

Good Communication Practices for ICT PSP Projects

VERSION 1.01 - OCTOBER 2008

••• Guidance Notes

This document is to give guidance on various communication activities of interest to your project which we encourage you to participate in. It does not replace or override a project's contractual obligations regarding communications, such as those set out in the Annex I (Description of Work) or in Annex II section II.18 of your grant agreement.

The ICT Policy Support Programme (ICT PSP) forms part of the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme (CIP).



Document revision history

Version Number	Date	Revision
1.0	July 2008	First public version
1.01	Oct. 2008	Change in section Communicate your project / General Obligations, correction of example of Acknowledgement of EU funds.

ICT PSP: Project Promotion

Congratulations, your ICT PSP project is just starting! Now it is time to tell everyone.

The promotion of your project helps you increase the reach and impact of your project, disseminate experiences and good practices, locate potential partners and attract public administrations or investors.

The visibility of your project depends on how you promote it. This means telling people about it! These guidance notes are intended to provide suggestions on how to better communicate your project and explain how we can support you to make your project more visible, so that the right people hear about your excellent work.

So, create your project communication / dissemination strategy early on, as these activities should follow through the entire duration of your project...

Think about your work:

- What is your project about?
- Why is it important to be done?
- What makes it different from others?
- What will be the "wider" benefits and impact?
- Who will benefit? (directly and indirectly)
- Who should be interested? Media, industry, local authorities, local citizens

Your contact point at the European Commission

As with all project interaction the normal contact point is your Project Officer (PO). However in some areas a special Communication Officer has been appointed, who handles issues in regard to communication and promotion for all projects in that area. For simplicity in the current document reference is only made to the Project Officer.

What's Inside

Topics	Pages
Communicate your project	4
How we can Support Projects	8
Contact Info	9
Disclaimer	9
Annex 1: Guidelines on Writing Press Releases	10
Annex 2: Project Information Sheet	11
Annex 3: Writing for the Web	12



Communicate your project



Overview

- **At the launch** – press release
- **Within first 2 months** – information sheet, website, logo
- **During the project** – workshops, brochures, technical details
- **After the project** – keep up communication

The first steps: At the Launch

Press Release

A press release is sent to journalists to announce something new. Partners in a new project should issue a Press Release that targets their local press as soon as they sign the Grant Agreement.

The press release should be simple, well written and written in the journalists' language and be no longer than one A4 page. This Press Release should focus on:

- the main objectives of your project and the rationale for such a service / initiative;
- planned end result and how it contributes to stimulating innovation and competitiveness through wider uptake and best use of ICT for national, regional or local administrations, business, citizens and other relevant stakeholders;

it should also refer to:

- the consortium;
- how more information can be obtained.

See Annex 1 for more help

Please send a copy of this press release to your Project Officer, who will take care that it will be considered for use in our communication activities (e.g. newsletters, websites).

Your press release can be e-mailed, faxed, or even mailed to journalists at newspapers, magazines, radio and TV stations. Target local, national or international media - try to think who might be interested and why. You may need to adapt it slightly for different media.

You should contact the press at different stages during your project, typically at key milestones, to announce important achievements or to promote project events and news.

The next step: Within the first 2 months of the project

Information Sheet

Write a simple one-page information sheet about your project, presenting your service, its goals and envisaged benefits in a clear non-specialist language and send it to your Project Officer. It will be used to improve your project information in our online project database. This can also provide a basis for other communications material. It should consist of a headline or an abstract of what your project's main objectives are and should also include a longer journalistic description of your service, similar to a fact sheet. *See Annex 2 for more help.*

Website

Your website is your project's key communications tool. We suggest that your website is created by month 2 of your contract. The web-site should include information which can be publicly disclosed, including general descriptions, presentations, publications and reports.

Remember that writing for the web requires a different style to writing for publications. *See Annex 3 for more help.*

Top tips:

- **Register and use a .eu domain name, register it for two years after the end of the project.**
- **Keep it simple – remember that you have to maintain it. It should only be as big as you can manage.**
- **Keep it up to date. No matter how wonderful your site is, it is of no interest if it is not regularly updated.**
- **You don't need to build a site from scratch. Using an existing "content management system" platform can make your job much easier. Many are open source (and free to use) and have active communities to support users.**
- **Your audience is Pan European, but may also be local – consider languages. Make sure all content is proof read.**
- **Avoid EU contract jargon – this is not what your audience wants.**

Logo

Your project will also need an attractive visual identity that can then be used on your website, in all publicity material, presentations and letter heads as well as EC publications referencing your project. We suggest that such a logo is created by month 2 of your contract.

