunities. (See sections below for more details about tactics).

Media

Summarise your target media for media relations activities. This should not be a full media list, but an overview of target media categories. Through what media do your target audiences get their information? Which of these media will be most influential for them? Which do they pay most attention to and which do they trust most?

NOTE: If your key audiences are small or select, consider whether it might be more effective to contact them directly rather than through the media. For some audiences such as politicians and opinion-formers, non-media tactics such as lobbying could be considered instead

Timeline

Create a timeline that identifies when each activity will happen, along with advance milestones that you will need to meet during the preparation process. This will help to ensure that deadlines do not slip, opportunities are not missed, and that activities are fully prepared.

Responsibility

Allocate responsibility for each activity and milestone to a named team member. If one person is accountable for a measurable result, it is more likely to be achieved.

Evaluation

It is important to evaluate the success of PR activities, in order to learn which activities worked well and which should be improved in future. Evaluation also creates useful feedback to share with others in the Programme, so that they can learn from your experience. State in your communications plan the criteria by which you will measure its success.

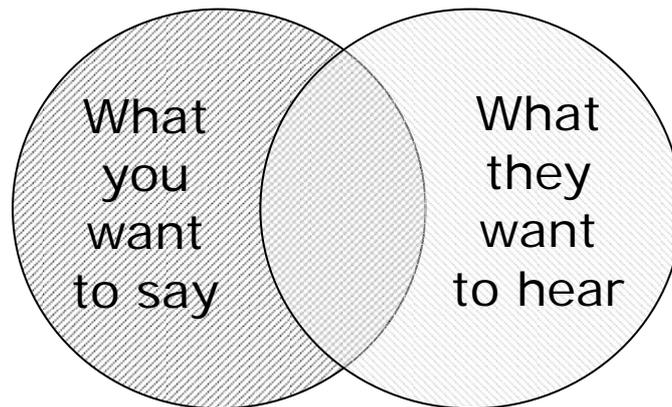
Making news

Most of what CENTRAL EUROPE Programme projects do from day to day is not interesting to most people on the outside. Most projects quite rightly devote most of their time and attention the mechanics of getting the job done: organising meetings, reporting, drawing up best practice guidelines, sharing knowledge, and so on.

It will always be difficult to generate interest in this aspect of a project's work because people outside CENTRAL EUROPE Programme or your project are not interested in the **process**. They care about **results** and **meaning**.

The intersection

A key principle is to **look for the intersection** between what you want to say and what they want to hear. When this type of projects fail to communicate effectively it is often because they are talking about things – like process – that fall in the circle on the left, but not the circle on the right.



The very big and the very small

What kinds of ideas and information tend to lie in that intersection?

At one end of the scale, "**the very big**" issues are always interesting: the major themes like health, quality of living, jobs, the environment and climate change. These ideas are in the news and in people's minds and conversations every day. All CENTRAL EUROPE Programme projects address big issues in one way or another. Communicating about how you are part of the solution to big issues will get you into that intersection.

At the other end of the scale, "**the very small**" issues are the local results and impact that people feel on their doorsteps and notice in their everyday lives. These are the results, the concrete impacts and changes that CENTRAL EUROPE projects make in the real world – not the theory of territorial cooperation or the process of cooperation, but tangible outputs like better paid jobs through innovation or safer houses through flood protection.

When projects find it hard to generate interest, it is often because they are talking about neither the very big nor the very small, but the process and bureaucracy by which projects turn one into the other. Important, but boring.

Making news

By the fax machine in most newspaper and broadcast newsrooms is a small in-tray for promising press releases that might become news – and a large bin overflowing with the rest. Most press releases are bad because they are not news. The same goes for electronic news delivery services and email – most messages that journalists receive are ignored or quickly deleted.

There is one reason for this enormous waste of effort: most of the stories that organisations want journalists to write and broadcast are not news. There is no point writing a press release or calling a journalist with a story idea if it is not news.

Messages will not make the news if they just say how worthwhile and important a project is. To get published or broadcast, a project must shape and adapt its messages inventively to be newsworthy.

Newsworthiness is relative, flexible and subjective. A small story can make the headlines on a slow news day; a big story can disappear without trace if somebody else makes bigger news the same day. A great local story might be of no interest to national or international media. A great story for print might be useless for television if it has no visual element. A great story for trade media might be much too technical for mainstream media. A story about industry trends may work for financial newspapers but not general press. Something that happened three days ago is news for a weekly publication, but ancient history for a newswire.

Most importantly, many developments that are fascinating and very important to people within the CENTRAL EUROPE Programme world are not newsworthy outside the CENTRAL EUROPE Programme world – at least on the face of it. This is where news angles become important. Think hard about how to touch your target audience. What do they care about? Why will this matter to them?

To generate interest in your project and its activities you need to develop creative PR angles that will capture the interest of your audiences over the activities of other organisations. This can be hard, especially if there seem to be no obvious creative angles that you can use.

Focus on the audience

The key to writing a good press release, for example, is to identify and focus on an aspect of what you have to say that will engage your target audience. This is what journalists do when they choose a “news angle”: they are looking for a way of explaining a news event that makes it relevant and interesting to their target audience. To make yourself newsworthy, you should do the same. Look for an angle that will **connect your agenda to something that your audience cares about**.

The first thing that goes through a journalist’s mind when he or she reads your news release is always: “So what? Why should my readers care?” Think hard about what journalists and their audiences would be interested to read. Why should they care? Take the information you have, and tell it in a way that makes them care.

News values

Perhaps your project needs to promote something that is newsworthy but dull, or you want to promote something that simply is not newsworthy.

The trick is to make your audience care.

In general, news is about **people** rather than **things**, and **concrete events** rather than **abstract ideas**.

Beyond that, there are essentially two kinds of news.

- ❖ Hard news is information that people need to make decisions. People need to make decisions when something has changed. Almost all news is about what is new, what has changed: so concentrate on novelty and change. Tell me what is new that will change my life and inform the decisions I need to make.
- ❖ Soft news is entertainment. People like news that touches them emotionally, amuses them or stimulates their mind. Soft news is just as important as hard news and to manage it we must think in terms of human interest. Make me feel something about this story and I will remember your project.

Hard news	Soft news
Novelty	Human interest
Change	People
Controversy	Humour
Conflict	Emotion
Surprise	Fun
Secret	Compassion
Money	Children
Problems	Celebrities
Solutions	Animals
Practicalities	Romance
Current affairs	Mystery
Business	Family
Workplace	Sports and leisure

Creative news

Below are some ideas to get you and your team thinking of new creative ideas.

Hold a brainstorming session. These are great ways of generating a large number of ideas from a group of people in a short space of time.

Speak to a journalist. Ask a friendly journalist what they would consider newsworthy about your activities. You'll probably have to spend some time explaining what you do, but they may come up with something you hadn't even thought was worth a news release. They might also be able to help with news angles for the story.

Use the PR story check list. This document contains 50 news angles that you can further develop into news stories for your project. Use it as an aid to brainstorm for PR activities.

Link your activities or project to other news stories. Use other news stories as a way of generating news for your project. For example, the August vacation period means that journalists are looking for news about tourism and holidays – has your project increased the appeal of your region to tourists?

Look for other potential news stories that you can use to interest the media in your activities, for example

- Significant dates – public holidays, anniversaries, religious holidays
- Sporting events
- World events – World Habitat Day, Children's Rights Day, etc
- Industry events – e.g. conferences
- Seasonal events – holidays, start of the school year, winter

- ✚ Political news – on EU, national and regional levels

Media opportunities

From time to time, almost every person within your organisation will come across an event or an idea that is newsworthy. Sadly, not everyone will recognise it when they see it! Here are a few guidelines for spotting a PR opportunity.

- ✚ Think **interest** – will this be interesting to other people?
- ✚ Think **news** – how your local paper or radio station report?
- ✚ Think **local** – how does it involve people locally?
- ✚ Think **people** – the media are usually more interested in what people are doing than in what organisations are doing.
- ✚ Think **communities** – what contribution has your project made to a community initiative or activity?

News devices

The opportunities for generating PR stories for the media and other audiences are almost endless. These are useful 'devices' for creating stories:

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Advice | 26. Link to current event |
| 2. Animals | 27. Link to forthcoming news |
| 3. Award | 28. Man bites dog – something upside down |
| 4. Bid for a tender or EU money | 29. Management appointment |
| 5. Briefings | 30. New contract |
| 6. Calendar events | 31. New premises |
| 7. Case study | 32. New process |
| 8. Celebrities | 33. New product or service |
| 9. Children | 34. Picture story |
| 10. Columns | 35. Press briefing |
| 11. Competition | 36. Press conference |
| 12. Conference | 37. Press visit |
| 13. Employee activities | 38. Personal profile |
| 14. Event | 39. Project profile |
| 15. Exhibition | 40. Quotable quote |
| 16. Expansion | 41. Report |
| 17. Expert opinion | 42. Seminar |
| 18. Human interest | 43. Slow news days |
| 19. "Ice to the Eskimos" – a service to an unexpected group of people | 44. Holidays and Sundays |
| 20. Improved product | 45. Speech |
| 21. Improved service | 46. Spokesperson |
| 22. Interview | 47. Sponsorship |
| 23. Investment | 48. Supplement |
| 24. Job advert | 49. Special report |
| 25. Letter to the editor | 50. Survey |

The media landscape

Europe is home to an enormous number and range of news media, each with a different target audience and its own news values. It is not possible or desirable to target all of them. Projects should consider two factors when deciding which media to target:

- 1) Which media do our own target audiences pay most attention to?
- 2) Which media will consider our messages newsworthy?

The answers to these two questions will usually be similar, because media define news as information that their own target audiences want to know.

Audience selection

Following are some examples of how different sections of the media reach different audiences:

Local newspapers	Local policymakers, politicians, communities affected by project activities or issues.
National TV and radio	Policymakers at local, regional and national level, opinion formers, businesses, regulators, researchers
Specialist/trade magazines	Experts, proponents and analysts in a particular industry or area of knowledge, e.g. EU affairs, regional development
International newswires	Newswires supply all other substantial media with news, so their final audience is the broadest of all

Pan-European PR

The nature of CENTRAL EUROPE Programme operations means that PR activities must take place on many levels: local, regional, national and pan-European. This document focuses on the organisation and management of these activities. The definition of pan-European PR is a programme of public relations activities executed in one or more countries. Usually a co-ordinator is needed to ensure:

- ✚ There is a level of consistency in communications across all countries
- ✚ The individual public relations programmes are executed well
- ✚ Cross-fertilisation takes place and best practice activities are shared
- ✚ Reporting is carried out in the required way and in a timely manner

Where just two countries are involved, the handling and co-ordination of PR activities is not usually too complex or difficult, as communications between the two can be straight forward and they can work in close cooperation. When a larger number of countries are involved things start getting more complex as lines of communication get longer.

Types of pan-European PR activities

As the cost and management of full-scale, pan-European PR activities is considerable and probably not the best way of communicating CENTRAL EUROPE Projects activities, here are various other options that can be used to communicate your work:

Using the foreign correspondents

Work through the foreign correspondents based in your country, who represent the media of the countries where you want media coverage.

However as with all media relations, the news must be relevant to that outlet and their respective newspaper or station. For example, for national newspaper correspondents, the news you are communicating must have some relevance to the country where the newspaper is based.

This is especially worthwhile in cities where there is a large foreign press corps. Brussels is the base for more foreign correspondents than any other city in the world. There are 700 foreign correspondents based in the city. (The second largest press corps is Washington DC with 574.)

Additionally, other major cities in Europe also have large international press corps, which are hubs for specific European regions. For example:

- ✚ Vienna, Budapest and Prague are the hubs for the Central and Eastern European correspondents.
- ✚ Rome, Budapest and increasingly Belgrade are the hubs for the South East European correspondents.

As most foreign correspondents are accredited by their own governments (press offices, ministry of foreign relations) or other agencies, in order to

get a list contact the relevant embassies, government department or EU office or search on line.

Also big media outlets (Wall Street Journal Europe, Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, Liberation, Financial Times, etc.) will provide you with a list of their correspondents in any region. The only big international media that does not disclose a list of its correspondents is The Economist.

Using a news distribution service

Utilise one of the news release distribution services to issue your news releases to the key media outlets in your target countries. These companies may also provide translation services for your news release, as well as help select the appropriate media for your news story. However they will not develop news angles for your story or write the news release – they are purely a distribution service.

Details of these services can be found on the following websites.

- ❑ www.prnewswire.co.uk
- ❑ www.romeike.com
- ❑ www.businesswire.com; www.businesswire.co.uk

Bear in mind that it is always advisable to contact all the media outlets that receive your news release to further explain and help 'sell' your news story.

Targeting the news agencies and wire services

If you have a strong news angle, which has relevant cross-border appeal consider pitching the story or issuing a news release to one or more of the news agencies in your country. Remember to include the correspondents of the foreign news agencies in your country. If it appears on their service, it has a chance of being picked up by newspapers and TV stations in countries where the story has relevance.

If you have appropriate material, distributing it to this group could be your means of achieving coverage in many countries.

Road-shows

Consider arranging a road-show of similar activities, such as round-table events or news briefings with journalists, which can be taken to a number of key cities in your target countries if this ties in with your planned activities. Clearly this type of activity will need to be adapted slightly to each country and possibly each city, but fundamentally the content can remain the same.

It is important to consider the following points if you intend to carry out activities of this type:

- ❑ The languages your spokespeople speak – they will need to be competent in the languages of each city to be visited. If they don't speak the necessary ones, investigate with local contacts if English can

be used. In some areas the business communities, politicians and journalists are happy to work in English.

- ✚ Translations of any support materials, such as invitations, media advisories, backgrounders and news releases, into the local language.
- ✚ It is also advisable to get some local help at each venue to advise on some of the cultural expectations, help with finding a suitable venue and liaising with suppliers. A local PR agency could help with this if there is no one from a partner organisation who can assist you.
- ✚ Take advantage of the local presence and contacts of any partners based in that area.

Larger scale pan-European PR campaigns

Consider how all your project partners can be incorporated into your PR strategy, and use the following guidelines to help you to organise it yourself.

As with any PR programme, for it to be successful there must be all the usual components: research, planning, defining objectives, strategy, tactics and evaluation, plus ensuring that the programme has continuation and consistency.

To ensure the continuation and consistency, a well organised network of people or offices (often an international PR agency with offices in all key countries) needs to be in place in the countries to be included in the programme. This team must work within the overall guidelines set out in the programme proposal, as well as develop their own localised version of the programme with appropriate adaptations and deletions necessary to make it suitable for local markets.

The network of offices should be coordinated by a lead office. The coordinator's role is usually as follows:

1. Builds understanding of the overall PR mission

Ensures everyone contributes

Helps with cross fertilisation of activities

Exchange of ideas and materials

Maximises flow of information and potential news

2. Coordinates reporting

Compiles regular reports of all PR activity in each country

Ensures timely distribution

3. Manages the relationship with pan-European media

Monitors forward feature opportunities

Initiates briefings between journalists and spokespeople

4. Runs a central press office

Keeps and updates media materials – messages, Question-and-answer documents, releases, backgrounders and other materials

Collects and organises material for websites

5. Develops news releases for pan-European distribution

Ensures approval of releases and translations

Manages their timely distribution in all countries

6. Develops specific projects

Media briefings

Speaker platforms

Speech / presentation production

Road shows

The role of each partner involved might be as follows:

- ❖ Provide details on their country's PR strategy, objectives and tactics
- ❖ Translate, adapt and distribute centrally produced news releases
- ❖ Initiate news releases on local activities
- ❖ Develop proactive PR opportunities to leverage key messages and awareness for local activities
- ❖ Handle media enquiries from their country
- ❖ Arrange and prepare interviews and briefings with key media and spokespeople
- ❖ Reporting
- ❖ Evaluation and measurement of activity

PR manual

It is a good idea to have a PR manual that lays out all the ground-rules for PR activities, but also has background information of all countries involved. Suggested contents might be:

- ❖ Contact details of all involved in the work
 - ❖ Procedures and expectations, including approval process
 - ❖ Overall strategy
 - ❖ Key messages
 - ❖ Summary of suggested tactics
 - ❖ Target audience and media - including priorities
 - ❖ Evaluation, reporting required with associated timelines
-

Pan-European PR programme template

To provide consistency and aid reporting, it is useful to have templates for activities in each country. The one below is a basic example.

Programme title: _____

Objectives:

To promote maximum awareness of partners' activities

Use the partners' programme as a 'news hook' to generate general awareness of CENTRAL EUROPE Programme project activities

Etc: _____

Target audiences:

✚ Main media in each region

✚ Politicians

✚ Etc: _____

Geographic execution

✚ Regions involved:

Timing: _____

Implementation:

✚ Series of press releases and other material to be developed and distributed to the media

✚ Media interviews – spokespeople to be put forward on programme-related topics

✚ Etc: _____

Measurement/evaluation: _____

Analysis of media coverage

Budget: _____

Region contact: _____

Project participants:

✚ _____

✚ _____

✚ _____

✚ _____

Promoting your messages to media in different countries

- ❖ Key facts you should know about when dealing with the media in other countries:
- ❖ Local spokespeople and local angles are essential.
- ❖ Be prepared to answer why your news is important to a specific country, however give the activity wider significance, for example in a context of collaboration between the participating countries.
- ❖ When pitching to national media, be prepared to speak the language of the country.
- ❖ Media materials must be in the format, style and language of the country's media.
- ❖ Media materials need to be adapted from country to country.
- ❖ Phone calls and e-mail are the most popular way to pitch.
- ❖ Be ready to respond instantly with facts, statistics, visuals, spokesperson, etc. Photos of activities and pre-recorded TV footage can extend coverage.
- ❖ News conferences are only for big announcements. One-on-one meetings with journalists work well.
- ❖ Use the snowball effect - the most devoted readers of newspapers are journalists themselves. Use coverage in one country as a vehicle for getting it in another one.
- ❖ There is no such thing as "Off the Record" in any country.
- ❖ Remember to place your project in context by explaining how it fits in with CENTRAL EUROPE Programme and the European Union.

Useful contacts for media relations

Press release distribution

- www.prnewswire.co.uk
- www.uk.cision.com
- www.businesswire.com; www.businesswire.co.uk

Press list development

- www.uk.cision.com (Media Disk is more UK focused)
- www.mediauk.com (list of most UK media)
- www.world-newspapers.com/europe.html (European newspapers and magazines)

Newsires

- www.reuters.com
- www.bloomberg.com
- www.dpa.com
- www.afp.com

Communications tools

Below are a number of communications tools that you can use to generate interest and awareness in your project.

All of these tactics are useful, but it is important in every case to consider whether the coverage they generate would merit the cost. Be sure that the result is sufficiently valuable to you. A project will need to consider carefully the eligibility criteria for this kind of expenditure.

Different ways to generate media interest for your project

ORGANISE EVENTS that will be interesting for your target audiences and for media to attend. When creating your event always think about your target audiences. What will they want to learn from your event? What is important for them? Make sure that this is reflected in your programme. If you want media to attend, ensure that you have interesting sessions for them or organise an event specifically for journalists, such as a briefing, press conference or interview opportunity. If media do attend your event, make sure they are well taken care of. Always appoint people responsible for journalists who can introduce them to people to interview, explain your project, and act as a contact point should they require any information.

Don't forget to send an invitation and ask journalists to confirm their attendance to help you judge numbers. Also follow up your most important media contacts by telephone in case they have missed the invitation. Some journalists might also come on the day without confirming, so always ensure that you have spare media materials available.

If you have budget within your project, it might be useful to cover the cost of transport and accommodation to your event. This may enable more journalists to attend, particularly those working for smaller media outlets who wouldn't otherwise be able to afford to come.

All journalists who attend your project events should have personalised itineraries that highlight who they will meet and where they should go, and full contact information if they need to follow up with you later.

Afterwards, send photos of the event to media who attended as well as those who did not. Avoid using staged group photographs as those are rarely used in publications. They are more interested in realistic action shots.

DEVELOP RELATIONSHIPS with reporters. Try to find out their story interests, work processes and deadlines, and be as helpful as possible. This can include providing them with a contact list of people in your project who might be good spokespeople on certain topics, providing them with background information on relevant subject areas. You could also offer them contacts with people not directly involved in your project but

who might be useful research sources for the journalist. Do not inundate journalists with too much information and do not be too pushy. Think of long term relationships, not short term coverage.

WRITE OPINION EDITORIALS for publication in a newspaper or magazine. Editorials are an expression of opinion on an issue by an individual who doesn't work for the publication. These are normally written by communications people, but carry the signature by a high-level person such as a minister, politician, head of an NGO, director of a think tank, a leading professor or a senior business person. The subject matter should be timely and linked to something that is already in the news. There is no sense talking about flooding if the media are covering a drought.

SEND A LETTER TO THE EDITOR in response to an article that was printed in a previous edition. The letter can argue a point of view or express an opinion, agree or disagree with an article, or be used to dispute facts and figures – or even the entire article. A letter in response to an article must be sent within 48 hours.

WRITE A CASE STUDY about your project's work and promote it to your target media. The normal formula for a case study is to identify a problem that your project has addressed, explain what you did to fix the problem and describe the results. Case studies explain in concrete or human terms what your project does. What are the practical applications? How does it affect people from your region? What kind of problem is it helping to address and why is it important? This practical information often provides the real-life illustration that journalists need to grasp a story.

SEND A PRESS RELEASE about something new, interesting or different that your project is doing that would interest regional, national or international media. Always carefully target your press release and ensure that it has news value. Try to keep the press release to one page. If you have more information, you can always direct journalists to your project website.

ORGANISE INTERVIEWS WITH JOURNALISTS if you have something newsworthy or different to tell them about your project.

GET TO KNOW YOUR LOCAL MEDIA and find out what kinds of stories interest them. You can call or email them, but it might be even better to invite them out to lunch or coffee to develop personal relationships. When

you do have news, try to organise interviews for them with key people from your project.

