

Scenarios of solutions of possible problems in the CoP

ANNEX OF THE FINAL REPORT OF THE PROJECT

„EVALUATION OF THE COMMUNICATION STRATEGY AND
PUBLICITY OF THE RDI OP“

Report prepared for:

CR – Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport
Karmelitská 7
118 12 Prague 1

Identification data of the processor:

Seat, Brno office:
HOPE-E.S., v.o.s., division EUservis.cz
Palackého tř. 10, 612 00 Brno
ID: 25342282

Prague office:
HOPE-E.S., v.o.s., division EUservis.cz
Lidická 1, 150 00 Prague 5

Person authorized to act on behalf of the processor:

Jan Šild, Partner at HOPE-E.S., v. o. s.

Content:

Tips and scenarios for dealing with the preparation and implementation of the CoP of RDI OP Chyba! Záložka není definována.

1	Problems with communication planning	Chyba! Záložka není definována.
1.1	What to do when planning communication in the period 2011 to 2015?	4
1.2	How to create an annual communication plan	5
1.3	How to design the structure of the ACoP of the RDI OP	5
2	Communication management	Chyba! Záložka není definována.
2.1	How to conceptually cooperate with external suppliers	8
2.2	How to build relationships with the media	9
2.3	How to be more visible and heard of	Chyba! Záložka není definována.
2.4	How to take advantage of new trends and on-line tools	10
2.5	How to avoid mistakes when writing press releases	11

Tips and scenarios for dealing with the preparation and implementation of the CoP of RDI OP

The following text contains selected tips and scenarios how to deal with possible problems that may be identified in the planning, preparation and implementation of information and communication measures in accordance with the CoP of RDI OP. The proposed scenarios can be used, but in general it applies, that all information and promotional activities should be implemented in accordance with the approval of the CoP of RDI OP or in accordance with its annual updates (annual CoP - ACoP).

1 Problems with communication planning

1.1 What to do when planning communication in the period 2011 to 2015?

Planning communication activities in the period 2011 to 2015 essentially means preparing the **four annual communication plans for the years 2012, 2013, 2014 and 2015**.

In a normal situation the methodology of the annual communications plan is a **guide on how to get out of a strategic level to an operational and tactical level**, i.e. how to implement a communication strategy, thus CoP of the operational programme, with specific communication sub-plans and subsequent campaigns and activities.

The form and content of the **CoP of RDI OP does not correspond to a real strategic document**. It does not specify a path or possible scenarios of how to achieve goals, nor defines specific milestones that must be achieved to successfully meet the overall objectives and which determine the content of communication and appropriate communication tools. That is why it is necessary to **expand each annual CoP by a strategic background**, which means to evaluate progress towards CoP objectives, take a comprehensive view of the key tasks in the long-term context and then decide on priorities for the year.

Only when we are clear on these priorities, we can proceed to define the operational and tactical levels, i.e. to plan specific activities for a specific year.

Besides the ability to look at progress in fulfilling the overall CoP, it means:

- ➔ at the development of awareness and actual knowledge of the operational programme in each segment of the target groups;
- ➔ at the awareness and skills of applicants and beneficiaries;
- ➔ at the overall impact of communication measures on the actual drawing of funds and administration of the operational programme and at the attitudes of target groups related to the actual drawing of funds
- ➔ it is necessary to also evaluate the all external factors that affect the planning of communication activities.

Before we proceed to the methodology of the annual communication plans, let's shortly summarize what major **changes of the external environment** can influence the planning of communication activities in the second half of the programme period.

When planning communication activities, choice of instruments and methods of their implementation, we should not forget that people expect smarter usage of new media and new technologies in order to address them with relevant statements and not be overburdened with unnecessary information that is not useful for them, rather than enhancing communication in new media.

1.2 How to create an annual communication plan

The annual communication plan is usually a **simple concise document** that should clearly describe which activities will be implemented in the given year, on what segments the target groups will be focused, when these activities will be implemented and for how much money. This document should give a very specific idea of the extent and nature of the communication activities for the given year.

