

Communication ToolKit

Tools to **create & implement**
your project communication strategy

14 | 20

Alpine Space Programme | 06.11.2018





Dear Interreg Alpine Space project communication manager,

communication is not valuable for its own sake, as you know, but we communicate to achieve or change something. In this communication toolkit you will find a selection of valuable tools to support planning and implementation of a goal driven and effective project communication.

Two sections compose the toolkit:

- *Section 1 – Create!* follows the structure of the communication strategy, and provides tools to develop each aspect of it;
- *Section 2 - Implement!* gives practical instruments to develop the activities that your communication strategy may foresee.

This toolkit completes the requirements and guidance documents available on the project communication activities [page](#) on our website. For more information, you can [contact](#) the JS communication team.

Now let's get our hands on!

The JS communication team



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Section 1:

Create your project communication strategy!

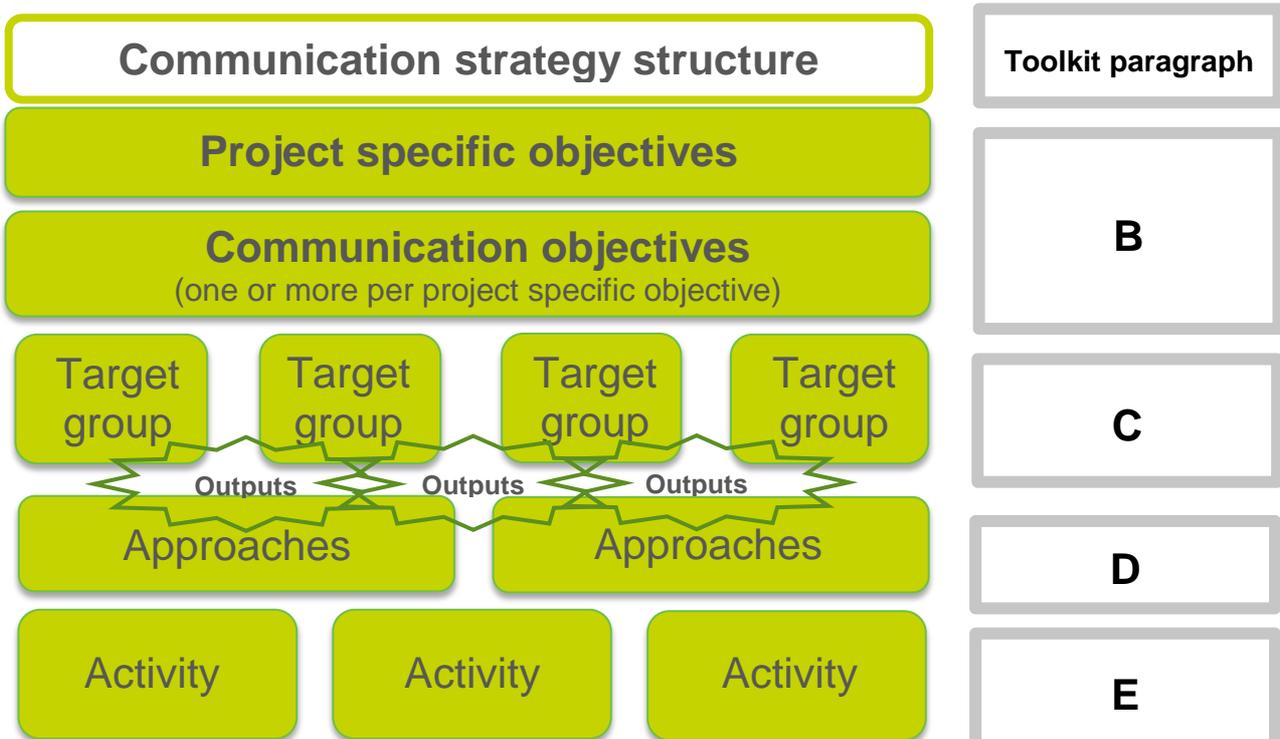
A. Communication strategy: why & how

Having a project communication strategy is crucial for effective communication. The strategy should not be a long and tedious document, but instead a clear and effective booklet to be often browsed through during project implementation.