ORGANISE A TOUR OR A PRESS TRIP if your project is involved in something interesting. But remember there must be some kind of news in it, and you need to plan it well to actually show them something useful. This could be a field study or trip to see how your project is working in practice.

PUBLICISE THE RESULTS OF RESEARCH that has been undertaken as part of your project or is linked to your project. Write a concise executive summary that is interesting and easy to understand, preferably using straightforward media-friendly language and even sound-bites. Newspapers and magazines are full of reports and statistics issued by companies and organisations. They provide news material and can be a great headline-getter.

CREATE A SURVEY linked to your project and publicise the results to the media, especially if it highlights a problem or shows that you are making a real difference. Make it relevant to your key messages and news angles that are likely to interest media.

FORWARD FEATURE LISTS Many media have a schedule of topics and themes for future issues. Ask to see the forward feature lists of your target publications and offer to contribute to any themes that are relevant to your project.

POSITION PEOPLE INVOLVED IN YOUR PROJECT AS INDUSTRY EXPERTS and try to get them quoted in newspaper articles or on television and radio. Media are always looking for people to offer expert opinions, so let them know who your people are.

PREPARE STORY IDEAS that you could pitch if called by a journalist. Good PR is not only calling media when you need them but being ready to offer story ideas and be helpful when they need you.

SEND UPCOMING EVENTS TO BE UPLOADED on the "EVENT CALENDAR" section of the CENTRAL EUROPE Programme website. To tell about your upcoming events email to info@central2013.eu

Opinion editorial

What's in an opinion editorial?

- ❖ A specific point of view on a topical and timely issue
- ❖ A reasoned argument to convert readers to the writer's point of view
- ❖ Like a press release, it will target one or more specific audiences

Types of publications that accept opinion editorials:

- ❖ International dailies – Financial Times, Wall Street Journal, International Herald Tribune
- ❖ National dailies – The Times, Le Figaro, Handelsblatt, etc.
- ❖ Weekly news magazines – Economist
- ❖ Trade magazines

Things to keep in mind:

- ❖ Be concise: opinion articles are typically no more than 400 words
- ❖ Someone senior must be named as the "author" of the article
- ❖ Liaise with the publication in advance and determine:
 - ❖ the deadline
 - ❖ number of words
 - ❖ the desired format
 - ❖ if they would like photos

What do opinion editorials look like?

Read the example editorial (next page) written by Donald Tusk. Poland's Prime Minister, from the European Voice 30 April 2009

Enlargement has energised Europe

Expansion has added vitality to the European Union and it is now vital to deepen the integration it has brought about, writes Donald Tusk

Five years on, we can safely say that the decision to undertake the greatest enlargement in the EU's history was a step that in every respect was right and beneficial. It was a major milestone on the road to the final goal, unifying this part of the world. Everyone in the Community has benefited.

The accession of the ten states, including eight from central and eastern Europe, has significantly boosted the competitiveness of the EU's economy, laying solid foundations for sustainable development and prosperity as well as contributing to the continent's stability and security.

As a result, the enlarged Union is now better prepared to face its current and future challenges. One shudders to think what the financial and economic crisis would have been like if Europe was divided geographically and fragmented politically. The economic crisis remains a true test of Europe's

cohesion. With its record of success and faced with this new test, it seems natural that all EU member states should now aspire to bring to a close – not just symbolically, but in real terms – a post-accession period in which new and old EU countries remain divided, albeit less so.

Ending these traditional divisions in Europe depends on deeper integration, as it is only through integration that we have a chance of real security.

Externally, enlargement has demonstrably strengthened Europe's position on the global economic stage, securing greater influence to shape the future. The efficient inclusion of the EU's new member states into the internal agricultural market and the Common Agricultural Policy has strengthened the Community's position on international markets for agricultural products.

Thanks to enlargement, Europe's voice today is even better heard on the international arena. No major initiative

in world policy can be implemented over the head of the EU, and Europe's own responses to global crises and threats, including terrorism, are swifter and more effective.

Within the EU, enlargement has brought more than just new investment opportunities; it has brought benefits to everyone. Workers from the new member states have gained from better employment opportunities domestically and abroad, while countries that decided to open their labour markets have benefited. The expansion of the Schengen zone has given everyone a greater sense of one of the EU's fundamental ideas, the right to move freely across a united Union.

Pre-accession funds, and now structural funds, have allowed new member states to accelerate the process of modernisation and improve their economies' competitiveness. In effect, enlargement has given them a chance afforded to western Europe first by the Marshall Plan and then by decades of economic integration.

Not all the assumptions, plans and visions related to integrations have been successfully brought to life in these five years. Some proposals seem too costly

for the new, less-prosperous EU members. We also frequently differ in our assessments of history. The search for full understanding on these issues will be long, as it will be on identity, enlargement and energy security.

Like other member states, Poland wishes to preserve its identity within the European family. We view equality of development opportunities for all member states and European regions as a central value. We want to reinforce the EU's soft power by, *inter alia*, remaining open to further enlargement. We will persevere in persuading other member states of the need to develop a uniform, pan-EU energy policy.

But the driving force in these efforts will be the idea of solidarity. Enlargement corroborated the continuing timeliness of Robert Schuman's words that solidarity is the *raison d'être* of European integration. During its five years as a member of the Community, Poland believes it has managed to enrich the understanding of this value and its fundamental significance for an ever-closer Union.

Donald Tusk is Poland's prime minister.

Letters to the editor

What is a letter to the editor?

- ✦ A response to a magazine or newspaper about a specific article that was printed in a previous edition of their publication
- ✦ Argues a point of view or expresses an opinion
- ✦ Can disagree or agree with an article
- ✦ Can be used to dispute facts, figures or the entire article

■ **The continued failure of the EU to agree extra funding for national environmental farming schemes is putting wildlife at risk.**

Funds for wildlife conservation and rural development were diverted elsewhere in the 2005 EU budget deal, but voluntary modulation – the use of national farm-subsidy money for conservation and rural development – was promised.

The European Parliament has again refused to sanction the option to transfer funds. As a result, funding for schemes designed to benefit wildlife and the environment in the UK is not available, restricting the approval of farmers' applications. We agree with the Parliament that voluntary modulation is a poor second best to compulsory funding increases by all member states, but an agreement is still needed urgently.

It is the duty of the Parliament, the European Commission and the Council of Ministers to put politics aside and agree the legislation.

Gareth Morgan
Royal Society for the
Protection of Birds
Sandy, UK

Who signs letters to the editor?

- ✦ Again, it's ...
- ✦ Politicians
- ✦ Ministers
- ✦ Company executives
- ✦ NGO officials
- ✦ Directors of think tanks
- ✦ Academics and researchers
- ✦ AND EVEN the general public may comment on articles

What's in a letter to the editor?

- ✦ A concise statement or argument
- ✦ Preferably fewer than 150 words
- ✦ A clear reference to the original article in question
- ✦ (title, date it appeared and author)
- ✦ Full name and title of the letter-writer

Example of a
letter to the editor
European Voice
May 2007

Case studies

What is a case study?

- ✦ A case study identifies a problem, how it has been solved and what the benefit has been to your project or organisation.

What's in a case study?

- ✦ A concise and engaging summary of the subject
- ✦ Preferably no more than one page, certainly no more than two or three
- ✦ It should clearly identify the problem, solution and results
- ✦ Include quotes from people involved in the project and/or people who have benefited from it

Tips for placing a case study

- ✦ Think what audiences will be interested
- ✦ Think what media will be best to reach those audiences
- ✦ Add it to your press kit
- ✦ Put it on your website

Remember

You can find good example of European Territorial Cooperation project case studies on CENTRAL EUROPE and other programme websites.

For example:

Alpine Space <http://www.alpine-space.eu>

North Sea <http://www.northsearegion.eu>

KEEP – database

KEEP is an online tool and internet portal containing comprehensive information on all European Territorial Cooperation projects. It will allow users to view and analyse the workings of cooperation on much wider scale and with greater depth than have ever been possible before.

This is being developed and will be available later in this year. Looks at INTERACT@S website for updates

<http://www.interact-eu.net/keep/227>

Example of a case study

SETRIC (Security and Trust in Cities)

Major disasters have struck fear into mankind across the world in recent years. Some are man-made tragedies like the September 11 terrorist attacks on America and the Madrid train bombings; others are natural catastrophes like the Asian tsunami, which seem to come around ever more frequently.

With citizens' lives at stake, cities and regions must all prepare effectively to prevent all kinds of disasters and respond effectively when the worst happens. Through INTERREG IIIC, the SETRIC project will help them do exactly this by sharing knowledge and lessons learned.

Just as the tsunami devastated the shores of a dozen countries, many disasters ignore borders and wreak havoc in similar patterns across the planet. Exchanging experience of these patterns and effective responses to them is the key to preventing and managing crises, and an example of interregional cooperation at its most valuable.

All nine partners in the SETRIC project have experienced disasters first hand, so they are a mine of information for places facing similar dangers. Bologna was shaken by a bomb attack in the central railway station in 1980. A chemical plant explosion brought Toulouse to a standstill in 2001 and injured over 2,500 people. Devastating floods across Europe in 2002 required widespread evacuations and a huge relief effort in both Prague and Cologne.

Each city has developed its own strategies to manage the risks that it has faced. The challenge and inspiration behind SETRIC is to bring them together to share knowledge and plans for emergencies so that the best ideas can be transplanted into any European city. That includes specific procedures and technical devices that are being developed by research institutes, and which might otherwise remain unknown to the authorities in places where they could save lives.

For instance, a key issue is how to make it easier for emergency services to communicate. 'One major barrier in many cities is that the police force

and fire brigade use different radio frequencies. This makes it very difficult for them to talk to each other,' said project coordinator Albert Deistler from the city of Cologne.

"This project bridges the gap between research and practice as well as the distance between different regions and cities," Deistler added.

Cooperation takes place through conferences and workshops with experts, complemented by a database and website that together will enable partners to design and improve their disaster strategies.

SETRIC is led by the city of Cologne, and has eight other partners: Naestved in Denmark, Marseilles and Paris in France, Bologna and Siena in Italy, Prague, the CERTU Institute in France and the Fraunhofer Institute for Applied Information Technology in Germany. For more information on SETRIC see: www.setric.org

Expert opinions

If you have any interesting opinion leaders, industry experts or academics involved in your project, tell journalists about them and see if they are interested in speaking to them. Below is an example of an article that uses expert opinions:

Record haul of 20,000 new species expected

From strange monkeys to rare rabbits, more animal exotica is being found

by Robin McKie and Zoe Corbyn

WILDLIFE on Earth has never looked so bountiful. Scientists believe that 2005 could be a record year for the discovery of new creatures.

A total of 20,000 new species, from beetles to dolphins, and from monkeys to birds, are expected to be uncovered by zoologists.

'The world may seem to get smaller, but we are finding more and more new animals on it every year,' said Andrew Polaszek, executive secretary of the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature. 'We could see a record haul in 2005.'

This year's discoveries include a new species of macaque monkey, *Macaca munzala*, in India and a new species of mangabey monkey in Tanzania. Other recent discoveries have included the Vietnamese striped rabbit, pinpointed from samples being sold in a local fair, and the discovery of a complete new species of extinct human being, *Homo floresiensis* - the so-called Hobbit people - in Indonesia.

As a result of these increases, a new online registration system - ZooBank - has been launched by the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature in a bid to bring order to the dizzying numbers of parrots, wasps, monkeys and antelopes being added to world wildlife lists.

This species increase may seem surprising, given the rate at which other animals are heading for, or have reached, extinction. Wild populations of chimpanzees, gorillas and orangutans are likely to disappear by 2025, it was reported last week, while creatures including the Hawaiian crow, the gastric-brooding frog and most species of Polynesian par-

tula snail have already disappeared from the planet in recent years.

'It's a race against time,' said biologist Professor James Mallet, of University College London. 'We are wiping out species at a terrible rate while we are finding thousands of new ones. But although it may seem encouraging to find new animals, we often only come across a new beetle or spider because its habitat is being destroyed for a new farm. Its prospects aren't good.'

There are two key reasons for the rise in species discoveries. The first has been the development of DNA techniques that allow scientists to spot genetic differences between apparently identical animals. For example, Borneo and Sumatran orang-utans look indistinguishable. But recently scientists found there is a wide genetic gulf between them. Now, some scientists argue the orang-utan should be classified as two separate species.

The second rise concerns

the opening up of previously remote land. 'We are getting to these remote places to find these creatures because more and more land that surrounds their habitats is being destroyed or developed,' said Mario de Pinna, director of the Zoological Museum in Sao Paulo. 'In the case of the Amazon, more and more logging tracks make it easy for us. How long this can go on is a different matter, of course.'

However, scientists stress it is extremely important to pinpoint new species accurately and quickly. 'It is not just a matter of good science, there are direct benefits,' added Polaszek.

He pointed to the example of the wasp *Anagyrus lopezi*. It was found by naturalists working in Paraguay and was discovered to be a natural predator of the cassava mealybug (*Phenacoccus manihoti*), which, until very recently, was devastating the cassava fields of sub-Saharan Africa. The wasp was then introduced into farms in Africa and killed mealybugs in such numbers, it is estimated local economies were spared \$2 billion damage and the livelihoods of 200 million subsistence farmers were saved.

It is the need to pinpoint these creatures and find ways to record them effectively that has led to the creation of ZooBank. At present, researchers notify various journals, published in different countries, of their discoveries. There is no central database and zoologists are often unsure if they are dealing with old or new species.

'You can download banks of images of the Moon's surface or stars in the sky, but we have no such system for the very animals we share the planet with,' added Mallet. 'Hopefully, ZooBank will put that right.'

Zoobank: www.iczn.org

NICE TO MEET YOU: RECENT DISCOVERIES

New to the scientific world, clockwise from top left: Hobbit man, whose remains were found last year; the lopezi wasp, a slime-mould beetle named after George Bush; the macaca munzala monkey; and the Vietnam striped rabbit.

expert opinion

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Zoobank: www.iczn.org

expert opinion

expert opinion

expert opinion

Non-media tactics

Your public relations strategy should not only be about trying to get press coverage with the media but also about how you can inform and educate your target audiences about the good work of your project.

Consider who, apart from the media, your target audiences listen to and trust. These can be sources of information such as community leaders, political and business figures, academics, cultural personalities etc. There is a wide variety of ways to reach your audiences through non-media tactics.

TAKE PART IN EVENTS such as exhibitions, conferences, trade shows or round-table discussions. This could be either as an exhibitor (although sometimes there might be a charge for this), speaker or even a delegate.

This gives you an opportunity to come face-to-face with your target audiences and tell them about your operations. Always go to events with your information pack and press kit to give to people who might want more information about you. There might also be journalists at the event. If so, use this as an opportunity to develop relationships and tell them about your project.

FIND SPEAKING OPPORTUNITIES which allow you to reach out to target audiences. This could mean giving talks at schools, universities, business groups or other organisations. This helps to raise the profile of your project and to share information about your good work. Make it interesting for your audience, provide lots of examples and always speak about the importance of European cooperation.

ORGANISE YOUR OWN EVENT such as a breakfast briefing, business round-table, or a debate. Invite people who you consider important to your project. If you can get high-level speakers to take part it will help attract more people to attend. A number of projects have found that this is a good way to brief people at local authorities, NGOs or trade associations. Keep your presentation or workshop concise and allow plenty of time for questions and discussion.

BUILD RELATIONSHIPS WITH TRADE ASSOCIATIONS relevant to your project and participate regularly in their activities. This will provide an opportunity to raise your profile and any publicity that the association gets may also be publicity for you.

MAKE USE OF RESEARCH RELEVANT TO YOUR PROJECT Within your project you probably already have research or reports that would provide interesting news material. You may have commissioned a report from an

academic, an institution, a government department or NGO that would be of interest if presented appropriately. The more topical and the more human interest the better.

You can publicise the findings to your target audiences through the media, but you can also announce the results in newsletters, at conferences, on your website and even make it the topic of a round-table discussion.

You can also create research yourself, specifically to appeal to the media. For example:

- Commission a specialist market research company who may be able to advise on survey questions to create media-friendly results. (This route can be expensive).
- Use an internet research company, such as Survey Monkey – a much cheaper option (www.surveymonkey.com)
- For qualitative results consider carrying out desk research using reference books, directories or online for national or research/surveys.

If your ongoing research reveals changes in themes, you can issue this as news again.

BUILD RELATIONSHIPS WITH NGOs (non-government organisations) that have synergies or common values with your project. This could boost your image and expand your range of contacts. But remember to choose carefully and make sure that your involvement is genuine and not seen as a publicity stunt.

ENDORSEMENT PROGRAMMES that target opinion leaders, high-profile business people, academics, politicians, NGOs, etc. can help boost your project's image and reputation. These endorsers could speak about your project and tell a larger group of people what you are doing. These people will be like ambassadors for your project and will speak about it when out in public.

To ensure that everyone is projecting the same messages, prepare and circulate briefing documents. Don't forget to identify your messages and emphasise to everyone the importance of mentioning them.

ANNUAL AWARDS SCHEMES can generate awareness of your project with your target audiences and with the general public. If your project can develop a creative awards scheme, even if it is mainly symbolic, and encourage people to apply, it could create more awareness among your target audiences.

LOBBY PEOPLE OF INFLUENCE who can help you to achieve your project goals. This could include local government, regional governments,

national government, the European Union (Parliament & Commission), business leaders, NGOs, academics, etc.

DEVELOP PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS for your project that are easy to read and understand. It doesn't have to be done by a professional company; what is more important is that they contain the right information about your project. Cut the jargon, keep it simple, get to the point and ensure each item emphasises the same consistent core messages.

If you don't have budget for bulk printing, you can opt for online marketing materials that can be downloaded from your website in a PDF format. Whatever language you are printing in, remember to have it checked by a native speaker, preferably someone with editing experience. It is worth getting it right first time.

NEWSLETTERS are a good medium to write about your project, let readers know about recent changes, new initiatives, events in which you have participated, or even interesting case studies. They also provide a written record of your activities.

Encourage all your colleagues to contribute articles. You could also ask local politicians, NGOs or other organisations to contribute articles or editorials. Depending on your project's scale and workflow, a newsletter can be published monthly, quarterly or annually.

If you prepare a regular newsletter, develop a new theme for every issue and focus a number of your articles on this theme. Again, if you don't have budget to print, consider creating an electronic newsletter that can be available on your website and in an email version. Inexpensive software is available that can help you to develop good looking electronic publications.

BLOGS are an easily created and regularly updated website that works a bit like an online diary, discussion board and news forum. A blog can contain personal or project information and facts or opinions on any topic. An author will usually write about something topical and allow other users to post comments or rebuttals to the person's comments.

Creating a blog is a great way to showcase a project, and can be a way to get people involved dynamically in its development. Your blog can be hosted on your website's server or you can set one up for free or a very small charge with a blog hosting service. Blogging is becoming very popular: even senior politicians like European Commissioner Margot Wallstrom publish blogs. Hers can be seen at <http://weblog.jrc.cec.eu.int/page/wallstrom>

If you create a blog for your project, make sure to update it regularly and encourage other people in your project to participate.

Facebook and online networks

There are a countless online chat rooms and networking websites. If you aren't already participating in one, see if there are any relevant to your organisation and try to maintain a presence on them. You never know who will be part of the chat room and you could be making contact with some of your target audiences. Remember to be professional at all times.

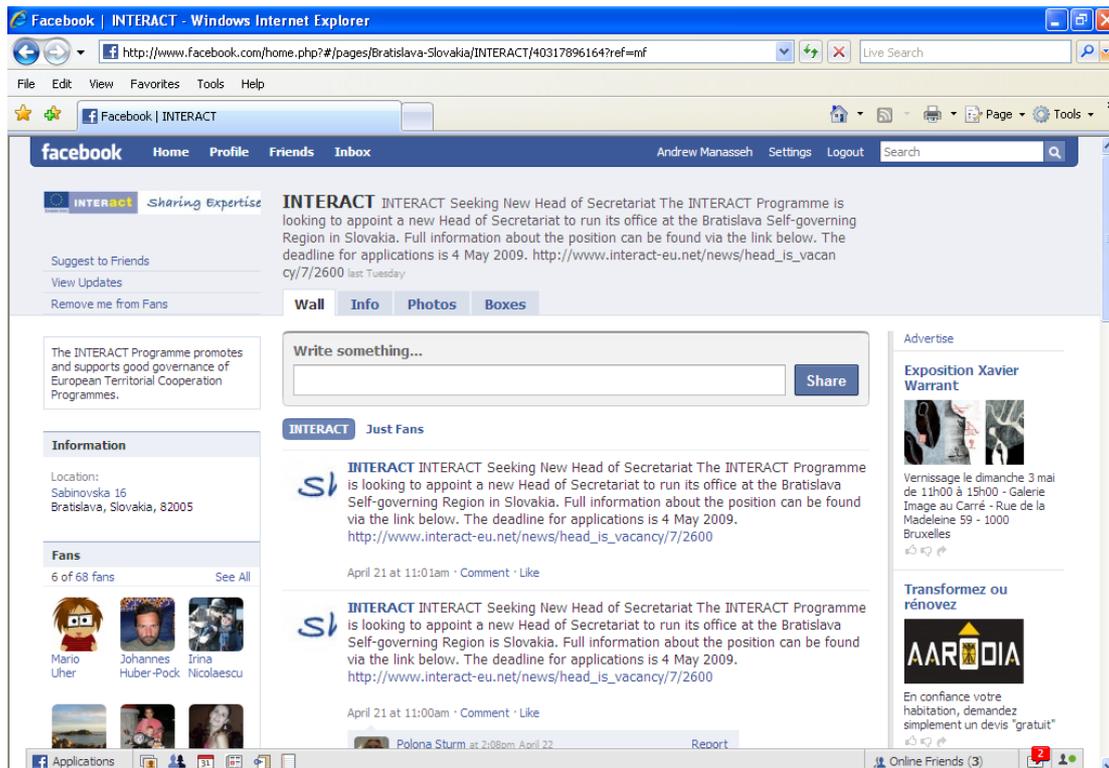
Set up your own "Facebook" profile with a brief description of your upcoming activities. Invite people and get them to write their opinions. You can moderate what is written – so maintain control.