Top tips:

- **Do not use Word Art or Clip Art.**
- **A logo should have a minimum resolution of 300 dpi (dots per inch).**
- **Industry standard file formats for graphical logos include tagged image file format (.TIF) and Encapsulated PostScript (.eps).**

During the lifetime of your project

Project Workshops with external target audience

At specific milestones such as reviews or some important achievements, projects might be required to organize a workshop to disseminate their results to a wider targeted audience. At the end of the project, organising a final project event can be useful to target potential users, service providers, interested parties or investors.

Please inform your Project Officer about any events organised by your project.



Brochures and leaflets

Projects typically create dissemination material such as brochures or leaflets for their dissemination activities (e.g.: workshops). Before creating such material consider what the aim is, who your target audience is and what message you want to get across. Then you can decide if a publication is needed and what form it should take. Please forward some copies of any such publications to your Project Officer.

Technical details

You may decide to provide more detailed information about your project in the form of a project "Technical description" to publish on your website and also to send it to your Project Officer, who might use it to improve your project description in the online project data base.

After the project

Keep up communication channels for at least 2 years

Communication activities should not stop once the project has finished. It has proven best practice to agree within the consortium during the project how the communication activities can be upheld with reasonable effort for at least 2 years after the project has ended.

The minimum option would be to maintain and update your project website, but also more pro-active communication activities can be envisaged, like news-letters and press releases on follow-up activities (e.g. reporting on the rollout of piloted services in specific areas).

Not only will it give visibility to the great work you have done, it also can generate follow-up interest and business opportunities.

General Obligations

Acknowledgement of EU funds

As your project is funded by the European Community any communication or publication material (including e.g. reports, presentations, promotional material, publications) must clearly acknowledge receipt of Community funding¹ through the display of a respective statement and the EU flag.²

Please ensure that this acknowledgement of funding and the EU flag is added prominently to your site's home page as well as on all relevant documents.

Example: "This project is partially funded under the ICT Policy Support Programme (ICT PSP) as part of the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme by the European Community" (ideally with a link to the ICT PSP website: http://ec.europa.eu/ict_psp).

The European flag must be given appropriate prominence when displayed together with your logo.

Disclaimer to be used on communications and publications

The contractual obligations also include that any communication or publication shall state that it reflects only the author's views and that the European Community is not liable for any use that might be made of the information contained therein.

¹ see also article II.18 (2) of annex II to the grant agreement

² The European flag can be found at: http://europa.eu/abc/symbols/emblem/graphics1_en.htm

How we can support projects



Keeping people informed

New developments provide a good opportunity to remind people about your project. Keep the spotlight on your work. Here are some guidelines to help.

Online project database

All projects will be available in a searchable online database, which will include dissemination material and journalistic description about all ICT PSP projects. We will publish here your project logo, URL, information sheet and possibly the technical details. It will also be possible to include links to any other material you have, such as:

- Press release
- Success stories
- Audiovisual material / videos
- Publications
- Presentations about your project
- Photos & Graphics

Newsroom

The Information Society Portal has an active newsroom publishing events, articles and conferences that are often organised or publicised by our projects. You can be kept informed via an electronic newsletter, which has over 17,000 subscribers, and RSS feeds.

Your project could be the next candidate to feature in one of these communication tools so please send us any news that you would like to share with our constituency. Visit our newsroom and subscribe to the newsletter here: http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/newsroom/

ePractice.eu

epractice.eu (<http://www.epractice.eu>) is a good practice exchange scheme with a web portal, weekly newsletter, online library, practitioner profiles, events calendar, monthly workshops and many more, created by the European Commission for the professional community in eGovernment, e-Inclusion and eHealth. You may want to use the portal to share your own experiences, for discussion, to promote your events and much more besides.

Conferences

Your project may be brought to a wider audience when the Commission gives presentations at conferences and workshops. We welcome any additional promotional items such as brochures, leaflets, CD-ROMs, branded give-away items from your project.

Publications

Your project may generate additional impact when it is featured in publications produced by the Commission. This additional exposure complements your dissemination efforts. Such publications are produced on an ad-hoc basis, but as long as we have relevant and up-to-date information about your project, it has greater chances of receiving additional visibility.