The communication strategy helps you remembering what your communication objectives are, to whom your communication activities are being addressed and when they are taking place.

Writing of your communication strategy starts with your project application form as the main elements are already included in it. The goal is to gather, improve, and give a time structure to the communication activities included in the different sections of the application form.

The recommended structure for your project communication strategy is the following matrix (Cf. Factsheet project communication available [here](#), page 4). This section of the toolkit follows the matrix. Every paragraph will develop one aspect of the communication strategy.

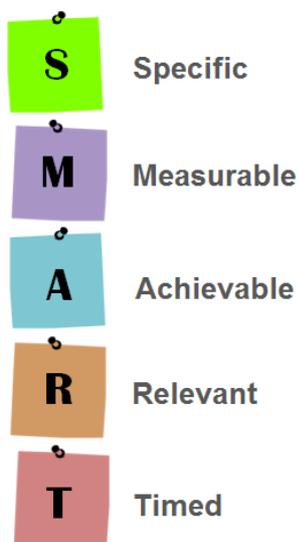




B. Specific objectives & communication objectives

TOOL 1: SMART objectives for clever communication!

Defining the project communication objectives is the first step towards the development of your communication strategy. In order to achieve quality communication, the communication objectives must be SMART.



How does it work? List your project communication objectives starting from the information in the application form:

- + internal communication objectives, which can be found in the management workpackage;
- + communication objectives for the development of outputs, which can be found in the implementation workpackages (e.g. the organisation of workshops to develop an output based on practitioner needs);
- + the communication objectives listed in the communication work package (these can be refined with the information in the boxes of transferability & durability of outputs).

Make sure that all objectives are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Timed.

Example: Project objective: promote the use of solar energy in public buildings.



Communication SMART objective: Influence attitude by convincing at least 2 administrators per Interreg Alpine Space countries to implement the project-developed public building solar energy sustainability model in 2 villages by the end of the second project year.

C. Stakeholders & target groups

Think about the audience every time you communicate! This should be a mantra when writing your communication strategy. This paragraph supports you in understanding who are the stakeholders, the target groups, and how to interact with them.

What is...

a Stakeholder group?

All actors involved. Both those positively and those negatively affected by the project.

a Target group?

The special stakeholder groups addressee of your communication. Each target group has different needs and should be reached via tailored approaches.

TOOL 2: Stakeholders list

Here is an indicative list of possible project stakeholders and/or target groups. You should try to choose and narrow as much as possible the groups relevant for your project.

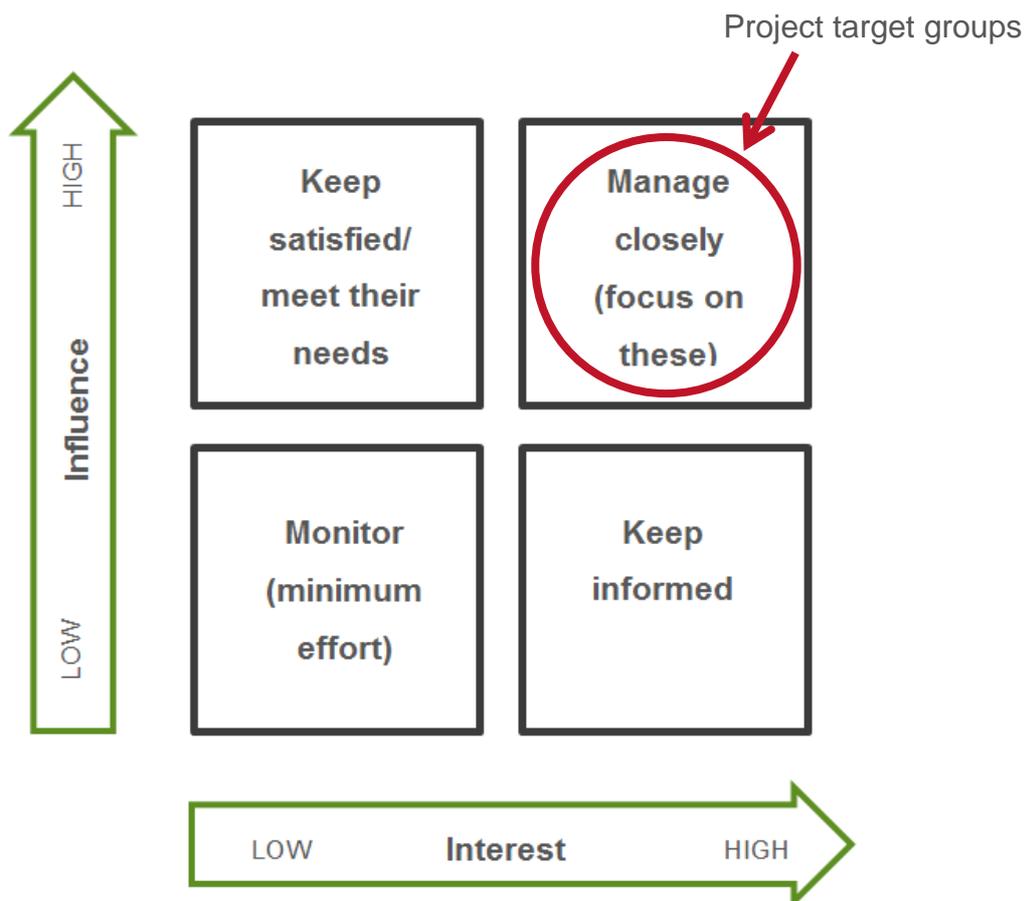
- + Public administration (local, regional, national)
- + Business support organisation, sectoral agency and service provider
- + Interest groups incl. international organisations and NGOs
- + Education and research
- + Private sector: enterprises, SME
- + General public and/or media