You can also see all the friends of the people you invite and you can invite them too. You can also see what other interest groups they belong to and become their members too.

Facebook allows you to quickly build up a very large list of members. Barak Obama ran an incredible Facebook campaign.

INTERACT has a Facebook profile

http://www.interact-eu.net/about_us/22



The screenshot shows a Windows Internet Explorer browser window displaying the Facebook profile of INTERACT. The browser's address bar shows the URL: <http://www.facebook.com/home.php?#/pages/Bratislava-Slovakia/INTERACT/40317896164?ref=mf>. The Facebook page header includes the name "INTERACT" and navigation links for Home, Profile, Friends, and Inbox. The main content area features a post from INTERACT seeking a new Head of Secretariat for the Bratislava Self-governing Region in Slovakia, with a deadline for applications of 4 May 2009. The post includes a "Write something..." text box and a "Share" button. Below the post, there are two comments from users, each with a date and time. The left sidebar contains information about the page, including its location (Sabinovska 16, Bratislava, Slovakia) and a list of fans. The right sidebar features advertisements, including one for "Exposition Xavier Warrant" and another for "Transformez ou rénovez" by AARODIA.

VIDEOS If your project has an interesting video you can upload it to an online video service such as YouTube or Google Video. You can also include a link to the video on your website. This increases the chance of it being seen by people who might have an interest in your project.

NETWORK whenever you meet opinion-formers, politicians, NGOs or business leaders. Tell them about your project and promote your messages. Get out to events and activities and speak to people about your project.

Presentations and speeches

Great presentation skills are particularly important for CENTRAL EUROPE Programme personnel as projects approach conclusion, with end-of-project events to manage and results to present. These skills are also scarce and difficult to build – partly because there are many rules for what goes wrong, but no set rules for what works well every time. This guide lays out the core guiding principles to build skills appropriate to each person and the wide variety of situations in which we need to perform. It draws on perspectives from psychology, linguistics, sociology, and hard practical experience to help you create simple, clear and compelling presentations and deliver them effectively.

The **content is the key**. In the professional world most audiences are much too sharp for superficialities of presentation to make much difference. Effective presentation content depends on identifying a handful of clear and memorable **messages** around which to build everything else. While it is important not to squander a good presentation with a limp delivery, the key to a great presentation is the preparation, structure and planning.

A key theme is the need to operate as a **communicator** rather than a presenter. That means being planning and responding to the needs of those on the receiving end, and performing collaboratively by paying attention to feedback. The heart or thrust of your presentation should be about your audience, not about you.

On the day, the goal should be to put across an impression of your true, positive and professional personality, without any tricks or contrivances. Good presenting is individual: build on what is already there without introducing any artificial elements. Then inject some energy: be expressive and enthusiastic to excite and inspire your audience.

Aim for “**enhanced conversation**” as a tone or flavour. “Conversational” deliveries seem relaxed, spontaneous, comfortable, confident, responsive to the situation and naturally expressive. Have a conversation with your audience. They may not actually say anything, but make them feel consulted, questioned, challenged, argued with; then they will stay awake and attentive. Your job as a presenter is to communicate with your audience and stimulate them into wanting to get the information you have, not just to present that information at them.

Performance is the icing on the cake, and a natural skill. We all dramatise our actions in everyday life, whether it be the punch-line of a joke, or when giving a present or opening a door for someone. It is an enactment, not a phoney façade, but a natural dramatisation of expression, involving timing, planning and visualising our impact upon others. This is the skill on which to build presentation.

Planning and preparation

Preparation is crucial for delivering a great presentation. Many of the best natural presenters appear relaxed and spontaneous precisely because of how much effort they put in beforehand. Even with material and situations with which you are very confident, neglecting the planning stage is always risky.

Messages

Human beings are surprisingly inefficient at taking on board new information in a limited amount of time. For instance, a typical newspaper story or broadcast news item will revolve around only two or three basic ideas. Much more than that, and readers, viewers and listeners become confused or bored. The same principles apply to presentations, which should be constructed around **no more than three key messages**.

What is a message? A message is a guiding idea or theme or proposition that you want to convey to a specific audience. It is the essence of what you want to say.

Boiling down everything that you want to say to a few key messages can be a difficult process, but it pays dividends in clarity and impact. The most important aspect of most presentations is not what happens in the room but what happens later as a result: we intend to change attitudes or behaviour. Messages are the foundations of all effective communication: in order to be understood they must be clear and simple; in order to be remembered and acted upon they must be consistent and repeated. Messages do not exist in a vacuum: they are aimed at specific audiences. (See section on audience analysis below)

Preparation

Psychologists and presentation experts identify three phases of preparation:

1. **Incubation** involves drawing together all of the information, ideas, basic facts and figures for a presentation and chewing them over mentally – leaving them to stew for a while. This can begin with a brainstorming process, a first stab at generating key messages and a vague structure for the presentation, but without imposing too much order. You may talk it over informally with colleagues or friends. The mind imposes order on information unconsciously over a period of time, and through this incubation process a natural structure and order for the presentation of this information often emerges by itself.
2. **Illumination** is the arrival of inspiration after a period of incubation. The final presentation does not spring forth fully formed, of course, but often you will arrive at a moment of realisation when the foundations of a presentation fall naturally into

place: an order of concepts, ideas for how to get them across in ways that can be easily identified and remembered.

3. **Refinement** is the formal process by which this framework is transformed into a presentation, practiced and prepared for delivery.

Because a presentation is delivered orally, use speech and conversation as a tool for preparation. Talk to people about your presentation, try out ideas and arguments and phrases informally to get a feel for what works naturally.

Efficient use of time in preparation

Allow sufficient time for incubation. Often time requirements determine that we must prepare for presentations up against a deadline, but just as often we create or exacerbate these pressures ourselves through procrastination or poor time management. A well structured and prepared presentation takes time, not just intensive work shortly beforehand, but spread out over a period leading up to the presentation. Ideas need time to develop unconsciously.

Allow sufficient time for practice. Incubation matters not just for the preparation of messages and structure, but also for practice. A good presentation must be tried and tested several times to become smooth and natural in delivery, and practice – like most kinds of learning – is most effective when distributed over time. If you are going to rehearse a presentation five times, you will learn it much better by doing so once a day for five days than five times in one day on the day before its final delivery.

Allow a margin for error. A preparation schedule needs breathing space, in case other work priorities intrude on your time, or the facts and situation for the presentation change and you need to adapt on the run. “Writer’s block” and “speaker’s block” can take time to overcome.

Structure

Your key messages will provide a frame for the content of the presentation. But how much information can you fit in? That will be determined by the time available. In some cases you will have a defined time slot; in others you can determine this for yourself. Either way, it is important to be concise in order to convey as much information effectively as possible. Bear in mind that people’s attention will start to wane after about 20 minutes.

In English, most people speak around 150 words per minutes. Fewer than 100 words can become boring and monotonous; more than 200 is hard to follow. That means we can convey roughly the equivalent of two normal paragraphs of text per minute. That could mean one element (message, idea, illustration or piece of evidence) per minute.

About 25 percent of a presentation should be for the introduction and conclusion (see below); the remaining 75 percent divided among the key ideas in the body of your presentation. So for a 10-minute presentation you have time for seven or eight elements; for 20 minutes, about 15 elements.

Make full use of the time, but be realistic about what can be conveyed effectively. Focus and select the most important information. Choose information that is best suited for oral delivery. Leave data, routine or technical information for the handout; use your spoken presentation for meaning and explanation. Choose aspects of the brief that are best suited to this audience and occasion: their needs, attitudes, knowledge and expectations.

Making a short presentation can be just as challenging as a long one precisely because of the need to cut it to its bare bones and yet remain compelling and get the message across.

Getting started: presentation points

Where a clear structure does not present itself logically or immediately, the most effective strategy is to generate many ideas by brainstorming. Think up every possible idea, without limits or order. The goal is quantity, not quality at this stage: this is the generation of raw material.

Different people have different styles for organising material at this stage. Some use a visual mind-map or concept map, like a spider diagram with lines and colours linking ideas; others use indented lists; others use moveable components like Post-It notes that can be shifted and rearranged on a wall.

Look for obvious clusters or natural categories. The goal is to generate many ideas, label and rearrange them, rework, adjust, select and cull until you have up to three major groupings that cover the most important ideas and can fit into your time frame. Too few points and you will lack structure and organisation and waste the opportunity to cover more ground. Too many and you will lack focus and your audience will not remember them. Exclude those that are less relevant, and focus on those that are necessary to prove your point. Stick to the point. For any detail that you cannot communicate in 20 minutes, try another medium such as handouts or brochures.

The end product should be presentation points focused on your key messages that are distinct and exclusive, central and indispensable to your agenda. There should be little or no overlap between the elements, in the interests of clarity and efficiency of presentation. Select main points that are mutually exclusive: each idea should fit in only one place.

Arrange your presentation points

Presentation points need to be arranged and structured appropriately in order to maximise effectiveness, logical persuasion, and the unfolding of premises and arguments. This can be achieved either through a topical pattern (one that arises naturally from the materials, as is most common), or using one of a variety of traditional or formal persuasive patterns.

Traditional

1. Chronological: by time
 - a. narrative unfolding over time;
 - b. past-present-future
 - c. step-by-step process
2. Spatial: by location
 - a. Geographic
 - b. Conceptual areas
3. Cause-effect:
 - a. origins to manifestation
 - b. Problem-solution

Topical

1. Elements have no pattern except their relationship to the topic
2. Listing the components that add up to argument
3. Combining aspects of cause-effect, problem-solution, etc
4. Pros and cons

Build your presentation points into an outline

A common pitfall in presentations is that the audience understands your overall topic but cannot recognise, understand or recall your specific points or arguments. Your presentation points must be clear propositions that can be evaluated true or false, not questions or vague assertions. Make them **full declarative sentences** and turn them into a full sentence outline, organised hierarchically:

1. Full sentence point
 - a. Full sentence sub-point
 - i. evidence
 - ii. evidence
 - b. Full sentence sub-point
 - i. evidence
 - ii. evidence
 - c. Full sentence sub-point
 - i. evidence
 - ii. evidence
2. Full sentence point
 - a. Full sentence sub-point
 - i. evidence
 - b. Full sentence sub-point
 - i. evidence
3. Full sentence point
 - a. Full sentence sub-point
 - i. evidence
 - b. Full sentence sub-point
 - i. evidence

Link your presentation points with transitions

A presentation should flow smoothly and seamlessly, and to achieve this you need to fill the gaps between your logical elements. The audience is also much more likely to follow and take on board your messages if they remain constantly aware of what stage of the argument they are at. To achieve this, good presenters make frequent use of transitions: verbal signposting to tell audiences where they are, and where they are going. You can't use too many transitions. They serve to tie the presentation together and formalise its structure. Give the audience a verbal map -

explain the point of your presentation, indicate where you are going and how you will get there.

Also make use of **internal previews and summaries**, which serve a similar purpose: tell the audience what you are going to tell them, remind them what you are telling them, and at the end, tell them what you have told them. Repetition is the key to understanding and memory.

The introduction

Audiences make judgments very quickly based on first impressions. Psychologists call it the “primacy effect”: given a list of pieces of information, human beings consistently recognise and remember the first items best. The introduction is crucial because it must grasp their attention and establish your credibility, fast. The introduction should develop a relationship with your audience and orient them to your topic. An introduction should take 10 to 15 percent of your speaking time. The intro must settle these five questions:

1. Are they listening?
2. Do they want to keep listening to me?
3. Do they want to know more about this topic?
4. Do they understand where I’m coming from?
5. Do they understand where I’m going?

Hook their attention

The first few moments really are crucial to the success of the presentation: even before you speak, in the moment that attention orients to you as you prepare to start. Develop a rapport fast that prepares your audience to listen to you. Plan first actions and sentences very carefully. Command attention from the first words. The first sentence you use, as in a novel, should immediately capture the imagination of your audience. It has to be one of the strongest sentences in your tale. It’s the hook to help you reel in those whose imagination you’re trying to capture. Be imaginative or dramatic, and consider the following approaches to the opening few words:

- Suspense
- Novelty
- Humour
- Conflict
- Story
- Quotation
- Startling statement
- Provocative question

Establish a good relationship with your audience

Try to create a personal bond, establish yourself as a human being rather than a distant and aloof speaker. Humanise yourself. Create an atmosphere of collaboration and dialogue with the audience: involve

them. Generally, project the idea that “I’m doing the talking now, but I’m also here to learn from you as well as instruct”. The aim is to establish your credibility. In the process, to create a bond, you may wish to refer to the occasion or setting, refer to someone present, or use humour.

Motivate your audience towards your topic

All audiences start off thinking: “So what?” or “What’s it to me?”. You need to show them fast that the topic has a link to their own experiences and is worthy of attention.

It helps at an early stage to establish a context for your presentation, perhaps by fitting it into a familiar framework, or placing it historically. Then give the audience a framework for what you are going to explain, to smooth their understanding as it unfolds. Explicit previews of the content are often useful, especially for complex or technical material – unless it is so complex that later points only make sense after earlier ones have been explained.

The opening should give the audience a preview of what they will be told in the context of why they should care: how will they benefit, what problems will this information solve. Tempt them with brief snapshots of some interesting gems coming up in your presentation. State what your key points are going to be.

The mid-section

The body of the presentation is the guts of your argument, the battleground on which you will seek to establish and prove your messages and make the audience care about them enough to achieve your desired outcomes.

Think laterally about how to get your point across. The following are some tactics that are regularly effective:

- ❖ Metaphor and simile
- ❖ Irony
- ❖ Contradiction
- ❖ Humour (where appropriate)
- ❖ Analogy
- ❖ Colour
- ❖ Link to topical events
- ❖ Specific examples
- ❖ People
- ❖ Humanity
- ❖ Characters
- ❖ Anecdotes and stories
- ❖ Memorable images

Metaphors and analogies are vital to communication. 'It's like climbing a greasy pole', for example, conveys far more than just literal meaning. It

conveys image and feeling and enables others to empathise through similar experiences of their own.

Stories are a very powerful way to bring to life and make interesting even the driest of topics. People love stories because of the pictures they paint and because they bring added colour and enlightenment and even inspiration to a subject. Keep them short and simple but scintillating. Tailor a story to your audience so they can relate to it and therefore you and your theme more easily.

The conclusion

Conclusions carry the power of the “recency effect” – the flipside of the primacy effect is that the information that audiences hear last is also very likely to be remembered. The conclusion also provides logical and psychological closure, and ties all the threads together with a sense of completeness. Just like the introduction, it needs to be planned precisely, almost to the point of memorisation. Briefly summarise your main points, and make it a rousing call to action (if that is the purpose of the presentation) rather than just petering out. If you can think of a thought-provoking final thought or quote which resonates with your overall theme, this will make more impact still. Rehearse the end of the presentation and look the audience directly in the eye when you deliver it. Avoid fumbling with notes and additional 'by-the-way' points which greatly reduce the overall impact.

The conclusion has two main goals:

Logical closure: make sure they understand and agree

1. Summarise the main ideas of the speech
2. Re-establish the connection of the topic to a larger context: pull ideas together into a pattern, refer to broader implications or ramifications.

Psychological closure: make sure they feel and care

1. Remind the audience how the topic affects their lives
2. Make an appeal: a **call to action**.

The call to action is extremely important: it is your best opportunity to change the audience's behaviour or attitudes once they leave the room, which is usually the core aim of a presentation.

The clincher

The very last sentence is as important as the very first sentence. Deliver it firmly and decisively and from memory, maintaining eye contact. This is just as important as your opener. You need to end on a high note and

therefore the close has to be as compelling as the opening. In fact, a brilliant close to a speech can, like a knock-out punch at the end of disappointing boxing match, positively transform the audience's overall perception of the presentation. The conclusion must sum up what you have said, as a reminder of your key messages, and also inspire thought and action.

End as if you have done well. Do this even if you feel like you've done badly. First, you're probably the worst judge of how you've done, and second, the audience may not have made up their mind by this stage, so it is an opportunity not to be wasted.

Do:

1. Leave no doubt the presentation is finished.
2. Perhaps tie back to the attention getting line at the start: answer a question
3. Return to opening joke or story
4. Consider a proverb or quotation
5. Maintain eye contact

Don't:

1. Apologise
2. Trail off
3. Introduce new info or ideas
4. Read it
5. Make it too long
6. Change the mood or style
7. Say "in conclusion" until you really are at the conclusion.

Credibility

It is not just what you say, it's how you say it. You have structured your presentation to get the message across in a way that the key points can be easily identified and remembered. To achieve those goals, your style of delivery must establish your credibility. Sociologists identify many characteristics that distinguish speakers who are seen as "credible".

- ❖ Competence
- ❖ Dynamism
- ❖ Intention
- ❖ Personality
- ❖ Intelligence
- ❖ Authoritativeness
- ❖ Extroversion
- ❖ Trustworthiness
- ❖ Composure
- ❖ Sociability

Projecting credibility

1. Don't be afraid to blow your own trumpet. Tell the audience why you have authority to be speaking to them.
2. Demonstrate your knowledge by substantiating your messages thoroughly: show you have done your homework
3. Show yourself to be very well prepared and organised
4. Be especially careful to appear balanced and objective and consider opposing views
5. Explicitly address concern and goodwill towards the audience

Be aware of your image in all dealings with the audience, including informal chats beforehand. First impressions are especially important. Don't try to emulate others: audiences will spot easily if you are trying to be anything other than yourself. Everyone has their own style of speaking. Aim for a delivery style with which you feel comfortable; play to your strengths and control your weaknesses.

Language and style

Modern psychological theories point to language being the essence of thought. Words are not just for communicating, they are fundamental to thinking – so when preparing a presentation, don't just throw language in at the end. "Talk ideas into being": develop your ideas through language to get an effective end product.

First, know exactly what you want to convey. Second, decide how that will be most clearly conveyed to your audience. Use language that is both **clear** and **vivid**.

Be precise in word selection (without sounding pretentious) and careful with unfamiliar vocabulary, especially if speaking in a language that is not your native tongue.

Use specific and concrete language; minimise abstract words like love, freedom, justice, beauty.

Be economical with language. The bloated language of bureaucracy is everywhere: wordy, redundant, euphemistic. Use the fewest, most straightforward words that still effectively convey meaning. Make every word count

Avoid common mistakes in English that will undermine your credibility.

Wrong:

Ten items or less

...said to my friend and I

A large amount of people attended
attended

Right:

ten items or fewer

...said to my friend and me

a large number of people

Avoid clichés and mixed metaphors

Imagery

Simile (her hands were as cold as ice) and metaphor (her hands were blocks of ice)

Personification: make it human. "The economy is limping", "Profits are hobbled by high fixed costs", "The wind is whispering".

Hyperbole: deliberate overstatement. "I have said it a million times..."

Use repetitive language or structure. This hammers home a point in a vivid and memorable way. E.g.: "How serious is the situation? Three of the mountaineers have frostbite. What caused the problem? They pushed on for the summit. How could this be prevented? They should have turned back when the storm clouds gathered."

No words or phrases are repeated, but the repeated format gives it momentum.

- ❖ Do the same to introduce a series of paragraphs: "We must act now to ... We must act now to ... We must act now to ..."
- ❖ End several sentences with the same words. E.g.: "What remains? Treaties have gone. The honour of nations has gone. Liberty has gone." (-David Lloyd George)
- ❖ Repeat key words within a sentence. E.g.: "But, in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate – we cannot consecrate – we cannot hallow this ground." (-Abraham Lincoln)

Antithesis: contrast two ideas. Not...but; Not only...but also; Never...unless.

Use fresh language. Discard buzzwords and clichés and jargon.

Vary the rhythm: alternate long and short sentences.

Avoiding information overload

Trying to convey too much information causes, in this order: anxiety, confusion, irritability, anger at the source, and finally just tuning out. Your job is to sort and sift the facts and data and deliver it at the right pace in chunks of the right size for the audience to digest. Be selective, and use the following principles:

1. Give the audience a framework to organise information
2. Move from the simple to the complex

3. Move from the familiar to the unfamiliar
4. Pitch it at the right level of complexity. Learning proceeds best when the focus is just beyond the knowledge level of the group, so that it is challenging without being discouraging.
5. Use organisers:
 - a. Signposts. "First, I will ... Then, ..."
 - b. Enumeration. "There are three reasons for this. One, ..."
 - c. Acronyms. E.g. Soften: Smile, Open posture, Facial expression, Touch, Eye contact, Nodding.
 - d. Slogans, catchwords, memorable phrases
6. Use emphasis cues
 - a. This is very important
 - b. If you only remember one thing...
 - c. Speak louder or softer for emphasis
 - d. Pause before and after key ideas
 - e. Step forward
 - f. Use facial expression
7. Use examples liberally
8. Use analogies
9. Use multiple channels
 - a. Words
 - b. Hands
 - c. Visual aid
 - d. Charts
 - e. Recordings
 - f. Video
10. Use repetition and redundancy

Attention and interest

It takes more than a snappy introduction to maintain interest, and you have to do more than just talk. Too much uninterrupted talk can lead to boredom even if your information is first class. Depending how alert your audience is, you will need to intervene to stop them wandering off at least once a minute, if you want undivided attention – which of course you do. Show a visual, tell a story, use a prop, move around, change the tone of your voice, change the pace, ask the audience to do something, write on a flip chart or demonstrate a process.

Following are some useful tactics for maintaining attention.