Preparation of the annual plan should be **timed in order that there is enough time for its approval and that this plan could be implemented from the very beginning of the year.**

From the beginning it is important to note that we are creating **a whole that will be effective, as long as all its parts are kept**, i.e. if it will be implemented as a whole, particularly as regards the communication mix - a set of tools with which we intend to meet the priorities of objectives for the year. It should also be created with that aim in mind. It should contain tools with which we best affect separate segments of target groups, and best express the content of priority announcements for the year. If we do not implement any of the planned instruments, whether because of a lack of time or financial or administrative, then the impact can also weaken the others – implemented tool of the communication mix. It is therefore necessary to **carefully consider the feasibility of implementation and determine the competencies that will ensure the implementation of the annual CoP.** In certain cases it is of course possible and sometimes desirable to allow flexible of the actual implementation of specific activities.

1.3 How to design the structure of the ACoP of the RDI OP

What is the **optimal structure** of the annual communication plan? Primarily, it is necessary that:

- *answer these important questions:* why we must take certain steps, what we observing thereby, whom does it affect, how we get the right message to the target group, when we should take individual steps and how much funding we need to secure;
- *suits the team* responsibilities for its;
- is it understandable for any new team members and cooperating external suppliers (agencies)?

Unlike the communication plan of the RDI OP for the entire programme period of 2007-2013, the annual communication plan should have a very **practical form**.

The communication objectives for the given year should also be specified in the annual CoP. The priority objectives are derived from the state of awareness identified in the previous analysis. The phase of communication or certain milestones in meeting the overall CoP should also be taken into consideration when specifying objectives for the given year.

- Is it still necessary to build awareness of the program?
- Should we not focus more on building knowledge of the results and benefits of the program?
- It is necessary to assist applicants?
- It is not more preferable to provide regular assistance to beneficiaries in the successful administration of a project?

Goals should be set and ideally also quantified in relation to impact indicators defined at the end of the program period. A calculated shift in impact indicators will help the quantification of goals which can best be determined via a survey of information during the evaluation of the previous annual CoP. E.g. based on the increase in awareness of the previous year, in relation to invested sources into communication of the same year, the planned increase can be estimated and change in awareness can be affected by the nature and especially extent of communication planned for the given year.

The annual plan should also **identify key target groups for the given year**. No substantial change in CS segmentation is expected when implementing the CoP of the RDI OP. However, the knowledge and attitudes of people will change as a result of the implementation of previous activities. Therefore, it will be important to determine not only the state of awareness, but also the specific sources of information and specific knowledge and attitudes of target groups. If the overall CoP of the RDI OP will not contain a description of the target groups, it is appropriate to produce a brief description regarding the preparation for the annual CoP. The better we know our target groups and the more current information we have about them, the better we will be able to target and engage them. And so we have a better chance of achieving set communication objectives.

The above-described information about target groups will facilitate the **specification of information and publicity tools and their specific form**. The best way of achieving impact indicators is conceptual and primarily continual communication. Activities that are well target evaluated by targets groups should be focused on and appropriately supplemented by other activities specifically designed for the current phase of communication. External suppliers should be involved in the specification of activities as well.

Appropriate **timing and an estimated budget** should be proposed for each action, activity of the annual plan. It is suitable not only to indicate when and what activities are best to be implemented, but also how much time is necessary to prepare these activities.

The total budget for a given annual CoP should be in line with the indicative distribution of financial allocation for the implementation of the CoP of RDI OP for 2007 – 2013. Alternatively, it should be justified why the current proposed budget for the given year varies from the indicative financial allocation. The budget should be considered realistically and, if possible, drawn upon.