How does it work? Your project stakeholders have already been listed in your application form (in the box: project focus, target groups). However, it is worth taking a fresh look to see if the groups listed are still appropriate. Once the stakeholders are identified, you can start mapping them.

TOOL 3: Stakeholder map

As the project resources are limited, you need to give priority to stakeholders that can have an influence on the project likelihood to achieve its goals rapidly and efficiently. Stakeholders mapping supports you in achieving this understanding.





How does it work? Get your project team together, and look at the list of stakeholders that you have previously prepared. Sort the stakeholder groups in terms of the strength of their interest and the degree of their influence in the map. You should end up with about 5 groups in each quadrant. On the top right corner you should find your communication target groups.

D. Approaches

What is...

a communication approach?

“Approaches refer to the different types of interaction between communication players (all project participants) and the audience. The same approach might be relevant for several objectives, while one objective could also be reached through the implementation of several approaches.”

Factsheet project communication p. 3

Not all your project target group might be reached with the same approach. It is important to choose the right approach to make the most from each communication activity.

TOOL 4: List of approaches

Here is an indicative list of possible project communication approaches.

- + Branding
- + Storytelling
- + Hand facts & figures dissemination
- + Practical guidance
- + Trainings
- + Networking
- + Child education/entertainment



How does it work? The communication approaches are already defined in the communication work package of your project application form. Writing your communication strategy should be the opportunity to refine and better target these approaches.

TOOL 5: Message/Target group matrix

What do you want your stakeholders to think?

To adopt the right approaches and to pair those with the right target groups it is important to clarify what message you want to share with them. This tool will help you to check the consistency of your project communication activities planned in your application form.