1. Activity or movement: lively behaviour and treatment of the content that makes it appear as if something is actually happening.
2. Reality: reference to actual people, events, places; being specific and concrete rather than abstract.
3. Proximity – drawing on what is close at hand; people in the room, current events, local references.
4. Familiarity – the use of recognised examples, well-known phrases, commonplace events.

5. Novelty – the opposite of the familiar; startling facts, odd turns of phrase, surprising images, unusual combinations.
6. Suspense – creating curiosity about what will happen next. Posing puzzles or provocative questions.
7. Conflict – setting up pros and cons, opposing viewpoints, competing schools of thought.
8. Humour – playful remarks, silly or exaggerated images, amusing plays on words, ironic twists of fate, entertaining stories.
9. Vital self interest – something that is important to listeners. Matters of survival, or saving them time, earning money, making life more pleasant.

Keep the audience involved

- ❖ Use the names of people in the audience
- ❖ Refer to the immediate setting or shared experience.
- ❖ Use concrete examples rather than hypothetical ones to illustrate a point.
- ❖ Ask questions, ask for a show of hands or a straw poll
- ❖ Ask rhetorical questions
- ❖ Ask listeners to visualise examples
- ❖ Use the word “You”.
- ❖ You’ve probably seen
- ❖ Do you sometimes wonder
- ❖ In your morning paper
- ❖ “Has this ever happened to you...”

Physical delivery

Effective delivery is unobtrusive. The audience should attend to what you are saying, not to your grand gestures or beautiful voice. You do not need to put on a huge performance to give a good presentation, but you do need to go beyond your natural expression to project yourself. This is not acting: present your own personality, speak your own words, adapt to the response you receive. Performance is amplified conversation. Assume the role of the most lively, confident, poised, expressive side of yourself. Picture yourself describing an exciting event to friends. Imitate yourself at your most lively and animated. Develop and use your individual style: be authentic, and have your character and integrity show through: with added energy.

It should come naturally: we have more experience communicating than performing. We do it all the time. We don’t have to think about our body language, voice patterns, and so on. This is evident in the paradox many of us will have noticed that a person can give a flat, dull, wooden presentation, and then become very animated in the question and answer session, as if when the pressure of the presentation itself was lifted they were able to relax as the delivery switched from performance to interaction. Relax and enjoy it from the start.

Your physical presence is an important component of your presentation. There is nothing less inspiring than a presenter who stands rigidly nailed to the spot. Your body language has just as much of an effect on an audience as your words and the way you express those words. If you walk on with your head down and shuffle uneasily to your stage, then you will be sending out a message which says that you're unsure of yourself. To generate and maintain attention and interest, you need to be animated: gesture and demonstrate to make your points.

Be conscious of your appearance and the message it sends – and above all, be natural and avoid distracting attention from your message.

Identify distracting habits

We all have idiosyncrasies and personal mannerisms, habits of movement – fiddling with glasses, twirling hair, tapping fingers, and so on. In isolation they are fine. It is the repetition of them that becomes distracting. Get feedback to identify any that you need to control.

Gestures

The overall energy of a presentation is enhanced by the use of gestures and limited movement. When under the spotlight, and concentrating hard, the temptation is to remain rooted to the spot. Dynamic gestures and movements reinforce the ideas of the speech. Make gestures larger to a larger crowd – without overdoing it to the point where it appears contrived or conspicuous. Don't stand as if with two frying pans tied to them. Gesture as you normally would in conversation.

Posture

Stand or sit with a relaxed but alert and purposeful posture. Standing is better while presenting: it focuses attention on you and gives you a better view of the audience. If you can be comfortable without a lectern, great. If the psychological support helps, take advantage of it.

Movement

It is usually good to move for the same reasons as for gesture. Movement adds variety and emphasis. You can move toward or into a certain section of the audience. It relieves boredom and tension. Movement works best at transitional moments, to signal a change in mood, content, or form.

Movement should be purposeful, relevant and motivated by the content of your speech. Sometimes speakers wander around the platform without apparent aim, creating a distraction. Don't pace around, shuffle or rock. Don't move when you are expecting your audience to concentrate or digest something technical or difficult. If you want to make an important point and you have been moving about, you can then stop still for dramatic effect.

Maintain eye contact

Be familiar enough with the material that you can look at as many members of the audience as possible, as often as possible. Eye contact denotes openness and interest; looking away or down is a sign of insincerity or shiftiness. Children do not look you in the eye when they lie. If you find eye contact hard to sustain, look at people's foreheads, or between audience members, so it seems to them as if you are looking into their eyes. Real eye contact is better though, as it enables you to see listeners' faces to get feedback on how the message is being received.

At the start of the speech, when you are getting into your stride, find a few listeners who are responding positively. Look at them and use their nods and smiles to help you through this period. Then widen your focus. Don't skim. Look at individual people for at least three seconds.

Aim to have eye contact 85 percent of the time, and especially at the most important moments: introduction, conclusion, and key messages.

Facial expressions

Slightly exaggerate facial expressions. Smile genuinely to reinforce your message: it is one of the easiest ways to establish a rapport, show goodwill, and put audiences at ease. But don't overdo it like George W Bush, who forces a contrived little smirk at the end of every sentence.

Our voices and facial expressions will naturally convey feelings. The best approach to expressing them is to allow emotions to arise spontaneously as you speak. The feelings come from your conviction and by tapping into your experiences. Don't force them. The audience will probably detect it if you are being less than authentic.

Vocal delivery

Speak clearly, correctly and conversationally: don't put on a performance. A presenter's voice should sound like private speech, but exaggerated to fill the room. Vary your voice for interest and emphasis. Try to eliminate useless space-filling sounds and phrases: Um. Er. You know. I mean. So to speak. Etcetera. Speak loudly enough for everyone to hear, and loudly enough to sound especially confident: usually louder than normal speech. Broadcast your voice to the furthest corners of the room; you will naturally keep your head up and open your mouth wide.

Speak at a rate the audience can follow, which is typically a little slower than in normal conversation. In any case, being loud and enunciating distinctly will require more pauses for breath. Go more slowly than you think you need to, particularly with as adrenalin tends to speed us up. Your audience need the time to assimilate and interpret what you are saying. Practise words that are unfamiliar or easy to stumble over. Change and movement are interesting, so vary your voice.

1. Vary your pitch to convey interest and confidence.

2. Vary your rate of speaking to establish a mood or add emphasis. Slowly sounds thoughtful or deliberate, or imparts a sense of drama. Speaking fast shows excitement and activity.
3. Vary your volume: raise or lower for effect, usually for a punch-line or attention grabber before something important.

Visuals

Good visual and audio-visual aids can enhance a presentation to the extent that studies have found increases in information retention of up to 50 percent. Bad visual aids can make a presentation unbearably tedious. One major risk is that the presenter becomes secondary to the slides. Do not narrate your PowerPoint. It should not duplicate your verbal presentation. Do not use it as a prompt or script for your own presentation: that is the purpose of private speech notes. Speak to the audience, not the screen: the visuals should support the speaker, not vice versa. Resist stock clipart. The principle returns that nothing should distract from you and your message. Do not use too many slides.

Use visuals to give a big picture quickly: graphics, pictures, cartoons, bar charts, and key words. Use your own words to elaborate. Visuals should be simple, clear, and with a defined purpose: to support the presenter. They should be large enough to be seen by the whole room. Text should be brief and minimal: single words and phrases. While there is text on the screen, the audience will be reading it, not listening to you. Clear, simple pictures, graphs, charts and illustrations are most effective. Do not crowd the screen: use lots of white space. Animations and reveals should be subtle and used for particular effect. Maintain styles and continuity between slides. Use simple typefaces, and no more than two fonts. If possible, have a colleague turn the pages so you are free to move around and concentrate. Use bold colour. Make eye contact with the audience: do not turn to the screen. Keep up the pace and keep talking as the slides are changed. Practice with them. Make sure they look attractive and professional.

Think laterally with visuals. Consider using a cartoon or striking photograph to illustrate a point rather than writing it out in text bullet points to repeat verbally. Coordinate them carefully with your presentation: don't confuse the audience by talking on one subject while they are looking at a slide illustrating something else. Google Images and Microsoft both have a good bank of photos that you can use free of charge, there are other providers such as Getty Images and photos.com that have royalty free photos that can be accessed for a subscription fee.

Nerves and fear

Not many of us actively like giving presentations. Most people feel neutral or slightly negative about them as a way of passing our short time on earth. Many of us become nervous at the prospect. One in five people has

a fear of speaking that is acute enough to affect their performance. One in 20 is effectively paralysed by fear.

The best course of action is to first understand, analyse and accept the natural nervousness around public speaking; then manage it by preparing, relaxing and visualising.

Fear in perspective

Fear is usually worst before the speech and right at the start, during the introduction. As you get into your stride and the audience responds, it recedes. This knowledge can help control apprehension: it will get better.

Nerves can be a good thing. They show that you're keyed up and that your body and mind are ready to perform. We all want to do our best and not make a fool of ourselves.

It is hard to understand and define what is so scary about public speaking, which is one reason that it can be hard to deal with. Try to analyse and isolate specific fears that can be translated into problems to solve. What are you afraid will happen? What will be the consequences? What can you do to prevent that happening?

- ✚ Afraid visual aids won't be clear – so fix them.
- ✚ Afraid not properly prepared or practised – so prepare and practise.
- ✚ Fear of speaking in a foreign language – so prepare and practise.

A lot of fear is to do with failing to meet our own high standards. It can help to recognise this as a positive motivating factor.

Another common factor is the fear of negative evaluation, which translates into a kind of fear of the entire audience. Remember:

1. An audience is just a group of individuals. They respond to you no differently than they would in small groups or individually.
2. Most audiences are supportive. They want to hear a good speech – they are rooting for you. They want you to be confident. They empathise with nervous speakers and this makes them feel embarrassed – so they want you to succeed. Audiences are also sometimes impressed or appreciative that you have made the effort to speak in a foreign language.
3. Try consciously to change the way you picture the audience from “critic” to “recipient” of your presentation, and your purpose from “perform” to “share”. You are talking with the audience, not performing for them.
4. Centre your thoughts on hypothetical audience members who are sincere and responsive.

The physical effects of nervousness and fear often stem from a “fight or flight” response. These can include:

- ✚ Rapid heart rate
- ✚ Dizziness

- ✚ Butterflies in the stomach
- ✚ Trembling
- ✚ Sweating
- ✚ Dry mouth
- ✚ Muscular tension in the throat: quaver or strain in voice

The most effective solution to these physical effects is physical activity. To calm your nerves beforehand, take a brisk walk or pace up and down, or clench and unclench your hands (out of view of the audience, in case they draw any conclusions from such apparently strange rituals). During the presentation itself, you can make a physical outlet for your nerves through the use of gesture and vigour.

Also consider specific relaxation techniques such as deep breathing, meditation, yoga, visualising serene settings, imagining warmth and heaviness. These are very individual: find out what works for you.

Fear often makes you visualise the worst outcome. Do the opposite using positive self suggestion, in the same way that sportspeople find it useful to visualise victory. "I will be calm, relaxed, conversational and authoritative, my voice will be clear and assured, and the audience will smile and nod attentively, laugh, applaud and feel motivated." Build in contingencies, such as, If I forget what I am saying, I will check my notes and continue. Visualise also the relief and elation you will feel afterwards.

Resist the temptation to use alcohol or medication to calm nerves. It frequently backfires and may adversely affect your performance, and it does not address the root causes of the problem.

"Drying up" is a common fear – stopping dead in mid presentation and losing the way. Some people find it helpful to memorise a "saver story" that can be slotted in at any stage while they reorient themselves. Otherwise, you can always fall back on your key messages, and your presentation notes and lectern are an ever present safety net.

Writing

This section of the communications guide runs through the fundamental concepts and skills that good journalists use to write powerful and effective prose. Many of these ideas are universal and can be applied to all kinds of writing, from press releases and case studies to project or CENTRAL EUROPE Programme internal correspondence.

Planning

Audience

There is no such thing as simply good writing. Writing is only good if it gets the right message across to a specific audience. An article full of scientific detail and jargon might be perfect for an academic journal, but useless for a community magazine. Therefore, a writer's first step must be to identify the intended readership. Audience analysis determines the tone, style, pitch, angle and content of every article. It determines what knowledge can be assumed and what needs to be explained. It determines what news angles will work. Write what your audience wants to read, in a way that will interest and appeal to them. A good writer always keeps that audience at the front of his or her mind from the very start.

Messages

What key information do you want to communicate? Narrow it down to two or three basic messages that will form your theme. Build the article around these messages using evidence, quotes and colour. Messages can be explicit (clearly stated as information) or implicit (intended for subliminal or emotional impact). For instance, an article about CENTRAL EUROPE Programme project may contain explicit messages about the scheme itself, and the implicit message that pan-European cooperation is valuable and positive. Messages sit alongside audiences at the heart of the writing process.

Research

Good writing requires thorough research and knowledge of the subject matter, which should be clear to the reader through those same three building blocks: evidence, quotes and colour. Gather and organise these materials before starting to write. Be sure to have evidence to back up all of your main statement, in the form of recent statistics or official information, and cite sources to give credibility to your arguments. Check your facts.

Organisation

After determining your audiences, your messages and a strong news angle to tie them all together, it can help to organise your information systematically. Well-written prose alternates between statement and quote, between numbers and colour. It gradually unfolds, with copy flowing logically between elements, so that the end of each sentence announces the beginning of the next.

Consider what facts need to be introduced first to put quotes and other information in context. Generally speaking, **rank and order your ideas in descending importance**. This approach emulates the classic “inverted pyramid” journalistic story model, so-called because it is top-heavy with all the important information at the start. A good press release reads somewhat like a news story: this helps the journalist to see it as news.

The headline

The headline is right at the top of the inverted pyramid, so in many ways it is the most important part. The headline is your chance to sell your story. It is the first thing your reader sees. If it's bad, it's also the last thing they see. A perfect headline will encapsulate all of the messages and key facts and also capture readers' attention. In the real world, we sometimes have to compromise, but always should aim to achieve as much of that as possible.

The headline should be no more than 10 words and should contain an active verb.

Write the headline first: the process of getting it right is an exercise in organising ideas and distilling the essence of the story, which often makes the rest of the piece much easier to write. Don't write it last as an afterthought. Stick to one main point – don't try to fit too much in. Keep it short and snappy. Use strong vocabulary to make every word count. Play with words, substitute and replace until you get it just right.

The lead paragraph

The lead paragraph is particularly important for “newsy” writing such as statements and press releases. For longer articles like features and extended case studies, the same principles apply but can be spread over two or three paragraphs.

The lead paragraph must tell the reader what is essential about the story: what is new and why it matters. Don't encumber the reader with unnecessary detail to start with – give the broad picture first and bring in supporting information later. Agonise over the lead paragraph: if you get it perfect, the rest of the piece can seem almost to write itself because everything important flows from the lead.

Clearly we can't fit everything into the first paragraph, so how do we choose what information is really important? Following are a few useful tricks.

The 6 Ws. Have you answered all of the question words? Usually most of them are important. Check if your first paragraph tells the reader:

- ❑ What has happened
- ❑ Who is involved
- ❑ Where it happened
- ❑ When it happened
- ❑ Why it happened
- ❑ How it happened

<p>"So What?" is the most important question of all. Read back what you have written and ask yourself</p>	<p>"so what". If you have to come up with extra information to answer the "so what" question</p>	<p>rewrite to answer the question in the first place. When you have written a paragraph that could not possibly leave anyone asking "so what?"</p>	<p>only then have you have got it right.</p>
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- ❑ **"The fourth why"** is a variation on the "6 Ws" and "so what" techniques that helps you to dig deep into the context that surrounds your subject matter.
- ❑ Something has happened that you're going to write about.
- ❑ Ask why it happened.
- ❑ Then ask why the thing that explained the first "why" happened.
- ❑ Then ask why the thing that explained that happened.
- ❑ By the time you get to the third or fourth "why" you've got to the heart of it.

Ten key words. Make a list of 10 words without which you simply cannot write the piece. They do not have to be the exact words you will use – think more of the facts or concepts that must be there. Once you have that list of 10 keywords (not including articles or prepositions), you have the essence of the story. Now rank those words in order of importance, then turn that list into a sentence. Often this will be something approaching a decent lead paragraph. In general, start your sentence with the subject of your story, unless you have good reason not to.

How long before you reach a crucial word? This is a variation on the ten-key-words approach. Read your introduction and count the number of words you use before you reach the most essential word. If you get near the end of the sentence before reaching that "must have" word, then stop and rewrite. You should be hitting key words very quickly.

Active or passive voice? In general, it is better to write a lead paragraph in the active voice, but balance this with the need to start a piece with its subject.

Lead paragraph length. 25-30 words are usually ample to convey the key information and context. Sentences longer than 30 words start to lose focus and impact and digress into unnecessary detail.

Soft leads. Not all lead paragraphs are hard and factual. Features often start with a “teaser” – an anecdote, a description, a narrative, a question. So do “soft news” stories. This technique is also called a “delayed” lead. A soft lead should not change the structure of the top third of a story. It should be followed by the same recipe: essence, detail, quote, context.

Structure

Build blocks

Try to group all of the information relating to one element of your piece in one block of paragraphs. Do not talk about the same thing in completely different sections, except in a thematic way. Put the most important block of information first. This should be the longest block, and should form the middle section of your piece.

The second, third and fourth blocks should contain progressively less important information, arranged as an inverted pyramid. The last block should contain the least important angle, and it should be possible to cut it out without harming the piece overall.

Write sequentially

Within these blocks, each sentence should connect to the next like a link in a chain.

For example: you make a statement, expand on it in the next paragraph, illustrate it with a quote in the third paragraph, and give some figures or background in the fourth paragraph. Then you move on to the next “block” by using a signpost sentence.

Use signposts

Signposts warn readers that you are moving to the next theme. A signpost is a transitional word or sentence that marks the end of one block and the beginning of the next. It can be as simple as “but” or “however”, or can be a short sentence which summarises and announces what is going to follow, like the last sentence of the paragraph above this one. Think of them as the cement between the blocks.

Flagging

If you are unable to avoid introducing an important idea relatively low down in your piece, at least to refer to it briefly higher up as well. This is called “flagging” – raise a flag high up in the story that something

important is coming lower down that is worth reading on for. That way it is less likely to be overlooked.

The kicker

Particularly in soft news stories, features and case studies, it can be worth saving a good quote or nugget of information for last, to finish the story with a flourish and reinforce its impact. A return to a personal story or anecdote from the top of the story, an ironic afterthought, or a splash of colour can end a story with a smile and a sense of closure.

Language and content

Keep it simple

Be concise. One word is better than two. Use as few words as possible: this will concentrate your message and make space to say more. Cut out the waffle. Examine each word and ask if it is essential or redundant; if you can do without, cut it out. Use simple grammatical constructions, avoiding multiple sub-clauses, commas, semicolons (and brackets too).

Keep it short

Short sentences and short paragraphs are clearer. Two short sentences are better than one long sentence. Sentences should usually contain no more than 30 words, because any longer than that and they become hard to understand and remember since readers have to hold too much information in their short-term memory, which starts to strain the mind just as this 49-word sentence is starting to do. Paragraphs should contain no more than three sentences and one basic theme or idea.

Use strong language

Replace dull words with lively synonyms. Choose words that convey movement and dynamism, while avoiding clichés and ornate or flowery terms. Write as if you care. If you don't sound interested, your readers won't feel interested.

Use straightforward language

Write with normal words such as you use in everyday business life. You are communicating with normal human beings. Your goal is clarity, not to impress readers with clever words.

Vary your vocabulary

Avoid repeating words and phrases. This can be a challenge when writing at length on one theme; try to find synonyms and alternative formulations to avoid the jarring effect of reading the same terms over again.

Write with verbs

Weak writers sprinkle their copy copiously with flowery adjectives and adverbs. Good writing revolves around simple, strong, straightforward **verbs**. Deploy powerful verbs in active, declarative formations. The passive voice should be used sparingly. Overusing participles (verbs in forms that end in “-ing”) is a mistake.

Cut out jargon

Picture the least sophisticated member of your target audience and remove or explain any technical terms that they would not understand. That includes corporate or management buzz-words as well as industry jargon. Avoid or at least spell out acronyms and abbreviations.

Write in the third person

Do not use “we” or “I” except in quotes.

Style and tone

Write in a style that is appropriate to your audience. In-house corporate communications can sometimes be chatty in tone, whereas publications for outside audiences should usually be more formal and couched in businesslike language.

Colour

“Colour” means using your senses. A well-written story gives a reader the feeling of having been in the place that you describe and of knowing the people that you quote. Often the reader will remember your story for a little detail, not the big picture. The best details are the ones that tell the big picture.

Be balanced and objective

A press release emulates the impartial tone of a news piece. It is not marketing or advertising. Don’t sound overexcited or “over-sell” your message. By all means inject energy into your writing, but don’t overdo it – avoid hype.

Read it out loud

Well-written copy sounds right when spoken. If it strains your voice, simplify it. If you run out of breath, shorten the sentences. Reading out loud often uncovers mistakes that are difficult to spot by eye.

Use evidence

Assertions become convincing when backed up with facts. Give context, comparisons and sources, and be precise.

“Thanks to this CENTRAL EUROPE project, local authorities have spent less than half as much on widgets recently” is not very useful or convincing for a journalist. It would be much better to say: “Thanks to this CENTRAL EUROPE project, average spending on widgets by local authorities fell by 75 percent to €200,000 in 2006 from €800,000 in 2005, according to an independent survey by ABC polling in May 2007”.

Edit and rewrite

Few of us get it perfect first time. Many of the best writers return to their prose repeatedly, bringing a fresh mind to the task. Write a first draft, leave it, and come back to it. If the deadline is tight, don't panic: time pressure can actually help you to crystallise what is important and write it clearly.

Context

CENTRAL EUROPE Programme projects do not exist in a vacuum, they interact with other systems and people's lives in complex ways. Often a good news angle can be found by stepping back and looking at where a development in a project fits into the bigger picture. All stories are part of the bigger picture, and it is this link with other events that makes them relevant.