**We're here to help. If you have any questions or need some advice, contact your Project Officer.
We'll be glad to hear from you.
Your news is our news.**

Contact info

Please send any communication material in electronic format to your Project Officer or if applicable to the Communication officer of the related area. Please accompany the material with a statement that the project gives the Commission permission, to reuse the material freely.

The ICT PSP website can be found at: http://ec.europa.eu/ict_psp .

Disclaimer

The Commission reserves the right to edit or change the submitted texts (press release, project information sheet, etc.) to increase their dissemination potential, should this be deemed necessary.

Annex 1: Guidelines on Writing Press Releases

A short, highly effective press release should be no more than one A4 page, and can be much shorter. It should incorporate the key elements that make your project interesting or successful (Draft format attached).

The way you express yourself is very important. Don't forget:

- Date it and write where it was written.
- Include links to your website or other relevant information to help journalists needing more.
- The aim is to inspire a newspaper article – remember this as you write
- Short, concise and specific messages (the fewer the better), can be easily picked up on by the media (e.g. “The Internet can save your life”)
- Write in the present tense, third person and the active voice (“We foresee” instead of “it is foreseen by the project”)
- Be factually correct and only put in information that adds some value.
- Keep it short: use clear and use concise sentences. Start bulleted lists with action verbs
- Use plain spoken language that most people can read without further explanation.

*Focus on:

- Who, what, where, when, why and How
- Main goals and results
- Problems that the project solves
- Give a real life example when possible to show the benefits for the reader.
- How the e-service will be deployed, now, or in the future.
- Contact specialised media and try to reach a broader audience when you have big news.

* Ask for help:

- Contact the Project Officer or Communications Officer for advice
- Ask a native speaker to write (or at least proof read) the press release and give you feedback
- Ask a non-technical person to read your press release to check they understand it easily
- A list of European/national/local media may help to distribute the information.

* Avoid:

- Acronyms, abbreviations, technical jargon, flowery adjectives, clichés and quotes
- Aspects or processes not relevant to people outside of the project
- General or over-used words (solution, innovation, platform...)
- Overstating the expected outcomes of the project
- Assuming that only specialists are the audience.

*Concentrate on the message:

- What is the project doing? Be specific
- What do you want to achieve?
- What is the significant about your project?
- Before starting to draft a press release, try to take some distance from the subject.

Annex 2: Project Information Sheet

- Acronym + Title of the Project
- Lead / Headline
 - Ideally no more than 3 lines, (~40 words): a high-level summary so readers can quickly understand what the project is about, without reading more. The summary should describe the project in a nut shell, focusing on the expected benefits for citizens.
- Objectives of the project (**max. 150 words**)
 - **Context:** A brief description of the problem or context the project addresses should be included. This helps to underscore its importance.
 - **Project:** Start the sentence with the project name and outline the goal. A bulleted list is the best way to present the objectives. Start each one with an action verb.
- Project Description (**max. 300 words**)
 - Provide more detail about the project, expanding on what you have previously written including, how the project addresses the problem or context. Indicate how the project will be validated.
- Expected Results & Impacts
- Case study / Practical Example (**max. 300 words**)

Annex 3: Guidelines on Writing for the Web

- Using the Web, we tend to scan the information and pick out the parts that interest us.
- To make this easier, try to avoid long, scrolling pages: Keep text short and to the point.
- Avoid marketing fluff or elaborate language. Use factual information.

Make your website easier to scan by:

- Highlighting **keywords** (hypertext links; font variations and colour are others)
- Using meaningful **sub-headings**. Organise content into logical categories
- Using bulleted or numbered lists. Information in lists can be quickly and easily digested
- **Limiting one idea** per paragraph (users will skip over any additional ideas if they are not caught by the first few words in the paragraph), highlight the key word
- Starting with the most important part or conclusion
- **Halving the word count** (or less) of conventional writing
- Dividing material **into page size blocks**. Endless scrolling can be annoying
- Breaking content up into **short paragraphs for easy reading**
- **Creating interest using colour and graphics** which visually direct focus from one topic to the next
- Doing a spell-check. Native speakers should proof read all content
- **Clearly labelling links**: avoid terms such as 'here is the home page. They don't add value

Guidelines on Writing for the Web

When writing for the Web, don't forget that users do not read on the Web. Instead they scan the pages, so your text should be short and to the point. For this purpose avoid using hyped language. Instead it is better to highlight keywords and to use clear structure (sub-headings, paragraphs, lists, colours and graphics).

For further information:

<http://www.useit.com/papers/webwriting/>

<http://usability.gov/>