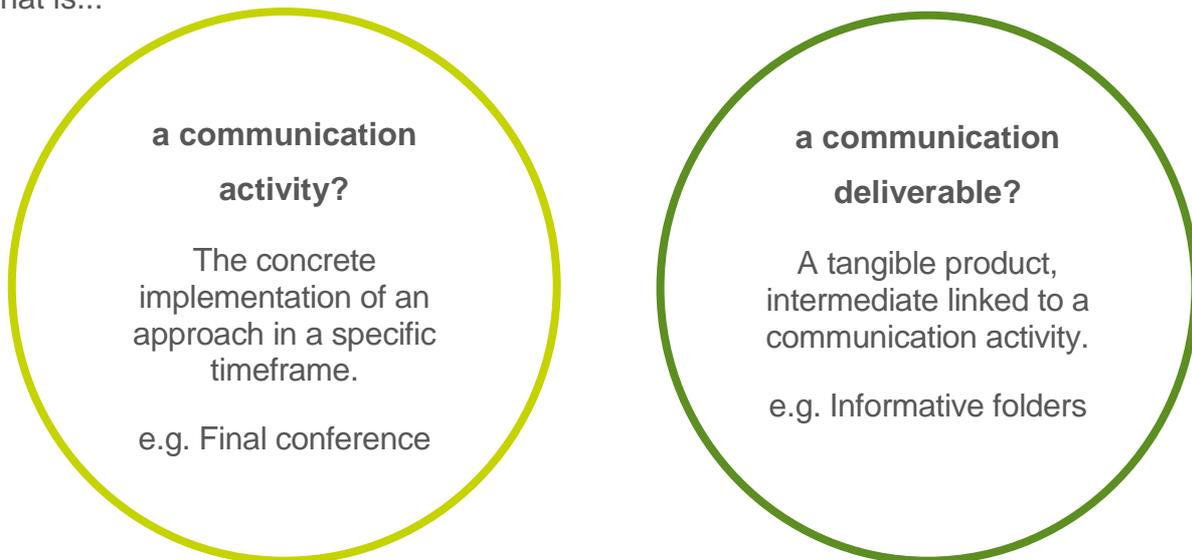
	Think now	Should think	Timeframe	Approaches
Target group 1				
Target group 2				
Target group 3				
Target group 4				

How does it work? Insert your project target groups in the matrix above, and fill in the table. Use the targeted messages in all communication activities in a tailored manner.



E. Communication activities and deliverables

What is...



Communication activities and deliverables are listed in the communication workpackage of your application form but can also be listed in implementation workpackages (e.g. seminars with stakeholders, etc.). You should identify them and include them in the communication strategy.

F. Monitoring and evaluation

Are you reaching out to the right target groups?

Do they understand clearly what your project is trying to do?

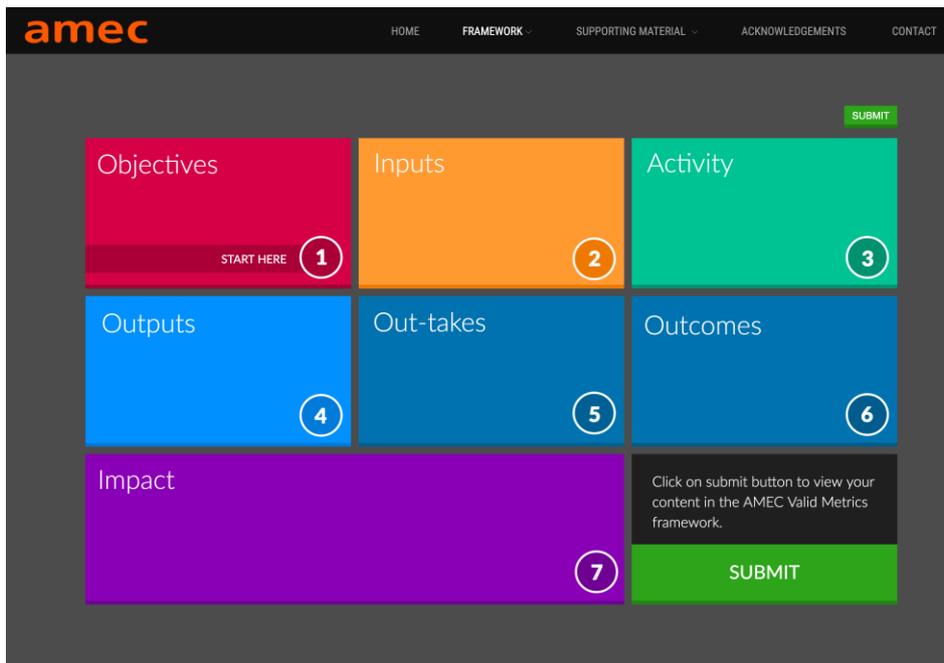
It is important to evaluate the success of your communication activities, in order to learn what is working well and what should be improved in the future. Furthermore, it is crucial not to leave this evaluation on hold until the very last period of your project implementation, but to plan evaluation metrics and goals well in advance.