Stories are put in perspective by events that happened before or elsewhere, or because of the impact they may have on events later or elsewhere. This perspective is what we call context. Context is the reason why readers would want to read your story, it is the “so what?”.

Always ask whether what you are describing is part of a bigger theme. A trend, anywhere in the world, always makes for good context.

Context is important enough that it should usually feature in the lead paragraph and also persist lower down the piece.

The most elementary form of context is rank. **Superlatives** such as “the world's biggest” or “the fastest-growing” provide crucial context. **Milestones** are as compelling as superlatives. When something happens, readers want to know if it's the first time or the second time, or how long ago it last happened, or how long since something similar happened.

Background

Context is often confused with background. Context gives meaning to the story and is essential: you cannot write a proper story without it. Background is the description or explanation of basic facts relating to the story. It is useful, but less important.

Unlike context, background does not necessarily have to appear high up in the story. Do not stick one-paragraph slabs of background in the middle of your piece. Try to weave in little bits of background as it unfolds.

Do not leave holes

Do not mention an element without explaining it. If you have just mentioned Europe's second-busiest sea-port, the reader will wonder immediately which is Europe's busiest sea-port. Tell them. A well-crafted piece guides the reader from A to Z, without ever having to pause or wonder what the writer meant.

Numbers

Numbers are the single-biggest cause of holes and errors. If you mention a number, give some context or something to compare it with. Numbers need company. On their own they often mean nothing. If a figure has changed from 446 to 903, don't expect the reader to find the meaning: do their calculations for them. Tell them it has doubled. Don't burden a piece with too many numbers: one or two in the top third should be enough to illustrate any trend. Put the rest of the figures in the bottom third of your article.

Check all numbers. Beware confusing millions and billions. Beware decimal places.

Style

Write in a style that is appropriate to your audience. Communication within a CENTRAL EUROPE Programme project can sometimes be chatty or informal in tone, whereas publications for outside audiences should usually be formal and couched in businesslike language.

Ensure that the layout and content of everything you print and distribute conforms to not only your project's but also European Territorial Cooperation and EU guidelines for publication, including all relevant and applicable logos. Be consistent with linguistic style, either according to your project's own style guidelines if they exist or according to a standard newspaper style guide.

This will determine such issues as capitalisation and how to express dates and numbers. Layout guidelines should apply to text style, font and sizes, as well as presentation and capitalisation. Style consistency is a sign of professionalism and should be used not only for printed materials but also for e-mails and websites.

Accuracy

Check everything, including photograph captions. Be extra-careful with names, figures and unfamiliar or technical words. Check that days of the week coincide with dates. If you say a certain number of points follow, count them. Be sure not to infringe copyright or libel laws – if in any doubt, consult a superior before publishing.

Energy and interest

Write as if you care: if you don't sound interested, your readers won't feel interested.

Quotes

Quotations add legitimacy and emphasis to your messages. They can also inject humanity, personality, emotion, immediacy and colour – but only if they are lively and clear. Quotes are a good way to make abstract ideas seem concrete, personal and relevant to the real world. You can get away with slightly more lively, informal and opinionated language in a quote without losing a balanced tone overall.

Be sure to quote people with authority over your subject matter. These can range from project managers with a broad overview to personnel with more hands-on experience where appropriate. Quotes from third parties such as people whose lives have been touched by a project can be especially valuable

Journalists need quotes to bring their story alive. A strong quote is valuable to any project because it is the part of a press release that is most likely to be reproduced unchanged in print.

Good quotes sound like **realistic spoken language**. Avoid hype, slogans, corporate buzz-words. Do not just put quote marks around written prose. Written English uses longer sentences, more formal vocabulary and more complex grammar. Spoken English uses shorter sentences and simpler, brighter vocabulary including contractions. Written English is punctuated logically; spoken English is punctuated “respirationally” – to give pauses where people naturally breathe. Use words that people actually spoke, or speak your rewritten quotes to ensure they sound natural.

- ✚ Talk to people as part of your research: spoken words are much more fertile ground for gathering strong quote material than written words. Encourage people to speak enthusiastically about the subject. Listen out for powerful and descriptive words and phrases that you can use in quotes.
- ✚ The first quote in your story is very important. It can make the difference between a reader reading on and giving up. Try to get a quote in by the third or fourth paragraph, if not the second. Delaying much longer than that without a quote can leave a piece of writing with a dry, academic tone.
- ✚ Double-check the spelling of the name and job title of everyone you quote. Mistakes make people angry and undermine your credibility.
- ✚ Don't waste quotes on purely factual information. Use quotes to give reasons, explanations or judgments and express opinions or emotions. Quotes are for illustration, decoration and emphasis, not conveying new information.
- ✚ Make them personal, using phrases such as: “I believe...” or: “For me, this is...”

- ✦ Most people most of the time are not very eloquent. PR professionals have the luxury of rewriting and inventing quotes that sound more effective. Check that the person being quoted is happy with the quote, whether the words are theirs or yours.
- ✦ Adopt language and tone appropriate for the person being quoted.
- ✦ Don't use too many quotes or quote too many different people. Spice up a story with a few good quotes, and keep them short.
- ✦ Make available a photo of the person quoted, where appropriate.
- ✦ "Put full sentences inside the quote marks." Broken sentence fragments in quotes are "worse than useless to" a journalist.

Press releases

The press release has been the primary format for communicating with the media for so long that it is astonishing how poorly most of them are written. Following is a five step guide to writing a press release with the best chance possible of becoming news.

1) Strategy

Plan your press release to harmonise with the overall communications strategy and plan of which it is part. What do you want to achieve by sending this press release? Who are its ultimate audiences? What message do you want to get across to them? What do you want them to do as a result?

2) Media targeting

Determine which media your target audiences read. Watch and listen to, and customise your press release to the news values of these media. If their news values are very diverse or if you have several distinct groups of audiences and media, it is possible to send different customised press releases. However, this approach takes a lot of time and resources so it is better to find common ground when possible and issue a single press release for everyone.

Media directories are available that list all print and broadcast media. It will take time to compile a press list relevant to your story but correct targeting will pay dividends. Send your news release only to your target media – and target precisely. Identify the appropriate journalists and editor to whom it should be addressed. Sending too broadly is a waste of your time and of the time of media who are not interested in this news.

3) News values

Determine an appropriate style, tone and content for your chosen medium. For instance, trade press need technical detail; tabloid newspapers need colour, emotion and humanity; print press need photos; broadcast media need to know the visual aspect of your story. Think hard about how to touch your target audience. What do they care about? Why will this matter to them?

4) Organise information

Decide your messages and pull together all the facts and details you will need to back them up. Use an information checklist (see below) to organise and prioritise your points.

5) Layout and presentation

The presentation of a press release is very important. Consistency and professionalism reflect strongly on the credibility of the news you are

telling. Spelling and grammar must be perfect. Use spell-checkers, but be aware of their limitations. Check and recheck all facts, numbers, dates and spellings of names and places. Keep the release to a single page if you can; if that's not possible, break the page cleanly between paragraphs. Create and use a **standard layout template** and conform to its specifications, in order to be sure not to miss any essential format elements.

Standard press release elements

At the top

PRESS RELEASE.

- ✚ Your press release should clearly state that it is a press release.

LOGOS

- ✚ Include your project, CENTRAL EUROPE programme, European Regional Development Fund and the EU flag.

HEADLINE

- ✚ This is the first thing a reader will see. If it's bad, it's also the last thing they see. The headline should be not more than 10 words and absolutely must contain an active verb. The headline is your chance to sell your story. Don't write it last as an afterthought; many journalists write the headline first to force their minds to distil the heart of the story right from the beginning.

SUBHEAD

- ✚ Optionally, you can include a second, smaller headline including additional key facts and information. Do not duplicate content from the main headline.

DATE

- ✚ A press release must be dated correctly for the day of issue. Journalists need to know when the news was released. If the date is old they may discard the press release, thinking it is not fresh news.

DATELINE

- ✚ The first paragraph should begin with the city and country from which the press release was issued.

In the middle

Lead paragraph

- ✚ Strong, clear first paragraph capturing all key details

Quote

- ✚ A good quotation (see above), by paragraph four at the latest

At the bottom

PAGE NUMBERS

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- ✚ Provide full contact details for at least one named contact who can give further information on this news. Give their telephone, fax and mobile numbers and email address. Make sure people named will be available when the news is released.

NOTES TO EDITORS.

- ✚ This is a numbered list of items of factual or background information that some readers may find useful, but which is not sufficiently important to use up valuable space in the main body of the press release. It may include technical background or definitions, references for external sources of information, such as websites. Include <http://www.central2013.eu/> your project's website, and any related sites.
- ✚ It should always include a standard background paragraph describing your project, and another boilerplate paragraph explaining the Programme. (Journalists call these texts "boilerplate" because they can slot it straight into their stories to explain basic facts, just like an engineer can bolt on a standard metal plate to fix a boiler.)
- ✚ Use the following boilerplate to describe CENTRAL EUROPE:

CENTRAL EUROPE is a European Union programme that encourages cooperation among the countries of Central Europe to improve innovation, accessibility and the environment and to enhance the competitiveness and attractiveness of their cities and regions.

CENTRAL EUROPE invests €231 million to provide funding to transnational cooperation projects involving public and private organisations from Austria, the Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Poland, the Slovak Republic and Slovenia.

The programme is financed by the European Regional Development Fund and runs from 2007 to 2013. Interested partnerships are invited to propose their projects following public calls for proposals, which will be widely publicised.

– MORE – or – ENDS –

- ✚ – MORE – at the end of the first page denotes that another page follows. If you need a second page, number it at the top. Three pages is too long for a press release. If you need more than one page, break it cleanly between paragraphs to avoid "widows" and "orphans" – untidy stray words or lines at the bottom or top of a page.

- ✚ – ENDS – is the standard international way to denote the end of the main text of the press release. Some countries also use ### in place of – ENDS –.

Press release distribution

When?

Time your release to suit the publication and broadcast cycles and deadlines of your target media. There is no point sending a press release on the day that a weekly publication goes to press – the journalists will be too busy, and the pages already set. Find out at what time of day, week or month they are receptive to news ideas, and time your distribution accordingly.

What?

A press release accompanied by good pictures has a much better chance of publication. Journalists will need high resolution digital copies. Include low resolution files in your press release (whether paper or electronic), along with a note that high resolution prints and files are available on request.

Depending upon the type of news you're issuing, it may be helpful also to send out reference or briefing documents such as fact sheets, case studies or background briefing notes. Be aware that you will annoy journalists if you clog up their fax machines or email inboxes with very large documents: be concise and selective. Alternatively, include a line in your press release describing the reference documents and make them available for download from the press section of your website, or by email on request.

How?

Many journalists prefer to receive information electronically (by direct email or through an electronic news distribution service): this makes it easier to manage, organise, cut and paste. Others like paper and prefer to be reached by fax. Paper has its advantages: it is more likely to be passed around and noticed on people's desks, and can't be deleted so easily at the touch of a button. It does no harm at all to send the same release by fax and email, just to be sure.

Avoid sending unsolicited attachments; many people do not open them in case of viruses. If you do need to send a document as an attachment, such as a final project report, the best practice is to compress it as a PDF file. If for any reason you do send a document in Microsoft Word format, be sure to first erase all document version and track changes history.

When using email, put all addresses in BCC so recipients will not see who else is on the list. Better still, use proprietary bulk email software or an electronic press release distribution service. Formatted HTML emails are

easy to create from basic templates and can help draw attention to your news. Simple and subtle designs are best.

Hardly anyone sends printed press releases by post any more: it is just too slow and unreliable for the pace of modern news cycles. News moves faster than the post, and by the time a journalist opens a letter, it is yesterday's news. Use the post only for large items that are not time sensitive or related to a particular news event, or which you are distributing in advance of a news event, such as press kits and formal invitations.

Follow-up

Calling journalists after sending your release can improve your chances of generating a story if it jogs their memory or draws attention to your news among other competing stories. It can also be a way to annoy them, unless you are efficient, friendly and brief. Ask if they have a moment to speak. If yes, say you're just checking they got the news, and would they like any more information.

Links

Press release distribution services

-  www.prnewswire.co.uk
-  www.uk.cision.com
-  www.businesswire.com

Press list resources

-  www.uk.cision.com (Cision is more UK focused)
-  www.mediauk.com (list of most UK media)
-  www.world-newspapers.com/europe.html (European newspapers and magazines)

Press release information worksheet

It may help to use a table like the one below to make a list of the key points that you would realistically like to be used in the finished article in your target media.

Then imagine the journalist coming to this story fresh, and ask yourself what questions they would have first after reading these key points. Add in more points to answer these questions.

Prioritise all the points by ranking them in terms of importance to the story and news angle you want to promote.

Mark the top points with a star to remind you to use them in the headline and lead paragraph and include a quote about them.

Mark the bottom ones with a question mark: do you really need them?

Point	Priority

Press release checklist

- Have you identified your target audiences?
- Have you determined your messages?
- Have you chosen the best angle to make them care?
- Are you targeting the right media? Will they consider it news?
- Have you put the news in context – the big picture?
- Is all the important information at the top?
- Are your messages woven consistently right through the press release?
- Is the headline catchy and shorter than 10 words?
- Does the headline have a strong and active verb?
- Does the first paragraph tell the whole story?
- Does it answer the “so what” question?
- Do your ideas flow clearly in decreasing order of importance?
- Can you speak every sentence comfortably? Does it sound right?
- Are your sentences all shorter than 30 words?
- Are your paragraphs all shorter than 3 sentences?
- Are there any dull words that you could strengthen – especially verbs?
- Are there any complicated or flowery words that you could simplify?
- Is it interesting?
- Is it written with energy?
- Does it sound like you care?
- Can you avoid repeating any words or phrases? Would synonyms help?
- Have you used any jargon or unexplained acronyms?
- Is the tone appropriately businesslike and balanced?
- Is the language objective? Are you over-selling the message?
- Have you backed up your assertions with evidence?
- Is there enough colour?
- Have you left any holes or unanswered questions?
- Have you given sources for any external statistics?
- Have you checked every number and the spelling of every name?

- Have you checked all geographic references?
- Do your quotes use strong, natural, spoken language?
- Have you run a spell-check?
- Are the spelling and grammar 100 percent perfect?
- Do the format and layout conform to your template specifications?
- Are all appropriate logos present and displayed correctly?
- Is the date correct?
- Are the contact details present and correct?
- Are the notes for editors present and correct?

Example of a press release template

Press release



**Project
LOGO**

HEADLINES SHOULD HAVE ACTIVE VERBS AND FEWER THAN 10 WORDS

11 June 2007

CITY, Country – The dateline should contain the name of the city and country from which the press release is being issued.

At the end of the text of the press release, write –ENDS- to denote the end. If you need to continue onto a second page, write –MORE- at the end of the first page to denote that another page follows, and number the second page at the top. Three pages is too long for a press release.

In the For More Information section, name a contact person and ensure that the named person will be available at the time of publication of the press release.

Finally, the Notes for Editors section can be used to supply background information and should also contain boilerplate paragraphs about your project and CENTRAL EUROPE.

-ENDS-

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact Name, and their job title

T: +123 123 123456

F: +123 123 123456

M: +123 1234 567890

Email: email@address.eu

NOTES FOR EDITORS

1. **PROJECT** is a Europe-wide project that supports ETC. This is a boilerplate paragraph about your project.
2. **Central Europe Programme** standard programme boilerplate should follow here, in standard format.

Media interviews

The stakes are high when you talk to the media. Get it right, and they will transmit your message to the heart of your target audience, in a format that your audience will trust. Get it wrong, and at best you've wasted your time; at worst you will fuel bad publicity, in which that same trust will work against you.

Proper preparation and training make a remarkable difference to the outcome of media interviews. They can help you get the right message across every time in confident and effective media interviews – even at the height of a crisis.

Make the news

Your interview must make news. You need to give your interviewer a story that he or she wants to pass on to readers, viewers and listeners. Experienced print reporters are all too familiar with the frustration of coming away from a long political or business interview in which the interviewee would not deviate from a personal agenda that was just not newsworthy. In a broadcast setting, this same frustration is very likely to direct increasingly negative and aggressive questioning, which in turn will set the tone for a negative story. Even when you are already under the spotlight, such as during a crisis or rolling news event, the number one rule is to say something newsworthy. Otherwise your interview will produce a story that you don't like, or no story at all.

Know your media

In order to generate good news in an interview, you need to think like a journalist, see stories in the way that journalists see stories, and speak in language that journalists can use in their stories. A journalist will always try to **find an angle** on the news – that is, a way to interpret or explain events that will appeal particularly to his or her readers, viewers or listeners. (An ambitious journalist will also look for a unique angle that will mark his story out from his competitors.) The best way to control the agenda of an interview is to give the journalist a ready-made news angle that makes great news for his particular audiences – an angle, of course, that suits your agenda too.

Know your media and know your reporter. Read, watch and listen to your target media regularly. This will help you to identify what they consider to be newsworthy and what angles they take on events. You can take this to a personal level by searching for previous stories written by a particular journalist – identify themes in his or her interests and attitudes. Apart from the practical benefits to your preparation, getting to know your interviewer can be a great confidence boost going into the interview itself.

At this stage you will also be able to identify any likely preconceptions and negative news angles that journalists may be likely to bring to the

interview: you can prepare the arguments and evidence that you will need to disprove such views and substitute a positive news angle.

Get the angle right

A journalist uses the news angle to tell readers why they should care, and different readers of different media care about different things. For instance, journalists from regional media will tend to look at events from a local angle because their audiences care most about what the local impact will be. International journalists may be more interested in the big picture. Trade press want an angle that reflects how developments affect their industry. Newswires want exclusive real-time information. Don't just push your agenda: adapt it to give each journalist what they want.

A very good way to prepare your agenda for an interview is to imagine the best possible headline that you would like a journalist to write afterwards, and that you can realistically imagine appearing in a publication. That's your news angle. Remember: Put yourself in the place of the publication's reader, what are they interested in? It must be interesting and newsworthy for the journalist and the audience.

The number one thing that every journalist wants is a good story that will interest his or her editor and the media's target audience. If you provide this for them, everyone is happy.

Get the message right

A news story typically revolves around a small number of themes – rarely more than three fundamental ideas, because otherwise the story would be too complex to be easily understood. There is room for remarkably little information in a typical newspaper story or broadcast news item. Likewise, it is unlikely you will be able to convey more than three fundamental ideas in an interview, particularly for broadcast media.

Strong and consistent messages can influence the focus of a news story and help control what angle the journalist takes. Prepare and memorise your key messages.

Prove it

Reporters respond to facts but they are sceptical about pure talk and ideas. Facts help persuade them that they are not being spun an agenda, and facts give them the foundations that they need to generate a credible story. Your messages are propositions or arguments; to persuade anyone to believe them you will need proof – particularly when defending yourself against a negative preconception or promoting a contentious proposition.

Memorise or have to hand "proof points" that validate, illustrate, explain, bring to life and lend authority to your messages. Proof points can be hard information like statistics, or soft information like anecdotes and personal stories. They should be colourful and memorable.

Preparation

Messages and proof points are the foundations of interview preparation. Messages should be consistent through time, but their details should be reviewed and customised to the needs of each particular news situation and each particular interview. Particular interviews will require particular proof points to support the arguments you are likely to want to make.

A question-and-answer (Q&A) document is often used to crystallise this process by anticipating all questions that are likely to be asked and preparing responses that incorporate key messages and proof points to back them up. It is especially important to prepare for areas of weakness. The list of questions should include all of the questions that you would least like to be asked, along with the best possible answers to them. Now is the time to prepare those answers – not off the top of your head when the journalist asks your nightmare question. Preparing for and covering your weaknesses in this way is not only practically effective, it is another great way to boost your confidence for the interview.

A Q&A document is not a script to be memorised. It is obvious to the interviewer when an interviewee is reading back verbatim prepared answers; this undermines credibility. To be trusted and believed, you need to be relaxed and spontaneous. Therefore, a Q&A should be used as a broad guide for the ideas that you need to communicate, not parroted word-for-word.

Practise, but don't rehearse. It is very useful to practise for interviews by giving your list of questions to a colleague and asking them to role-play a probing journalist. For the same reasons though, this should be viewed as practice and not rehearsal – you are not preparing precise lines to roll out again later, rather the goal should be to build confidence, experience, and familiarity with the situation and the material.

General advice for interviews

Interviews are strange, contrived situations that are unfamiliar to most people who don't take part in them regularly or professionally. They can have a similar dynamic to normal meetings with colleagues at work, or normal conversations or debates with friends, but don't be fooled. An interview is a game, an intellectual challenge, and ultimately a contest between the interviewer and the interviewee for control of the story.

At the beginning it can feel as if the interviewer holds all the cards. He or she gets to choose what questions to ask and what answers to use in print and broadcast (unless it is live). By journalistic custom, you have very few rights. You should be able to ask to see your own quotes and to know when, whether and in what form and when it will be broadcast or published; but you have no right to see the whole piece before it is aired. You can ask beforehand what themes and subjects the interview will cover, but you have no guarantee that the journalist will stick to those topics on the day. You can ask for a list of questions, but almost always the answer will be no.

This is where issues of control come into play. You have power to the extent that the journalist needs access to you and your information. These are your bargaining tools in setting the terms for the interview.

However they may seem, journalists are not your friends, and they are ultimately loyal only to the story. Nevertheless, treat them with respect, because whether consciously or otherwise their feelings towards you will colour their treatment of you during the interview and subsequently their treatment of your interests in the story itself.

Treat all journalists equally well, regardless of how lowly their publication. Obscure local or trade publication articles might have little immediate impact, but can easily come to the attention of bigger media. When major reporters are preparing to cover you and your organisation, they will search through previous coverage for their background, and what they will find will be exactly these little and obscure stories. Finally, major journalists were all minor journalists once – with long memories.