Picture 1: Possible form of the annual CoP of the RDI OP

CoP of RDI OP for the year 20XX			
Communication objectives for the year 20XX			
CoP tools for the year 20XX			
above-the-line communication			
Tool	Determined for CS	Timing	Estimated budget
Media communication:			
On-line communication			
below-the-line communication			
Public relations:			
Direct communication:			
Publishing activities			
Other tools			
			Total:

2 Communication management

2.1 How to conceptually cooperate with external suppliers

In case of a shortage in capacity, collaboration with external suppliers is a necessity. In terms of professional approach, conceptualization, but also overall efficiency, using external suppliers to ensure communication activities appears to be advantageous. One can close a long-term framework agreement with one supplier of above-the-line activities and one supplier of below-the-line activities, in many cases cooperation with one full-service supplier also works to satisfaction. In the case of conceptual collaboration with one or more suppliers, it is necessary to **strengthen the methodological and managerial role in the publicity department**. The moment staff from the publicity department are free of time-consuming executive tasks, their main role is to **effectively coordinate tasks assigned to a supplier / suppliers and provide a meaningful basis for improving the content of communication** (topics, successful projects, views of other departments, etc.) and manage implementing the communication plan.

It is definitely not correct to close cooperation with the implementer of communication activities by the end of the period, only to invest resources. **If the administration process does not allow quick selection of an implementer/s, it would be better to reconsider the method of implementation.**

The first option is to procure the services of externals for below-the-line orders. To make this approach work effectively, it is truly necessary to have a flexible and strategic approach from the publicity department. An increase in flexibility is possible either by delegating more authority to the department of publicity, or the introduction of the above-mentioned practical and regular status of meetings with the leadership of the governing body. In order for this approach to be indeed functional, there must be a qualitative change in planning, as is described in the previous chapter.

The second option is the implementation of activities by one's own sources. This alternative is not recommended by the processor because it is not possible to make real changes in qualifications, professional background and equipment of the department of publicity, for this approach to work successfully in reasonable time.

2.2 How to build relationships with the media

- Establishing quality relationships with journalists is one of the basic rules that lead to successful communication.
- Create a database of journalists who are regularly interested in education, go downstairs with them and offer them interesting topics for processing.
- Personal contact with journalists will simplify your job when you invite the media to various actions and events. It also increases the likelihood that journalists will deal with press releases, which you send to them - they will know that such material comes from someone who regularly supplies them with relevant information.
- Currently the importance of independent persons who work on the internet, especially bloggers is also starting to grow. Find interesting blogs dedicated to education and address their author - the importance of bloggers is currently rising and if they find offered topics interesting, information about RDI projects can get among specifically targeted internet users who visit these blogs.
- Identifying journalists who you want to address or creating a media list, to which you want to send press releases, are things that really require close attention. If you send journalists a press release, which is well beyond his interest, it may happen that your next e-mails will be classified as spam you he will not be willing to communicate with you in the future.
- In Czech media it is unlikely that journalists directly specialize in the area of structural funds, yet common themes can usually be found in press releases that may interest a given journalists.
- Regarding the RDI OP, it is no problem to address journalists who are dedicated to science and research. To increase media coverage of the programme, it is a good idea to also identify projects that may be of interest to other oriented periodicals.
- E.g. Media focusing on education may be interested in projects of universities that employ students, women's magazines, stories of women in science, economically orientated journalists or media reports on the actual status of drawing subsidies or the status of allocated subsidies, etc.

2.3 How to be more visible and heard of

- When projects and program activities appear in a wide range of media (from television, through newspapers, to social media), there is a big probability that viewers and readers will remember them.
- For this reason it is good to connect all possible forms of advertising - media articles and press releases published on websites, to promote projects and events and taking advantage of not only printing but also social media, etc.
- Present your project to a representative of the managing authority as experts on issues of science and research - based on meetings with editors, try to recommend them as guests in various television and radio programs, quote the director of the department in press releases, etc.
- If you want to really increase the awareness of the general public, the benefits of the program and specific benefits for the company should be introduced in order that everyone can see it for themselves. It is then very likely that people will spontaneously pass on information about the programme ("You know, yesterday I was at such an event where they performed an attempt, well you will not believe it as it apparently is funded by the EU ...").
- Usually it is good to involve a specific story of someone from the scientific team that deals with the project to articles, press releases and presentations on websites in addition to specific projects and their benefits (e.g. when he became interested in science, what research gave him etc.).
- These stories are always very engaging for journalists and the general public and people remember them better because they have the possibility of joining an otherwise anonymous project with specific human destinies.