Evaluation can show the benefits of communication, and ensure renewed support from your project partners.



TOOL 7: AMEC evaluation sheet

AMEC (International association for the measurement and evaluation of communication) has developed an easy and user friendly tool to facilitate the evaluation of communication. This interactive tool is free and accessible at the following URL:
<http://amecorg.com/amecframework/home/framework/>



The screenshot shows the AMEC evaluation framework tool interface. It features a dark grey header with the 'amec' logo and navigation links: HOME, FRAMEWORK, SUPPORTING MATERIAL, ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS, and CONTACT. The main content area is a grid of seven colored boxes, each representing a step in the process, numbered 1 through 7. Box 1 (red) is 'Objectives' with 'START HERE' and a circled '1'. Box 2 (orange) is 'Inputs' with a circled '2'. Box 3 (green) is 'Activity' with a circled '3'. Box 4 (blue) is 'Outputs' with a circled '4'. Box 5 (teal) is 'Out-takes' with a circled '5'. Box 6 (dark blue) is 'Outcomes' with a circled '6'. Box 7 (purple) is 'Impact' with a circled '7'. A green 'SUBMIT' button is located in the top right corner of the grid. Below the 'Impact' box, there is a text box that says 'Click on submit button to view your content in the AMEC Valid Metrics framework.' and another green 'SUBMIT' button.

How does it work? Fill in all requested fields and submit. The system will reorganise the information according to the AMEC system. This will allow you to have a visual overview of what your evaluation goals and metrics are.

This tool is therefore useful both for planning your evaluation and during review.

Taxonomy of the most important evaluation keyword is also available on the website:
<http://amecorg.com/amecframework/home/supporting-material/taxonomy/>

TOOL 8: Online survey tools e.g. EUSurvey

The evaluation of your activities may require the method of evaluation surveys. Many free



or paying tools are available online, of which [EUSurvey](#).

How does it work? Main information on the use of EUSurvey are available in the [online training course](#).

G. General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

The General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679 came into force on 25 May 2018.

GDPR main principles

- **Transparency and purpose limitation:** only the data necessary for your purpose must be requested and the latter must be clearly indicated;
- **Data minimisation:** you should request only the necessary data (e.g. you don't need to request for phone number for the registration to a newsletter);
- **Consent evidence:** the consent should be explicit and you should be able to prove the consent of the people you have personal data from. NB: absence of an answer = no consent;
- **Access and withdrawal:** people must be able to access their personal data and withdraw from a database (even a not published database) at any time.

Who is responsible

The institution responsible for the compliance with the GDPR is the institution hosting the data.

Concerning the projects, this means that one project partner institution is responsible for the newsletter contacts (the one who store them), and that the programme shares with you the responsibility for the content of your website (hosted on our website).



Section 2:

Implement your project communication strategy!

Once the communication strategy has been created, it is time to start with the implementation. The following tools help you in the day to day activities of your planned communication measures.

G. Website and Newsletter

In the current programming period Interreg Alpine Space projects website are hosted on the programme website.

This decision is based on previous years' experience, and has highlighted many positive aspects:

- Projects can exploit the website traffic that the programme website already gets;
- The workload of project partners is reduced: no need to start from scratch anymore;
- The project website is available also after the project end;
- Traffic is boosted on the programme website.

The Alpine Space project website content management system (CMS) is: [Pimcore](#).

All the information about content management can be found in our [Website Management Manual](#).



Website

TOOL 9: Website design mantras

A well designed website will help your target group easily find what they are looking for and will make your project look professional.





GDPR – What to check on the project websites?

- **Is there any personal information published?** For example a list of participant to an event, a stakeholder list, observer contacts, etc.
 - ⇒ Please remove this information from your project website through Pimcore. You may publish compliant information on other platforms not linked to the programme.

- **Can people register for your project newsletter on your website?**
 - ⇒ 1. It is important to make sure that you ask only for the e-mail (and possibly name or surname for personalisation) and that people give their explicit consent (for example by ticking a box). On the registration page, please also add a link to unsubscribe. 2. Please include a “unsubscribe” link in your newsletter as well.