Most interviews bring together conflicting interests: yours and those of the journalist and any other players in the story of which you are a part. Expect to be asked aggressive, melodramatic, or ignorant questions: the journalist wants to improve the story with drama, conflict and (over)simplification. These are not usually in your interests, so don't rise to them. Remain calm, confident, and measured. The bottom line is that you cannot control the reporter and should not seek to do so. All you can control is yourself and your own behaviour. Above all:

Use your messages. Use the facts.

DO

Push your messages. Your messages should be a thread running through your contribution to the entire interview. Consistency and repetition are your way to ensure as much as possible that the journalist takes away the right information and the right angle, and puts these into print or broadcast. Make a point of trying to include one of your positive messages in every answer you give. It can be an intellectual challenge to turn questions and conversation around in this way without sounding strained, but it is an invaluable skill to master. But beware the perception of spin.

Use facts, examples and anecdotes to illustrate, substantiate and bring to life each of your messages. Use examples that are appropriate to the media that will publish or broadcast your interview.

Give good quotes and sound-bites. Besides information, what a journalist is really looking for in an interview is a set of strong quotes to illustrate the story. The same goes for text as for broadcast: quotes add colour, authority, immediacy, personality, humanity. Give good quotes. If you come up with a good phrase while practicing for the interview, remember it. Use strong and lively language and short sentences so that your words can be edited easily. Your quotes are your only opportunity to appear verbatim in the finished product – so make them shine. You will probably only get a few sentences of your own direct speech in a print article, or 15 seconds in a news broadcast. The reporter will choose the quote that best illustrates their story – so make sure it is one that helps your agenda.

Be humble, open, friendly, non-defensive, accessible, normal, calm, and human. You want the journalist and viewers or readers to warm to you and empathise with you: this will translate into attention and trust for your messages.

Be honest. Giving a little ground where you can do so without causing damage makes you seem reasonable and inspires trust in whatever else you say. Honesty is a very powerful positive signal.

Body language is particularly important for television interviews, but also plays a role in any face-to-face interview. If you sit up straight, make eye contact and speak naturally, you will more readily inspire trust. If you cross your arms, avoid eye contact and swivel in your chair, your lack of comfort will be apparent and this will hurt your credibility.

Start and finish well. Go in strong and don't let up at the end. How you start sets the agenda for the whole interview; the interviewer will be taking notes for ideas to return to. Your final comments will be the ones people remember most readily, so no matter what mistakes have been made during the interview, you may be able to rescue it with a good positive finish.

Don't raise issues that you don't want to talk about. It might sound obvious but it is surprising how many people, having prepared to cover their weaknesses, voluntarily start talking about them when they might not have come up at all.

Keep it simple. Don't get bogged down in unnecessary detail.

Use basic universal language and no jargon. Technical terms and abbreviations that are everyday to you will often be meaningless to outsiders. Pitch your language for the level of expertise of the lowest common denominator, the reader or viewer of the media in question with the least specialist knowledge. A useful mental discipline is to picture your grandmother or grandfather and imagine explaining it to them in a clear and engaging way. It is almost always possible to break down jargon into clear language without "dumbing down" or patronising too much. If you succeed, the result is much more clear and accessible.

Be succinct. Make your point quickly and directly; then stop talking. Watch for signals from the journalist that they want to move to a new topic. Time is limited, especially for broadcast, and succinct language makes the best quotes.

Forget process, talk action. Internally, communication about process is very important. For anyone on the outside, process is very boring and usually irrelevant. Don't talk about institutions, procedures or bureaucracy – talk about action, people and results.

Bring a press kit where appropriate to give the journalist all necessary background information.

Participate actively. Do more than just answer the questions – raise questions. While answering, think about the next question and drop suggestions or dangle information that will invite a new line of enquiry and guide the conversation towards topics that suit your messages.

Correct yourself immediately if you make a mistake. It is easy to forget and find it has become a matter of public record.

Use your brand. Wherever possible (and without seeming contrived), use your brand name – project, programme, or Europe in a broad sense. Don't say "I feel strongly that ...", say "[BRAND] feels strongly that ...". Get your name out there. Too many spokespeople get the message right but forget to say who they are. When that happens, audiences do not register your brand and therefore don't change their views or behaviours towards it.

Object to loaded questions. If a question is based on incorrect information or a biased proposition, say so. Otherwise you may seem to accept this view implicitly.

DON'T

Don't digress. Politicians, for instance, have a maddening habit of making party political points in interviews on non-partisan topics. The same goes for any kind of agenda you may have beyond the scope of the story that the journalist is working on. Unless you think they will be genuinely interested, you can be confident that changing the subject will annoy the journalist and not make it into print anyway. If it's a live broadcast, it will annoy the listeners or viewers too, because they are in the middle of being told a story about something else.

Don't rise to it. Journalists can be aggressive or even obnoxious in their questioning, and you may not be used to being spoken to in this way. Don't take it personally; don't get angry or defensive or emotional. They may be trying to make the story appear more dramatic, or trying to make themselves appear more probing, or trying to intimidate or unsettle you, or perhaps they really are just ignorant. The obnoxious question may even be edited out so all anyone hears is your indignant or defensive answer. Likewise in a broadcast panel debate, do not engage in personal animosity with other panel members – this is also a digression.

Don't be unsettled by rapid interruptions. Some journalists try to unsettle their interviewee by asking many questions very quickly one after the other, without allowing the time to respond fully. Keep your cool and set your own pace. Take your time answering each question, or use a phrase such as: "You have asked a lot of questions. Let me go through them one at a time". If you really have to get a point across without being interrupted, don't draw breath between sentences – roll straight into a linking phrases such as, "... and what that also means is this:..."

Don't be intimidated by repetitive questioning: the reporter may be trying to trick you into discrepancies, but equally may be giving you a chance to say the same thing in a better quote or sound-bite. In any case, stay cool and respond with using messages as normal, trying different examples and tactics each time.

Don't be afraid to give an honest answer even to a negative question. It can be as simple as saying, "Yes, but..."

Never say "no comment". It makes you sound defensive, evasive, and as if you have something to hide. There is always a better way to say nothing, such as "I can't confirm or deny that for the moment. What I can say is..." If you can't comment on an issue for reasons such as the law, confidentiality or commercial sensitivity – or if you just don't have the information – then say so.

Don't be intimidated by a tape recorder. It can feel like having evidence taken down against you in a police interview – but it is there to protect you. Good journalists will usually use one to check quotes and information.

Don't be taken by surprise. Journalists will sometimes call unexpectedly or ask for an interview without warning. If you don't feel prepared, ask to meet or speak by telephone later – even if it's only a few minutes to give you a chance to collect your thoughts. Note down the journalist's name, publication, deadline, and ask them what kind of story they are working on. That will help you prepare for the news angle. And do call them back.

Don't speak "off the record". If you don't want to see something in print, don't say it. Some journalists are more scrupulous than others, but to be safe you should assume that everything you say, whether on or off the record, might be published. You need a very good reason to speak off the record, and a journalist you trust utterly.

Never say "to be honest" or "to tell the truth". It implies that you weren't before or that you aren't always.

Don't use negative vocabulary. Single words like "unfortunately" are powerful in setting the tone for your entire position. Be positive.

Don't repeat negative material from questions. For instance, following riots recently a police chief was asked: "Have you lost control of law and order?" He answered "No, we have not lost control of law and order". This set a negative and defensive tone, so the focus of the story became: Police chief denies losing control of law and order. If he had answered "No, we acted decisively to make sure law and order was never even in question," the angle is positive. A negative quote easily becomes a damaging sound-bite, as Bill Clinton found out after pledging "I did not have sexual relations with that woman."

Don't be afraid to say "I don't know", if you couldn't be expected to know. It is better than rambling or digressing – and it is honest. You can always offer to get back in touch with the journalist with more information if necessary.

Don't overdo it. While it is important to push your messages and remain positive, do not exaggerate or engage in hyperbole. Remember, journalists are suspicious of hype, and they respond to facts rather than hot air. Use your proof points. Do not be perceived to spin.

Don't be defensive or engage in argument with the journalist. The journalist controls the terms, so you will probably not win the argument. Even if you do, you will lose in the court of public opinion. Instead, be positive, open, humble and honest.

Don't speculate. You don't know what will happen in the future, so avoid responding to questions that ask you for a prediction. Your words may be used against you if things don't turn out as expected.

Don't over-answer. For some people a natural response to the anxiety of being interviewed is to talk more than they usually would. Saying too much can dilute your message, or take you into unintended territory. Make a conscious choice to stick to your messages, then stop talking. When you hear yourself say something good, that is a signal to stop while

you are ahead. If there is silence after you have finished speaking, don't feel obliged to fill it by rambling on – wait for the journalist, or say, "what else would you like to know"?

Don't let your guard down – particularly after a good answer.

Don't criticise third parties. Conflict and controversy make great news so journalists may try to encourage you to criticise or disagree with views attributed to a third party. This will rarely serve your purposes.

Don't be forced into a false dichotomy. Some journalists will try to make you choose between two blank options when in fact the situation is more complex. If you don't like the options, don't choose: explain.

Don't assume the journalist knows anything. Journalists sometimes pretend they know more than they really do, in order to get you to confirm sensitive information. It's a classic investigative journalism technique known as "fishing". Never assume a journalist knows anything that isn't in the public domain unless they have clear evidence.

Don't assume a journalist is really that ignorant or clever – mock-ignorance can be an act to get you to drop your guard; purported expertise can be bluster.

Don't joke unless you're really sure it would be funny in any context.

Never, ever lie. In an interview, you are creating a public record, and untruths have a habit of coming to light and returning to haunt you.

Difficult questions

Media training used to be simple. In the early days, spokespeople would be told: “**don’t answer the question**”, or even (literally), “don’t even listen to the question” – just speak your rehearsed lines. Nowadays, that would be seriously counterproductive. Failing even to address the question is guaranteed to antagonise an interviewer and make an audience suspicious.

The techniques became slightly more sophisticated with the “**blocking and bridging**” philosophy of the 1990s, in which spokespeople were encouraged to evade questions by answering them briefly in a non-specific way with a generic get-out phrase, and then quickly try to make a smooth transition to a topic that suited their agenda.

Nowadays, audiences are much more sophisticated and media-savvy, and they recognise when spokespeople are being slippery. Journalists are likewise becoming increasingly unlikely to let them get away phrases like “What I think you mean by the question is...”

Here are some more common blocking and bridging phrases, of varying effectiveness:

- ❖ “The underlying question is...”
- ❖ “That’s an interesting question, and to put it in perspective...”
- ❖ “I’m glad you’ve asked me this because it brings me to a point that I’ve been wanting to make...”
- ❖ “I don’t have precise details, but what I do know is...”
- ❖ “What I think you mean by the question is...”
- ❖ “Let’s not lose sight of the key issue here, which is...”
- ❖ “This is indeed important, but what’s even more important is...”
- ❖ “What’s important to remember is...”
- ❖ “I can’t say that, but what I can say is...”
- ❖ “Before we move on to another subject I want to add...”
- ❖ “Even more importantly...”
- ❖ “You should also remember...”
- ❖ “There is more to the story, specifically...”
- ❖ “What I want to explain here is...”
- ❖ “You make a good point there, but our main consideration was...”
- ❖ “That reminds me...”

In the current media environment, spokespeople need to **make every effort to actually answer the question**, whenever possible – and are left with the challenge of finding a way to do so while also serving their own agenda, on potentially negative ground. It is hard work, but it has its advantages because the interview becomes a much more exciting and interesting media event, thereby engaging the audience, and thereby improving your capacity to get your message across.

Victory is no longer measured in terms of rhetorical point-scoring like a political debate, or according to technical rules like in a court of law. To win over the opinion of your target audiences in the public is more of an

art than a science. You need to make them trust you, believe you, and preferably like you. You need to explain, argue, enthuse and inspire.

This raises some paradoxes. For instance, some negative material in a story can be an asset. If you concede a few points but still end up on top overall, your victory is worth more because it is credible – the debate is perceived to have been balanced, the reporting rigorous. Furthermore, it reaches more people more deeply, because drama and tension make good news. Many reporters see their job as shining a light into dark places, seeking the truth, probing, investigating on behalf of the public to expose wrongs. Be prepared for hard questions, and see them as an opportunity when they come up.

Answer the question – but don't only answer the question. Run with it and make of it what you can. Answer it and say more. Consider the question as a springboard for your answer. **Identify a keyword** that will let you bridge smoothly to a positive message, rather than using a clumsy generic and evasive bridging phrase. There can be a positive theme hidden in many negative questions; use it to bridge seamlessly to positive ground.

When in doubt, always fall back on the facts. They are safe, and effective.

This version of the ABCD technique most fully sums up the modern approach to handling difficult questions:

ABCD

Answer the question if it is at all possible to do so. (At the very least **A**cknowledge it).

Bridge, in a smooth and non-evasive way, to a message. If possible, use a keyword from the question.

Conclude. Back it up by laying out your facts and proof points; make sense of them, explain them, wrap it up into a conclusion. Useful phrases include "That is why we believe..." or "What that means is..."

Dangle. Get ready for the next question by raising your own question – leave an issue open or unanswered, "dangle" an interesting idea that the journalist may seize on for the next question instead of moving into negative territory.

Acknowledge and action

Sometimes, it's best not to try to deny a negative question, but instead to acknowledge the problem quickly and openly and immediately focus on what practical action is being taken to resolve the problem. Honesty and pragmatism are powerful positive signals, even in a negative situation.

“Yes, we made mistakes in the past. The important thing is that we learned from them very rapidly and worked hard to fix the problems, and that effort is now paying off as we can see...”

Practicalities for TV interviews

- ❖ Ignore the camera and speak naturally to the interviewer. Don't stare down the camera lens at the viewer.
- ❖ Make eye contact and make a special effort to keep looking at the interviewer; if your eyes flit around the room you will look suspicious and uncertain.
- ❖ Try to relax and speak naturally.
- ❖ Gesture normally to project a relaxed image: stillness looks stiff and wooden on screen. But movements can look exaggerated too, so don't wave your hands around too wildly.
- ❖ Sit up straight: if you slouch then you are not projecting your voice and neither are you projecting enthusiasm.
- ❖ Don't use a reclining or swivel chair, because its movements will look exaggerated and distracting on screen.
- ❖ Don't sit back or cross your arms: it looks defensive.
- ❖ Smile! It transforms your image. Look alert and interested.
- ❖ Stay calm if subjected to hostile or aggressive questioning.
- ❖ Don't use written notes because you won't be able to resist the temptation to look at them, and that makes you look unsure of yourself.
- ❖ Don't have anything in your hands, even a pen, because nervous energy will make you fiddle, and that is distracting on camera as well as making you look even more nervous.
- ❖ Arrive early. It can take a long time to set up equipment for a broadcast interview. Give yourself time to relax and gather your thoughts.
- ❖ Ask for a glass of water. Studio lights are hot.
- ❖ Stay where you are when the interview ends until the TV crew take your microphone off and ask you to move.
- ❖ Never assume that you are off camera or microphone even when the interview is apparently over.

Clothing and appearance:

- ❖ Dress professionally (or appropriately for the occasion)
- ❖ You can get away with brighter and bolder colours on television than in real life, but don't overdo it or viewers will remember your outfit, not your message.
- ❖ Blue, grey, beige and black suits look good on television. A navy blue suit is safe. Contrasting colours are good. White is often not flattering to skin tone and can make eyes and teeth look yellow so use with care. Be aware of how your clothing will contrast with or blend into the background behind you.

- ❖ Avoid fine patterns like stripes and checks, particularly herringbone: they create a distracting interference effect on screen.
- ❖ Wear a jacket, shirt or top with a lapel or seam that a microphone can clip to.
- ❖ Jewellery should be minimal and simple for women. None for men.
- ❖ Women should wear slightly more make-up than normal. If offered professional makeup, accept it (both men & women)
- ❖ Glasses should be non-reflective and non-photosensitive if you will be interviewed in bright light. Nobody trusts you if they can't see your eyes.

Practicalities for radio interviews

Radio is the “theatre of the mind”. Peculiarities of the voice are particularly obvious and used to form a general impression of the speaker’s personality and credibility. A faint voice paints a picture of a timid person; a loud voice can sound aggressive or arrogant.

- ❖ Try to sound confident, yet cooperative and calm.
- ❖ Microphones can be sensitive to direction and distance. Keep a constant distance from the microphone and speak directly towards it.
- ❖ Just as for a camera, try to forget that the microphone is there. Look at the interviewer and speak naturally to them.
- ❖ Don’t speak too close to the microphone: your voice will take on an unusual intimate quality.
- ❖ Don’t lean away: your voice will sound weak and distant.
- ❖ Have a glass of water and drink if your mouth is dry.

Events

There are many opportunities to hold or take part in events that bring together your project's personnel with key target audiences in the right environment to communicate your key messages directly to them and generate awareness for the value of the work that you and your partners do.

This section of the manual, in conjunction with the following Event Management Checklist, focuses on a range of ideas and practical knowledge that will facilitate the organisation and management of effective events.

Planning

Project events can sometimes be weak because they are seen as an objective in themselves rather than as a tool to achieve a bigger objective. An event needs to be conceived and planned with a clear purpose in mind. An event is usually a significant cost investment, so it needs to deliver some value that endures longer than the hot air generated by the speakers on the day.

Planning has been the key for projects that have organised successful events. It depends on a clear understanding of the purpose of the event and the target audience, matched to an appropriate event plan. For instance, if you want to influence policy on a regional level, it will be very important to plan an event that will be appealing to regional policy makers.

One important aspect of planning will be to decide whether to hold an internal or an external event.

Internal events – Sometimes due to the nature or stage of development of your project, an event should only be for the lead partner and project partners. For instance, this may be in order to give you an opportunity to share experiences and best practice, and to keep up to date with what is happening within the partnership. This is fine where appropriate to your objectives. However, remember that many CENTRAL EUROPE Programme projects have broader goals beyond their practical internal business. Some goals, such as raising awareness of issues and ensuring that progress continues after the project ends, cannot be served well by a purely internal event.

External events – Events for external audiences are a very important way to keep stakeholders up to date with what is happening within the project, what you are doing to tackle a priority area, and why it is important.

Event outputs

When planning your event always consider your event outputs. What is it that you can do that will make people remember your project, or perhaps even allow you to engage with important stakeholders such as politicians after your event? For example, some projects have created a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with politicians and policy makers who attend their events, while others have signed one and circulated it to key politicians and policy makers in their regions after the event. Other projects have found it useful to develop a list of key statements calling for something or agreeing to take a certain action.

There needs to be a clear purpose for your event and finishing with a “call to action” enables you to engage further with your target audiences and shows that your project and the event has achieved something.

Audiences

Think laterally when considering target audiences for an event. Which groups of people can you interest in attending? Which groups of people have the potential to help you to achieve your practical and communications objectives if you can reach out to them through an event? Who has a stake or an interest in your subject matter? Who is already involved, but could become more committed or useful to your project if you engaged with them more closely?

It never hurts to be ambitious in planning a list of people you would like to attend. There are no guarantees that they will come, but you can improve your chances a great deal by thinking hard about how to make the event attractive for your target audiences. Think about what they are interested in. Why would they want to come? How can you make your event appealing to them?

Budget

Most projects will already have a set budget for their mid-term and end of project events and will normally not be able to exceed this. Your budget will ultimately determine where you hold the event, the number of people you invite, the quality of the support material (such as presentation handouts, press packs, brochures, etc.) and the overall quality of the event.

The budget will determine the overall size and scope of the event, but within the budgeting process there will be decisions to make about the allocation of resources to individual elements. For instance, for some events it may be more important to invest in an interesting venue in order to boost attendance; for others, a high-profile external speaker might be more valuable; in other cases, the priority may be to accommodate as many attendees as possible.

Draft an initial budget using a spreadsheet and allocate one team member to be responsible for it and monitor all costs as they occur. Include a contingency for emergencies. Be aware that some suppliers may need a deposit in advance.

Theme

The headline theme of an event defines its identity and is an important factor in helping people decide whether or not they want to attend. The theme must fit your project's goals and objectives. Keep it short, simple and easy to understand. If your project is about developing parks in urban areas then "Spatial planning and trans-national cooperation for the effective use of green spaces in urban centres" would be difficult to understand for many external audiences. A conference theme such as "Improving green spaces in European cities" would be much more effective.

Programme

The format of your event should be based on the needs and interests of your target audiences. Before approaching anyone to speak at your event or inviting people to attend you will need to draft a programme. Organise sessions and arrange speakers in a clear and logical order. For example:

General introduction to the topic

Specialist views/case studies/different perspectives on the topic

Workshops on different aspects of the topic

Summary and conclusions

Two-way communication

As a general principle, do not rely excessively on one-way communication. When you have one speaker or a succession of speakers delivering presentations, audiences tend to lose attention quite quickly. It helps to include regular interactive elements in the programme, such as:

- Panel discussions
- Workshops – some people feel more comfortable in smaller groups which in turn helps to stimulate interaction
- Break-out sessions for discussions

Be sure to build in regular breaks to encourage networking possibilities and for busy attendees to answer phone calls, send emails, etc.

Speakers

Interesting, knowledgeable and skilled speakers are one of the make-or-break factors of any event. High-profile names, or people from well-known organisations, will help to make your event appealing to target audiences. Individuals who are naturally good at presenting to groups can also transform the atmosphere and impact of the event itself. Depending on the nature of your project and event, interesting speakers to invite might include:

- ❖ European policy: people from the Commission or Parliament
- ❖ National policy: people from Member State governments or organisations
- ❖ Regional policy: people from regional assemblies, local authorities, etc.
- ❖ Experts: academics, researchers, think-tanks, etc.
- ❖ NGOs: with an interest in your project
- ❖ Industry: many projects have some link with industry and it is often important to involve them in some way with your project – offering a speaking slot can be useful
- ❖ Trade associations: relevant EU or Member State-based bodies

Moderators

A good event can become great with the addition of an excellent moderator. Make sure that you have someone who is able to manage the event, lead discussions and debates and make the event interesting and relevant to participants. If necessary you may consider hiring a professional moderator, which could cost anywhere from €500-€5,000 depending upon who they are. Many journalists also make good moderators; ask some of your media contacts if they know of someone suitable.