2.4 How to take advantage of new trends and on-line tools

- Online advertising is now an essential complement to advertising in printed media.
- Presentation on the internet, however, does not only include online media, its importance is increasingly growing in social media as well
- The need for interaction between internet users is becoming increasingly evident, almost every article in the online media today include the possibility of leaving comments, and the authors of articles are increasingly entering into discussions with users, etc.
- Journalists often draw from opinions of the general public and incentives for their articles from social networks, news channels are typically connected with these types of media and here newly formed groups are also able to influence some world events to a certain measure.

- Social media, in addition to the actual promotion of programmes and projects, enable the managing authority to obtain feedback from users and shape their opinions on the situation for example in science and research projects funded by the RDI OP or about the managing authority as such.
- Methods of advertising are still evolving and therefore it is necessary to constantly monitor and respond to new trends.
- If you have a feeling that preparing a presentation on social media takes too much time, take advantage of media that is currently not used by mainstream in the Czech Republic, but according to marketing experts have a great future ahead - it concerns social networking like Foursquare and Twitter.

2.5 How to avoid mistakes when writing press releases

Distribution of press releases is an essential part of publicity. It usually contains current information which should inspire journalists to writing article. They deal with different topics, from information about ongoing events and events as such to specific stories.

Producing press releases however has its own rules in order that journalists may become interested in the vast amounts of information that you send. When creating the text you should not forget that news reports should include:

Attractive headlines

- The title of press releases must appeal to journalists at first sight. It is reported that most readers read subtitles, but only a small part of them then continue reading the rest of the text.
- The title should contain information that clearly informs journalists that it is worth reading further; it must be obvious from the title that this is a hot topic and that it is a topic within a journalist's competence.
- Subtitles published on websites must attract the ordinary reader; sometimes it is good to create two versions of subtitles.
- If the press release will be published on the internet, keyword selection is very important - press releases will appear in search engines according to them.
- Do not be afraid to use phrases (informal or expressions of surprise) that will surprise readers and encourage them to read the article (it is not necessary, however, to create a tabloid release).
- Do not write information in headlines that attracts readers, although, has nothing to do with the rest of the text.

Minimum of technical terms

- Professional expressions usually disturb readers from the general public and make texts difficult to understand. You must therefore always remember to whom a press release addresses.
- Always use expressions which you are sure readers and journalists will understand.
- Remember whom the press release is directed at - if your target group is experts on the issue of structural funds, some special terminology may also be used.
- Do not use technical terms in quotes. If for example, a scientific authority will reflect on an issue, try to translate his observations into the most comprehensible form.

Facts

- In the very first paragraph, try to answer fundamental questions: what, when, where, why, and how it will impact.
- Often immediately after reading the opening line, a journalist assesses whether he is at all interested in the issue and may not continue reading at all, so the introductory paragraph should also refer to any current issues that are often mentioned in the media (e.g., problems with financing science).
- In press reports give only verified facts and be brief, when a press release appeals to a journalist, more information will be requested.

Quotes

- Quotes allow readers to assign a specific person to an abstract institution. Regarding the RDI OP, it is advisable to quote the minister himself or employees of the Ministry and science authorities.
- If you are processing a press release about an approved project, it should certainly contain quotes of the implementer.
- Regarding press reports on the state of spending, it is good to insert quotes of factual data such as the number of approved projects. There is a very big probability that the editor will not cut out such quoting when editing the article.