- **Can people register to event or fill in a questionnaire (embedded) on your project website?**
 - ⇒ 1. Please make sure that you ask only for the minimum necessary information (e.g. is the postal address really needed?), 2. Please ask specifically for all necessary consent (e.g. Do you accept your details to be included in the participant list distributed at the event?), 3. You are normally not supposed to store the personal information after the event, therefore it would be advisable to delete it. It is of course possible to offer in the registration form the subscription to the project newsletter.



Newsletter

Projects are welcome to develop newsletters. This is an inexpensive and environmentally-friendly way to keep in touch with your target group. Nevertheless, with the GDPR regulation, you cannot use existing lists for the project newsletter, people will have to explicitly register for it. Consequently, it might be better for some projects to communicate via the partner newsletters rather than try to get subscriptions in the limited project duration.

If you create a project newsletter, try to get more subscriptions via subscribing options on your website and promote the existence of your newsletter at your events. Always provide an unsubscribe option at the end of your newsletter (most of the current newsletter tools have this functionality built in). After sending the issue, publish it under a specific section of your website that will represent an archive.

Pimcore allows you to produce and personalise your project newsletter, check the [Website management manual](#). Since Pimcore does not provide a sending tool to manage your contacts, you may find an alternative (e.g. [Mailchimp](#)).

In addition, publishing an article on project partners' newsletters can be a great opportunity to reach out to new segment of your target groups, or you could try to contribute to other organisations' newsletters, for example a newsletter published by a chamber of commerce, NGO, a newsmagazine of a transport provider. If you have created a project newsletter, don't forget to add the subscription link in these articles.

TOOL 10: Newsletter production checklist

Are the obligatory elements (project logo, EU flag, ERDF claim) displayed and respecting the size requirements?	
Did you consider your target groups when planning your newsletter?	
Is the purpose of this newsletter evident in the news and information given?	



Is it clear to your readers how often your newsletter will be published, and what the date and volume number are?	
Is the visual identity of your project evident in the general look of the newsletter?	
Do you use visuals where appropriate? (e.g., photographs, clip art, text and graphic boxes)	
Did a colleague proofread it?	
Did you update your e-mailing list? (delete unsubscribers or old email addresses)	
Did you circulate the newsletter internally (in your institution, to your partners)?	

H. Social media

Complementary to the website, social media are interesting online tools for project communication.

Social media:

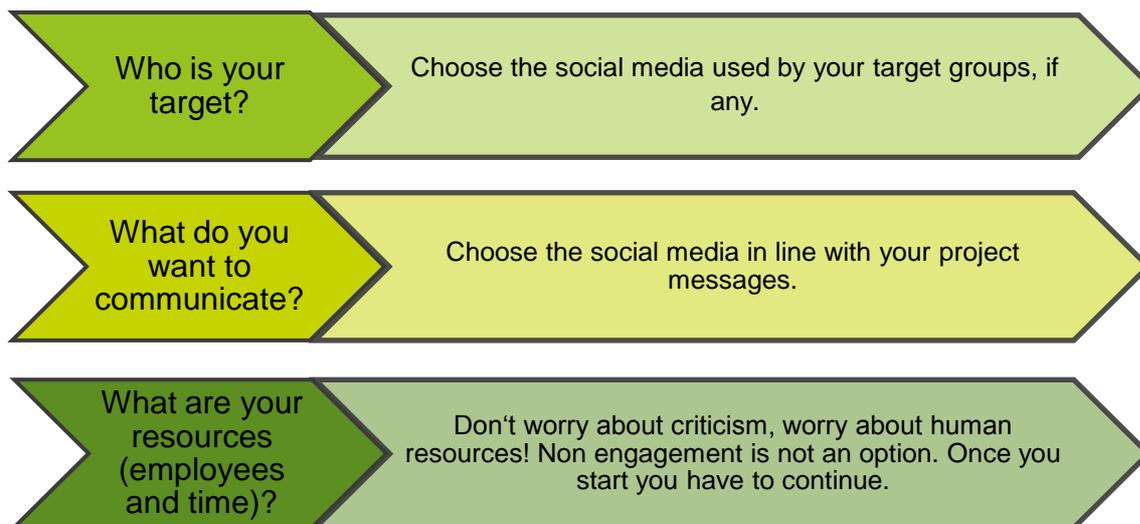
- represent a cheap way to reach your audience,
- are interactive and you can directly engage your audience,
- help you connect with your stakeholders,
- can increase the traffic on your website,
- increase your knowledge about news in your field in real time.