Speaker invitations

When inviting speakers you will need to provide them with more information on the event, normally in the form of a draft programme, a briefing on the types of people attending the event and a summary of what they are expected to do. Invitations to speakers can be sent by a formal letter or a less formal email invitation or telephone call. Use your judgment when issuing an invitation depending on the level of the speaker. For example, when inviting a politician or senior official it is always best to send a formal letter together with the programme. Always follow up proactively in person afterwards: do not assume that people received, read, or registered your invitation or that they will respond to you.

Timing

The date chosen should not conflict with any other events that your target audiences might also be interested in attending. This is almost impossible

to guarantee but research it and check for major political events, public holidays, conferences etc. Check with your project partners to ensure that there are no events on a local level that could conflict.

Venue

Determine what facilities you will need and choose a location that offers everything you require. Be imaginative and choose somewhere that reflects the nature of your operation and the theme of the event. Unusual or expensive venues may increase attendance, but make sure it is accessible for the people you want to attract. For instance, if conveying messages to busy officials at Brussels-based institutions is one of your key aims, a local venue in Brussels may be better than even the most interesting site elsewhere.

If the event is to be held outdoors, make a contingency plan in case of bad weather.

For suppliers, check whether you have to use the venue's own caterers and equipment or if you can provide your own. This can sometimes be cheaper. If the venue cannot provide all the things you need, ask them to recommend suppliers with whom they have worked before.

If you are going to provide food, a buffet is a good idea as it allows people to mix and talk. For a stand-up buffet, choose food that does not need to be cut up with knife and fork. For the benefit of any journalists attending, remember that it is almost impossible to juggle a plate, glass, fork, pen and notebook. Allow places for people to sit down.

Visit the venue with your team and all suppliers present. Use this visit as an opportunity to walk-through the event from start to finish and envisage all eventualities.

Venue search

You have a couple of options when looking for the perfect venue for your event – find it yourself, or commission a company to find it for you.

Most cities and countries have professional companies that specialise in locating venues for events. Usually there is no direct cost to you and this option could save you a lot of time. Search companies tend to know most local venues and can usually negotiate better rates than you could acting alone.

The way they operate is that you approach them with your requirements and then, on your behalf, they research potential venues, provide a list of what is available and arrange for you to view the suitable places on offer.

Check the terms and conditions in advance of employing a venue search company, but you are normally under no obligation to them. They are usually paid a commission by the hotel or venue if and when they make the booking.

Once the search company secures a venue for you, you then will deal directly with the venue. Some search companies can also negotiate discounted rates on accommodation for attendees at your event.

How to find a venue search company

The best way to find a venue search company is through a recommendation from someone who has organised events in your designated city or through an internet search, such as Google – use terms such as “venue search” and enter the name of the city, or “conference venue” and the name of the city.

Negotiating with venues

Fees are always up for negotiation and it is good practice to shop around to find something that suits your budget. Often venues or hotels will quote a “day delegate rate” rather than charge you for the space and food. This can be useful as it helps you plan your budget and ensures you don’t have any unexpected surprises. Do not be afraid to ask for a discount, especially if you feel that the fees are too high or are over your budget. Avoid revealing your maximum budget if possible.

A day delegate fee will normally include three tea and coffee breaks (welcome, mid-morning and mid-afternoon), water throughout the event (refreshed during breaks) and a two- or three-course buffet lunch.

A venue will normally charge extra for the following:

- ❖ Alcohol consumed at lunch or a cocktail reception
- ❖ Break-out or workshop rooms
- ❖ Technical equipment (data projectors, televisions, DVD or video players, screens, etc.)

Areas that you can negotiate on:

- ❖ Free use of conference facilities in the evening, which is useful if organising a dinner
- ❖ Hotel rooms for conference staff or speakers
- ❖ Room upgrades, e.g. to an executive room or business suite
- ❖ Break-out rooms
- ❖ Free newspapers for conference delegates
- ❖ Free or discounted fees for on-site amenities such as the gym or business centre
- ❖ Minibus to take delegates to or from airport or conference events
- ❖ Late check-out
- ❖ Gifts for delegates in their hotel room such as chocolate, wine, movie, etc.
- ❖ Extra equipment like data projectors, televisions, screens, etc.
- ❖ Wireless internet access, normally for conference staff

Reduced day-delegate fee for staff working on the conference, for example you might only have to pay for their lunch

Template – Finding a venue

Below is a list of the most common information that you should send to hotels and other venues when looking for event space.

Kind of event: conference, press conference, seminar, training, etc.

Event date(s) – (Set, or flexible?):

How many people will attend (minimum and maximum):

How much space is required: one large room, break-out or syndicate rooms

Layout required: classroom, theatre, cabaret, boardroom, etc.

Any special requirements:

How many tea and coffee breaks:

Do you need exhibition space:

Do you require a large space for registration:

Do you plan to hold a cocktail or reception after your event:

Will you be holding a dinner:

Do you require accommodation:

Any other information:

Venues for small events and budgets

If your budget is small and you cannot afford to hire a venue, consider using a meeting room in your office. This might not be suitable for all events but for small seminars, briefings etc. it will be fine. In fact some of your audiences may well like to see where you operate.

Ensure that the event will not be invaded by colleagues who might not have a genuine role in the proceedings and that you will not be interrupted by telephone calls.

Ensuring attendance

Consider carefully the purpose and scope of your event when deciding whether to invite media, NGOs, politicians, dignitaries, officials, etc. If the information you wish to communicate is not of general interest, be selective when sending out invitations. Only invite those who will benefit from your information and whose attendance will benefit you. Always consider that attendees may have their own agendas which may overshadow what your spokespeople have to say.

Invitations

Develop the invitation as soon as you have the venue details and timing. It is important to give your guests as much notice as possible. If you have not finalised the details, consider sending out a save-the-date email or letter, so the guests at least have the event in their agendas.

Include a fax back reply form, dedicated email address or online registration to capture responses.

Event website: Promoting the event

It is common practice now when organising most significant events to have a dedicated website. This is also valuable for CENTRAL EUROPE Programme project events. A website makes it easier for participants to find out more information about the event, its speakers and the content, and it saves you having to continually update people by email, post or telephone.

Depending on the nature of the event, delegates often like to see who else is attending the event. It might be useful to publish a list of attendees, or at least mention their organisation's name somewhere on your website.

Also look at including links from other relevant websites, such as:
<http://www.central2013.eu/nc/event-calendar.html> and
http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/conferences/agenda/index_fr.cfm;
and <http://www.interact-eu.net/>

Standard practice is also to have online registration for the event. This makes life easier both for delegates and for event organisers. People submit their details online into a database that you can normally access through a private site and output into Excel in order to keep track of delegates. A website that has a content management system will allow you to add, delete and update event information yourself without the need of a programmer.

To develop a website with a registration database option you should usually budget between €1,000 and €3,000 depending on your requirements.

To inform people about your event it is best to use a combination of email notification, letters through the post and telephone calls. Emails designed and formatted with HTML coding can look more attractive, professional and interesting.

Remember to keep it simple and easy to understand. Also make sure that it tells your target audiences "why I should attend."

Event logistics

Speakers

Ensure that your speakers arrive on time, in good spirits, refreshed and prepared.

Brief speakers if possible, and obtain and assess all their materials, such as presentations and hand-outs, well in advance of the event.

Arrange all necessary logistics such as transfers and accommodation.

Arrange and check the necessary technical equipment and set-up, e.g. lectern, video projector, laptop, etc.

Arrange for their arrival in sufficient time for dry-run and any last-minute changes.

Meet speakers on their arrival and introduce them to the technical/AV person

Thank all speakers at the end of their speeches or the end of the conference – both verbally and later in writing

Be sure to have discussed and confirmed fees, travel expenses etc. in advance and for prompt payment

Audio visual requirements

At events where there will be presentations or speeches requiring visual support and/or amplification, the AV set-up is crucial. Ideally, your AV supplier should support you on the day of the event as well as with preparation work.

Brief them well and arrange a site visit in advance. However, as with any suppliers, listen to their suggestions – they are experts in their field and may offer practical and innovative solutions to any challenges faced.

Ensure that the AV supplier:

- ❖ Provides expert support, technicians who are knowledgeable with PowerPoint and other presentation software
- ❖ Has somebody in the presentation room at all times
- ❖ Has arranged set-up times and details with the venue in advance

If possible, ensure that all presentations are pre-loaded in one large presentation file on the presentation laptop – run one after the other, including links to any external media.

Documentation

Although delegate packs and paper handouts are regularly used and expected by attendees, there is a slow move towards providing such documentation electronically.

Electronic support materials can be:

- ❖ Downloaded from the event website – using passwords to protect unauthorised access
- ❖ Emailed – in compressed format
- ❖ Sent out CD following the conference

Printing

For an event you will need a good printing company who can professionally produce event brochures, leaflets, registration materials and delegate packs. To get the best price and quality, get quotations from two or three printers and select the one that gives you the best price and who you feel will provide you with the best service. If you particularly like one printer but they haven't given you the best price, ask them to match your lowest price. Remember, you need a good reliable printer to deliver on time.

Try to get all your printing done at once because this can secure big cost savings.

If you are organising an event in another country, it might be more cost effective to produce materials there, or you could produce them in your country and take them with you.

Printers can produce for you:

- ❖ Letterhead for your event
- ❖ Event flyers or brochures
- ❖ Delegate packs
- ❖ Large signage
- ❖ Delegate badges
- ❖ Pop-up stands

Accommodation

- ✚ Insist that delegates book accommodation well in advance, particularly for destinations where hotel rooms are in short supply. Many people tend to leave accommodation to the last minute, which can be too late.
- ✚ When expecting a group, try to arrange pre-check-in with the hotel to avoid waiting time in the lobby.
- ✚ When confirming breakfast numbers, calculate carefully. Many people don't have breakfast – preferring coffee and pastries outside the conference room
- ✚ Pay particular attention to the reply sheet details – twin rooms, king size beds, non-smoking rooms, disabled requirements, etc. Reconfirm with the venue.
- ✚ Ensure that you know the venue – e.g. location of the toilets, cloakrooms, telephones, gym, etc.)

Food and drink

- ✚ Ensure that you allow for all dietary requirements (vegetarian, religious needs, allergies, etc.)
- ✚ Not everybody drinks alcohol. Alcohol at lunch is not conducive to attention and participation in the afternoon. But find out what is most suitable for the participants, as sometimes teetotal lunches can disappoint important invitees, and give a bad impression.
- ✚ Keep it light and simple
- ✚ Choose something the venue can provide easily

Events involving media

Inviting media

If you are inviting mainly trade press and/or weeklies and monthly publications, then try to alert them to the event about three weeks in advance. If you are trying to attract national news outlets you can invite the media nearer to the event.

Follow up the invitation by telephoning all invited media to ensure attendance. It is frequently possible to persuade reluctant or otherwise busy journalists to commit to an event by speaking to them directly.

(See below for an example of a media invitation)

Media events might include:

- ✚ Press conferences to make an important announcement, attended by a number of journalists. (See section below)
- ✚ Media briefings for one or more journalists, either to inform them of secondary news or to provide background information for use at a future date.
- ✚ Media visits to facilities or operations to help the media understand your activities.

- ✚ Seminars or round-table meetings with a group of opinion leaders discussing an area or explaining a complex development, product or service in more depth to the media.
- ✚ Speeches at an industry conference that might be attended by the media.

Media events – timing

For media events it is a good idea to contact one or two journalists whom you intend to invite to see if the event clashes with any other.

If you are inviting journalists, select the time of day carefully. Journalists work to deadlines and these must be taken into account. If you want to attract national news media and want coverage on the day of the event for TV and radio, or the following day for print media, the morning is best – any time from 09:30 is ideal.

If you want to attract weekly or monthly publications, then a lunchtime, afternoon or early evening gathering is good as long as you do not hold the event on any publication's press day (the day the publication is finished and sent to be printed), when it is hard for editorial staff to leave their desks.

Press conferences

Press conferences are a standard feature of many public relations programmes, but they need to be considered carefully. You must assess the pros and cons and then decide if it is the best method for communicating the news you have. It might be better to hold a media briefing or issue a press release.

A press conference should only be held if there is news of real interest to the target media or when the only way you can respond to a whole range of questions posed by a large group of media is by holding an open conference. They can be a major logistical exercise and can bring significant costs if you need a special venue, such as a hotel, and want to provide refreshments for a large group. So you must be certain that it will be a useful exercise.

Consider the following:

- ✚ Is the story strong enough to justify holding a press conference?
- ✚ Is a press conference the best way to communicate with the chosen media?
- ✚ If only a very small, select group is involved, would individual briefings and interviews be more effective?
- ✚ Could the story be better covered by distributing a news release or telephoning media contacts?
- ✚ Are the CENTRAL EUROPE Programme project representatives who would hold the conference prepared to respond to any sensitive or controversial issues that might be raised in an open press conference?
- ✚ Are they sufficiently senior, trained and briefed to front such an event?

- ✦ Is a photo-call prior to the conference appropriate and might it increase the chance of media coverage?

Potential impact

If you are satisfied with those conditions, a press conference can be effective in a range of ways:

- ✦ Communicating a news story to target media simultaneously.
- ✦ Communicating the story with authority and excitement.
- ✦ Providing a platform to enhance the status of your work.
- ✦ Providing a controlled environment for dealing with media questions, which have been anticipated in advance and responses developed.
- ✦ Providing an opportunity to meet a variety of media contacts, develop and strengthen relationships, which may have a long term benefit as well as delivering short term coverage.

**Example of a media invitation
shown for an event held by an
imaginary EU project**



SPROUT

MEDIA INVITATION

You are invited to attend an organic banquet at Kilkenny Castle for the launch of an EU-funded project that aims to help struggling rural communities to benefit from the recent surge in demand for organic food. The feast is one of nine being held simultaneously across Europe to celebrate a new network to help farming economies develop in a sustainable way for the environment and society.

The event will:

Be attended by a number of high-profile individuals including the Irish Economy Minister and the Mayor of Kilkenny

Offer a delicious array of organic food from across the region as well as the other SPROUT regions for journalists and visitors to sample

Give a taste of how poorer regions can benefit from the knowledge and experience of richer areas through enlightened European cooperation.

Friday, 5 June 2009

TIME: 1.00pm – 2.30pm

LOCATION: Kilkenny Castle

I will attend

I won't be attending

I can't attend, but _____ will come
in my place

Please send me a press kit

Name:

Publication:

Telephone:

Email:

Please return this form by email to: s.lynham@iem.gov.ie or by fax: +353 123 123456 no later than Thursday, 11 May 2009.

Event planning checklist

For media or other events

Planning

- ❖ Clarify purpose of event
- ❖ Why are you holding the conference/seminar/workshop/meeting?
- ❖ What is it meant to achieve?
- ❖ What messages do you want to communicate?
- ❖ Write down these objectives and ensure all involved are in agreement
- ❖ Determine your target audiences
- ❖ Who is the event for?
- ❖ What are those people interested in?
- ❖ Will this conference be interesting for them?
- ❖ Put together a detailed plan as soon as you can and circulate it
- ❖ Allocate roles to team members
- ❖ Ensure all relevant colleagues and partners are behind the event and know what's expected of them
- ❖ Keep them informed and committed
- ❖ Schedule regular meetings or conference calls for all involved in advance, e.g. every Monday at 10:00 hrs
- ❖ Issue agenda in advance of each meeting and send out contact report following – even if it's in bullet point form

Date

- ❖ Select dates
- ❖ Check all relevant employees and spokespeople can attend
- ❖ Check for clashes with other more newsworthy events: political events, holidays, regular press briefings, etc. Call journalists, government departments to check for clashes.
- ❖ If it's a media event, don't hold it on a Monday or Friday unless you've got a really hot story

Theme

- ❖ If appropriate, develop a theme to fit objectives and strategy
- ❖ Brainstorm ideas to increase creativity
- ❖ Theme whole event to maximise impact – right down to the invitations
- ❖ Whatever the theme, remember to comply with the information and publicity requirements of your operation and your CENTRAL EUROPE Programme.

Venue selection

- ❖ Before researching suitable venues have some idea of:
- ❖ How many people you expect to attend
- ❖ How many rooms are needed
- ❖ If you need workshops or breakout rooms
- ❖ What kind of food you want (Breakfast, lunch, dinner, cocktails, coffee breaks, water, etc.)
- ❖ Be imaginative to capture interest, but choose a venue that is appropriate and accessible
- ❖ Create a briefing document to give the venue as much information as possible
- ❖ Visit several venues before making a decision:
- ❖ Ask what's included in the price
- ❖ Can you see other events being held at the venue?
- ❖ Are staff friendly and helpful?
- ❖ Negotiate on the price and contract (avoid paying up front – credit card guarantees sometimes work)
- ❖ Ask for extras
- ❖ Do you need an alternative indoor venue if it's raining/cold?

Once venue is selected

- ❖ Check whether you have to use venue's own caterers, equipment suppliers or can provide your own (it's often cheaper to provide your own)
- ❖ Check venue has personal liability insurance – if not organise through own insurer (usually will advise as to the amount necessary)
- ❖ Visit site with all other suppliers present
- ❖ Use site visit as an opportunity to walk-through event from start to finish so you can prepare for all eventualities
- ❖ Check WC facilities – do you need more?
- ❖ How many of your staff do you need – should you hire host/hostesses, cloakroom attendants, etc.?
- ❖ Do you need on-site accommodation? If not, are there enough hotel rooms close by and do you need to provide a shuttle service?

Invitation

- ❖ Develop concept as soon as you have venue and timings
- ❖ Consider a save-the-date-fax if official invitation printing is delayed
- ❖ Ensure all partners are happy with the final version. Fonts and sizing can change on email
- ❖ A fax-back reply slip and dedicated email address are the easiest way to ensure replies
- ❖ Remember map, reply-by-date, contact email/phone number, envelopes
- ❖ Send out invitations as soon as you can – the longer an event is in someone's diary the better. If necessary send a reminder closer to the date
- ❖ With media events, consider that forward planning diaries run months in advance but you'll also need to send a reminder a week before the event for their Monday morning planning meeting
- ❖ Have a specific person to be in charge of maintaining invitation list and all replies
- ❖ Remember to include all the necessary logos (project, programme, EU)

Equipment

- ❖ Assess what you need in terms of equipment
- ❖ Liaise with venue as to what they have and what you can use
- ❖ Hire a technical person or use company IT/tech department
- ❖ Microphones – lapel, podium, handheld, cordless

Presentations

- ❖ Projectors , lap-tops, screens
- ❖ Connection cables, power sockets, transformers, adapter plugs
- ❖ Get presentations 48 hours in advance and upload onto laptops for checking

Moderator/Presenter

- ❖ Who will introduce the event, provide links between speakers, moderate a Q&A session, close the event?
- ❖ If needed to moderate a discussion, consider hiring a professional

Branding/Signage

- ❖ Check what's required
- ❖ Do you need to get it made or can you use existing materials?
- ❖ Ensure that your event complies with the information and publicity requirements of the European Commission. All events, public or private, require an EU flag to be on display.
- ❖ Ensure all spokespeople have names and organisation name displayed

Photography

- ❖ Consider hiring a professional photographer (only if necessary and can be justified. Please refer to eligibility of expenditure)
- ❖ Think diversity when choosing models or a shoot
- ❖ Have props available for use in photos – branding etc.
- ❖ Make sure all photography is captioned. Include names and titles of people in the shot (indicate left to right), along with the date and location
- ❖ Most news organisations, if interested in the story, will want a photo. If you don't send a photo with your press release be ready to send one electronically upon request. Assuming you have access to a scanner, you'll want to send a high-resolution file
- ❖ Have EU flag on display for event photos.

Equipment to take with you from the office

- ❖ Name badges/place labels
- ❖ Signing-in book
- ❖ Pens and paper
- ❖ Contact list of all suppliers
- ❖ Fully charged mobile phones
- ❖ Binder with all information including receipts, confirmation of bookings
- ❖ EU flag

Budgeting

- ❖ Be thorough and stick to budget
- ❖ Allocate fees and costs
- ❖ Keep some contingency budget for emergencies
- ❖ Be aware of public procurement procedures and the time needed to contract services within legal requirements.
- ❖ Start a spreadsheet as soon as an event is planned – column for quotes, column for actual prices, etc.
- ❖ Make one team member responsible for tracking costs
- ❖ Ensure eligibility of expenditure
- ❖ Keep track of all paperwork (emails, letters, quotes, contracts etc.)
- ❖ Check suppliers' contracts before signature
- ❖ Check how much needs to be paid in advance as deposits etc. – arrange this with your accounts team
- ❖ Check invoices correspond with contractual agreement before payment

Meet and greet

Upon arrival attendees should receive detailed instructions. This might include a welcome pack with:

-  Name badge
-  Agenda
-  Accommodation details
-  Map
-  Press pack
-  Tourist information
-  Contact phone numbers

Template for an invitation letter (to invite to speak or participate in project events) for the European Parliament or European Commission

Project name

Project address

Project contact details

Insert name of the Member of European Parliament/European Commission...

Address

Day/Month/Year

Dear xxx,

On the insert date here, the name of organisation or project and its partners across Europe are organising a major event which will highlight regional development around insert topic of your project (eg. Flooding, transport, etc.). As a key (Parliamentarian, Commission official) dealing in (name subject – eg. transport policy issues) we would like to invite you to participate and attend our event. It would be immensely helpful in showcasing the major contribution of EU funding to (regional development and XX policy).

The primary purpose of the event will be to highlight the great value that EU-funded projects are adding to investments in XX, and the practical benefits that XX can generate in line with many of the Commission's key regional development goals. This conference is about more than XXX: it is about how EU projects can lever their benefits deep into regional economies and communities. That is why we are keen for (MEP/Committee/etc) to take part in this event.

One of the subjects of the day-long seminar will be a showcase of (number of projects) major European Territorial Cooperation XX projects that are great examples of how we can deliver the practical side of the Lisbon Agenda and the Gothenburg Strategy. These projects are turning the Commission's view for the future into reality on the ground, with tangible benefits for EU citizens. They show how we can harness the huge power of XX to stimulate commerce, competitiveness, employment, urban regeneration, social renewal, regional connectivity and European integration.

I believe that many of these issues are of considerable interest and importance to you, and I also hope that you would wish to be associated with a great success story for extracting tangible, practical value from European funds.



EUROPEAN UNION
EUROPEAN REGIONAL
DEVELOPMENT FUND

The event will be moderated by XX (if you have a well-known moderator) and attended by over 150 senior politicians, EU and national officials and private sector executives with a stake in regional development through XX (type of project). It will be promoted heavily to journalists for media coverage both before and after the event.

I do hope that you will be able to lend your support by attending the event. For further information and to register, please see conference website address or contact the event administrator, name here, by telephone on +XX or by email: XX

Yours sincerely,

To be signed by a high-level member in your project (eg. Mayor, councillor, head of a development agency, etc.)

European Commission publicity obligations

The Commission Regulation (EC) No 1828/2006 (Implementing Regulation) sets out a number of specific obligations for beneficiaries of ERDF funds as regards their publicity obligations. Based on this legal foundation as well as specific Programme requirements the following information and publication responsibilities apply to projects co-financed by CENTRAL EUROPE.

- 1) All information and publicity measures shall include the CENTRAL EUROPE Programme logo in the form made available explicitly as download for project promoters on the website www.central2013.eu, i.e. in the version that includes the Programme slogan "Cooperating for success".

The logo or emblem is the centerpiece of the graphic identity of the CENTRAL EUROPE PROGRAMME. Its function is to provide the CE Programme with an attractive and distinctive "look" with a high recognition value.

The CENTRAL EUROPE logo or emblem consists of a picture mark and a text mark, which are set in the programme colour. The swirling stars symbolize dynamism and achievement. They stand symbolically for the regions and countries "cooperating for success" in the programme.

The text mark includes the programme name "CENTRAL EUROPE" as well as the programme slogan "COOPERATING FOR SUCCESS." Picture mark and text mark form a single unit. They should never be used separately!

The Programme logo needs to be placed on the first page (or equally prominent place such as the front of a conference bag, exhibition display or power point presentation). The size of the Programme logo should not be smaller than the size of other logos displayed on the same page or surface (e.g. project logo, logo of the Lead Partner institution) and the text "Central Europe" and "Cooperating for success" should be clearly readable. To ensure the readability the minimum size in which the logo should be displayed is 30 mm in length – except special cases which are mentioned later.

All information and publicity measures shall also include the EU emblem with the references "European Union" and "European Regional Development Fund" in the form made available explicitly on the CENTRAL EUROPE website. The exact location and size of the EU emblem is left to good judgment. However, the text "European Union" and "European Regional Development Fund" should be clearly readable.

Programme logo:



EU logo:



In case both logos are placed close to each other on the same page/space it is recommended to use the following option that includes both logos in one file as well as the necessary references.

Combined logo option:



For very small spaces with an available print size smaller than 1 cm in height such as on pens or lanyards, where due to the lack of size the fonts would be too small to be readable, the following solution can be exceptionally (only for small spaces!) used.

Small surface logo:



Black and White logo:

In case a realisation of the logo in color is not possible, for instance on a fax cover or for newspaper ads, the logo color is to be replaced by black. In the black/white modus an inverted display is, of course, also possible.



- 2) Additionally, any document, including attendance or other certificate, concerning approved project within CENTRAL EUROPE Programme shall include the statement: "This project is implemented through the CENTRAL EUROPE Programme co-financed by the ERDF."

Resources

Websites

Your website will be the first source of information about you for many people outside your project, so it needs to contain the right information in a clear and accessible design and structure.

Design

Many organisations spend a fortune on the aesthetic design of their websites, a luxury that is beyond the reach of most CENTRAL EUROPE Programme projects. If you do have budget to commission a professional web design company, be aware that many will try to sell you a service that is unnecessarily complex and expensive. A simple “brochure” site may be sufficient for many CENTRAL EUROPE Programme projects.

Alternatively, it is relatively cheap and easy to configure and publish a straightforward website using inexpensive off-the-shelf software. Most web publishing programmes include a range of generic website templates that can be personalised easily. Keep the design minimal and professional, avoiding any sound, movement or clashes of colour. Avoid information overload: leave enough empty space. Clarity, accessibility and ease of use are vital.

Structure

Good websites have a system of links among the pages that is intuitive, straightforward, and reflected in a clear navigation facility that makes it obvious to users where in the site they are, and how to get to wherever else they want to go.

The easier it is to use, the longer users will stay at the site and the more they will see. Links to all key pages or sections of the site should be displayed on the front page, and every page should contain a standard set of links to other key pages or sections since not all users will arrive at the front page.

Make your structure hierarchical and as shallow as possible: no page should be more than two clicks away from the home page. (See sample website structure below)

Content

Research has shown that people read text very differently on websites from the way they read on paper. On paper, people read sentences fairly predictably from left to right, and persist through long sections. On screen, people’s eyes scan around unpredictably and settle on interesting keywords. On paper, people are more likely to read to the bottom of the

page. On screen, people lose interest more quickly and many people do not bother to scroll down.

- Break up your text with sections and bullet points
- Highlight key words in bold
- Be concise. Avoid long texts that require users to scroll down

Hosting

Your website can often be hosted directly by your web design company or they can suggest another company for you. If your project is part of a large organisation or local authority, there might also be an opportunity to host your website internally. Look around to find the best hosting option for your project.

Leaflets and brochures

General leaflets and brochures need to convey a rounded impression of your project in a way designed to draw attention and create interest. The first step is to choose or commission a design that will encourage a person from your target audience to take the time to read it.

Effective designs tend to be relatively simple and make good use of **graphics and imagery** that are both eye-catching and relevant to your subject matter. Use bold and striking pictures, preferably including some action or an interesting view or place, rather than bland portraits, group team pictures or handshakes.

Be realistic about **how much information** can be conveyed in the space available. There is no point cramming everything you want to say into a design so crowded that it becomes unattractive or effectively unreadable. Accessible designs include a substantial amount of white or empty space to make the content easier on the eye. Determine how much space you have available before beginning to write.

Imagine **how people will read** the leaflet and brochure. Not many of them are likely to sit down and give it their full concentration for a long period of time as they might with a book. People flick through brochures until something catches their eye; leaflets get even less attention, so be clear and concise.

Vary the format of your content, avoiding large blocks of text that will put readers to sleep. Use boxes, lists, bullet points, graphics – any way you can imagine to encourage readers' eyes to linger on your key information.

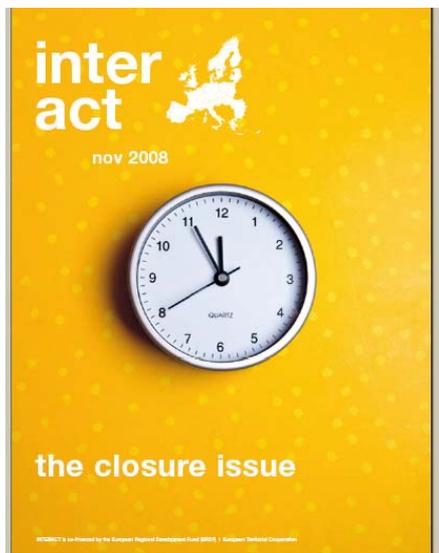
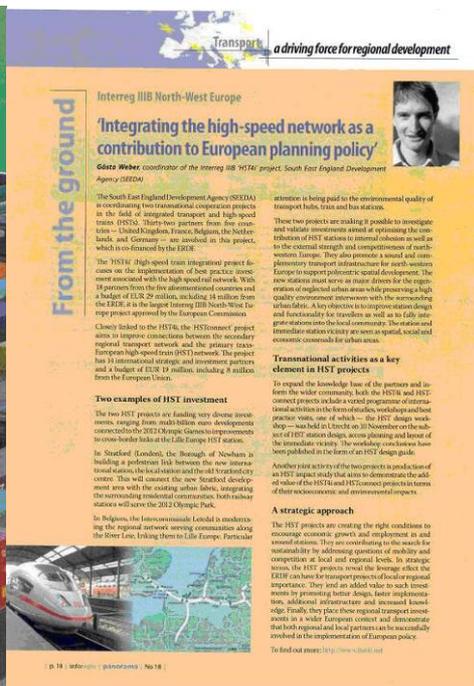
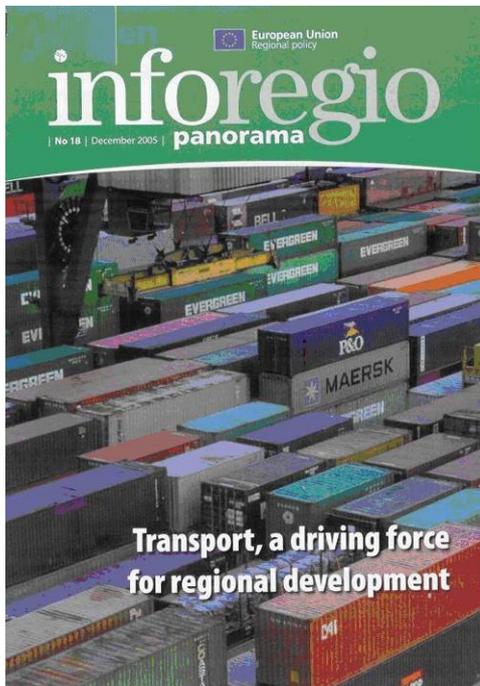
Build the content around your **messages**, with a clear view to angles that are likely to be interesting to the target audiences that you have in mind.

If your leaflet or brochure is destined for a use where it will be competing for attention with a large number of similar publications from other organisations, consider using a format that will help it to stand out, such as an unusual size or shape (this can be as simple as using landscape rather than portrait orientation), a novel material such as a textured paper, or a fold-out layout.

Probably the most common error with leaflets and brochures is to invest a great deal of time, effort and budget into an expensive design, layout and print job but direct much too little attention towards the **quality of the content**. The goal is to engage an audience and influence their views or behaviour in line with your communications strategy. In this context a beautiful brochure is no use if it is boring or unclear. Use your best writers and devote enough time to the task to create truly powerful prose; if necessary, commission professional copy-writers or copy-editors.

Third party newsletters

Newsletters compiled by other organisations can often be interested in CENTRAL EUROPE Programme project activities, and this is a great opportunity to reach out to a new segment of your target audience. Below are two examples of such publications (DG Regio's magazine "Inforegio" and the Interact newsletter).



Other media relations tools for your project

Press lists

Each project should have a press list to keep track of all media contacts. Put a list together in Excel (use Excel because it supports mail merges, print lists and bulk emailing better than Word) and enter all of your media contact details. Include the name of the publication, the journalist's name, their telephone, fax and mobile numbers and email address. Make sure that your project's press list is updated regularly because media move around and telephone and email addresses change. There's nothing worse than struggling on the day of your press release or media invitation to try and get contact information.

United Kingdom				
Media name	Address	Editor/Journalist name	Contact telephone	Email address
RECOVERY Magazine	C4U, The Very Busy Office, 23A Elm Terrace, London SE9 5DW		00 44 7000 248007	recovery@bdma.org.uk
Green Futures	Green Futures, Overseas House, 19-23 Ironmonger Row, London, EC1V 3QN	Roger East, Editor	00 44 20 7324 3660	roger@greenfutures.org.uk
Ends	Environmental Data Services, 11-17 Wolverton Gardens, London, W6 7DY	Roz Bulleid, Writer	00 44 20 8267 8123/8100	roz.bulleid@haymarket.com
Environmental Agency	Environment Agency, Rio House, Waterside Drive, Aztec West, Bristol, BS32 4UD	Clare Sturges, Editor	00 44 1454 205 720	clare.sturges@environment-agency.gov.uk
National Flood Forum	Old Snuff Mill Warehouse, Park Lane, Bewdley DY12 2EL	Mary Dhonau, National Co-ordinator	Tel: 00 44 1299 403055 Fax: 00 44 1299 403101	info@foodforum.org.uk
Water Active Magazine	Water Active Ltd, Unit 2, 57 Bushey Grove Road, Bushey, Watford, Hertfordshire, WD23 2JW	Philip Alsop	Tel: 00 44 1923 23 33 77 Mob: 00 447786 06459 Fax: 00 441923 25 22 20	phil@wateractive.co.uk
The Environment Post	c/o Environment Post, PO Box 2136, Wickford, SS12 0WB	Andrew Phillips	00 44 1268 450024	andy@ppath.com.co.uk
Edie	Faversham House, 232a Addington Road, South Croydon, Surrey, CR2 8LE	Sam Bond	Tel: 00 44 20 86517161 Fax: 00 4420 8651 7117 ISDN: 004420 86511471	vnewsdesk@edie.net
Belgium				
Media name	Address	Editor/Journalist name	Contact telephone	Email address
European Voice	International Press Centre, Résidence Palace, Rue de la Loi 155, Box 6, 1040 Brussels	Tim King, deputy editor	00 32 2 540 9079 Fax: 32 2 540 9070 or 32 2 540 9071	timking@economist.com
EU Observer	EUobserver.com Editor's office, 203, Rue Belliard, bté 5, B-1040 Brussels, Belgium	Andrew Redman, environment journalist	00 32 485 754741	ar@euobs.com
European Packaging and Waste Law	Rue du Commerce 20, 1000 Brussels	Zoe Casey	00 32 2 7366313	zoe.casey@informa.com
Europe Information Service (Europolitique)	Avenue Adolphe, Lacomble, 65-69 B-1030, Bruxelles	Pierre Lemoine, Editor in Chief	Tel: 00 32 2 737 77 00 Fax: 00 32 2 732 66 08	pierre.lemoine@europolitique.info
EU reporter	Residence Palace, Rue de la Loi 155 box 79, 1040 Brussels	Cillian Donnelly, Editor	00 32 496.120.929	cillian@eureporter.co.uk
Euro Correspondent		Stephen Gardner		stephen@euro-correspondent.com
Euromedia Services	Av. D'Auderghem 63, 1040 Brussels	Frederik Ronse	Tel: 00 32 2 7716834, Fax: 00 32 2 7716979	frederik.ronse@skynet.be
Euractiv	International Press Centre, 1 Bd. Charlemagne, boîte 1, B-1041 Brussels	Armin Meyer, environment journalist	00 32 2 2265810 (general number)	armin.meyer@euractiv.com environment@euractiv.com
Ends Europe Daily	Box 52, IPC, Bd Charlemagne 1, 1041 Brussels	Paul Keye, Editor	00 32 2 285 0859	editor@endseuropedaily.com

Above is an example of a press list to give you an idea of what it should look like

Press kits and information packs

Every project should have an up-to-date press kit that contains fact sheets of all the important information about your project, case studies and biographies of key people.

Although press kits are designed to be presented to journalists, they can also be an important source of information for other people who want information about your company, such as European institutions, local governments, industry associations, regulatory bodies, member state governments, and the general public.

Why are press kits important?

Journalists are busy and normally have several stories to write in a day. If they conduct an interview with someone from an organisation, or if they receive a press release, they usually need additional information.

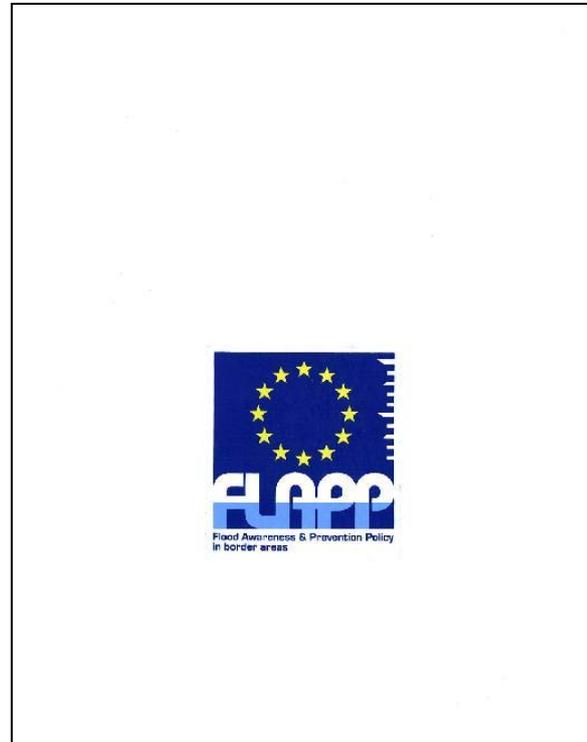
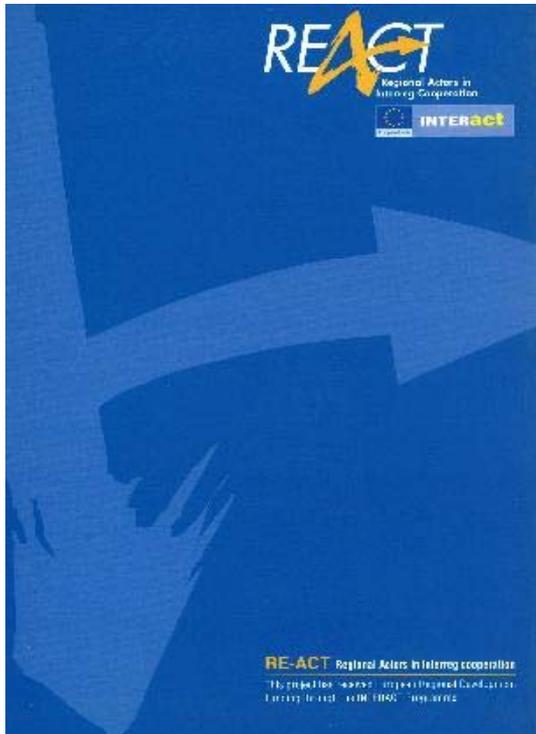
A journalist can always do their own research about your project, but this could take them a long time. So giving them a press kit could make the difference between them writing a story about your project or not – and between that story being right or wrong.

People attending events or activities that you organise will also want to have further information about your project and what you're doing. Remember to have this in an easy-to-read format.

Press kits can either be in a hard-copy printed format or available electronically, either by email or on a website – it's usually a good idea to have both.

What should a press kit look like?

Your project's press kit should have a nice professional-looking folder with your project name and / or logo placed in a prominent spot on the front cover. Here are some examples:



You will also need to include the CENTRAL EUROPE Programme European Regional Development Fund and EU logos on the front cover.

What goes inside a press kit?

Your press kit should contain the following:

1. A general fact sheet about your project
2. Background information about the project
3. What is your project doing and why is it interesting?
4. Biographies of any key people or of the main spokesperson
5. At least one case study on your project
6. Any brochures or materials that might be interesting for the journalist (if it won't be interesting, don't include it)
7. Recent photos of your project – either hard copy or on a CD or USB drive/stick
8. One or two relevant recent articles published about your project
9. Recent press releases that you've issued – one or two is enough
10. CENTRAL EUROPE/European Territorial Cooperation -fact sheets

Press office

There is no need to be put off of having a press office for your project. A project press office can simply be a set of documents and systems that you have in place to help you deal more efficiently with your public relations activities. When you are working with a number of different project partners it is also useful to have these readily available to everyone, as it helps them to do PR work in their own country or region.

Below is a comprehensive list of all of the kinds of tools and systems that might help a project with organising its public relations activities better. You don't have to do everything on the list, but as many as possible will make you more effective with your communications.

Press office checklist

Tools checklist

These are standard tools that you should have prepared before you begin doing media relations for your project:

- ✦ Press kit with fact sheets on your project and general CENTRAL EUROPE Programme (European Territorial Cooperation) fact sheets
- ✦ Standard format for your project's press releases
- ✦ Biographies of any key people who will give interviews
- ✦ Key messages and examples to substantiate and bring them alive—both from CENTRAL EUROPE Programme (European Territorial Cooperation) and for your own project
- ✦ Media lists
- ✦ Telephone target media to get contact details for key journalists
- ✦ Research target media online
- ✦ Use personal contacts to supplement your lists
- ✦ Note names of journalists on published stories about relevant topics
- ✦ Commercial media directories are available for purchase
- ✦ Contacts
- ✦ Photos (online is best)
- ✦ Writing style guide to ensure everyone writes consistent materials
- ✦ Events calendar (forthcoming events you are taking part in)
- ✦ A system for archiving press coverage
- ✦ All relevant logos and EU publicity requirements

Housekeeping checklist

Have named individual responsible for:

- ❖ Daily media monitoring
- ❖ Internal communications
- ❖ Website news section maintenance

Keep an up-to-date list of everyone working on your project and their contact details so they can be reached quickly if needed for urgent news management.

Systems checklist

- ❖ Develop a system for logging press calls for all staff
- ❖ This can be an electronic document or a paper-based log
- ❖ Staff should direct all media calls to the press office
- ❖ Brief staff (including switchboard and reception)
- ❖ Introduce system
- ❖ Test it
- ❖ Make sure it works using feedback

Monitoring the media

Feedback about your public relations activities is crucial, so be sure to monitor the media systematically for relevant news.

- ❖ Scan daily papers
- ❖ Keep press office copies of key trade publications
- ❖ Search news sites and news aggregators e.g. yahoo or google news
- ❖ Paid monitoring services are available e.g. www.factiva.com
- ❖ Consider a rota system for media monitoring

Look for coverage not only of your own projects but of anything interesting, relevant or useful in the sector or industry. This may signal potential public relations opportunities or problems for you.