If you decide to go for any of the social media you should add icons linking to your social media pages on the homepage of your website to attract visitors (see the [website manual](#) to find out how in Pimcore).



TOOL 11: Should your project be present on social media?

The project presence on all social media is not mandatory. Before joining any social media you should analyse the following aspects.



TOOL 12: WHICH social media?

Here a short guide that can help you in choosing which social media to join.

When you are on a social media connect with Interreg Alpine Space Programme accounts:

Facebook: [@EUAlpineSpace](https://www.facebook.com/EUAlpineSpace)

Twitter: [@EUAlpineSpace](https://twitter.com/EUAlpineSpace)

LinkedIn: [@InterregAlpineSpace](https://www.linkedin.com/company/interreg-alpine-space)



PROS:

- possibility to have several page administrators;
- management of milestones on the timeline;
- easy integration of links, pictures and videos.

CONS:

- mostly used for private communication;
- it takes a long time to build a community of subscribers;
- more time consuming than Twitter.

TIPS:

- subscribe to groups and like pages dealing with your project's issues or geographical area;
- be active on the pages you subscribed to by liking, sharing and commenting posts;
- mention people and pages and pages in your posts;
- try to be active on a weekly basis;
- always illustrate your post with media content.



PROS:

- used by many professionals, policy-makers and journalists;
- ideal to inform and get informed quickly;
- building a community of followers is relatively fast.

CONS:

- very limited writing space, you have to be very synthetic;
- you have to tweet regularly to be interesting for your followers.

TIPS:

- plan (schedule) and tweet live;
- include media content (pictures / videos) in your tweets;
- follow many accounts dealing with your project's issues;
- follow partner regions, policy-makers and local/regional press accounts;
- use hashtags such as #topic to appear easily in search results;
- mention other accounts (e.g. @EUAlpineSpace), re-tweet and respond;
- use TweetDeck or similar to monitor accounts, topics and manage several accounts;
- Tag other accounts on pictures to save space.



PROS:

- Great tool to create networks (Groups);
- Great recruitment tool;
- Good tool to emulate discussions by being active in your groups;
- No “trolls”, no junk email (trusted relations), used only by professionals.

CONS:

- Difficult to reach a less business-related, more general public;
- Pages not available, only account.

TIPS:

- join groups dealing with your project’s topics and issues;
- be sure to make a complete profile,.



PROS:

- videos animate your project communications
- free (no limit) and high quality service;
- comments are possible.

CONS:

- Difficult to moderate;
- Video creation needs expertise to look professional.

TIPS:

- Embed videos located on YouTube in your website;
- Share the same videos on your social media channels through the video tools of these channels (they will get more views than if you share the YouTube link).



Other useful online tools:

Presentation tool: [Prezi](#)

Publication tools: [ISSUU](#), [SlideShare](#)

Pictures publication tool: [Flickr](#)

Story tool based on Twitter: [Tweetdeck](#), [Moments](#), [Periscope](#)

Easy infographics making tool: [Infogram](#), [Venngage](#), [Visme](#), [Vizualize](#),

I. Events

Project events can be a great opportunity for projects to show their achievements and to create a bigger network. Nevertheless, project events can sometimes be perceived as an objective in themselves rather than a tool to achieve a project objective. In order to avoid this, it is important to follow a few necessary steps. No matter what type of event you are organising, it needs to be planned and prepared with a clear purpose in mind.

Therefore, remember to ask yourself (and your event planning team) the following three questions:

- 1. Objective:** What do we want to achieve with the event?
- 2. Audience:** Who do we want to reach?
- 3. Method:** What is the most effective way of reaching them?

The answers are the baseline of the event concept and plan.

Project partners can produce their own project event or take part in external events.



Project events

WHAT: conferences, seminars, exhibitions, field trips, kick off and closing events.

WHY: interesting for the target audiences and for media to attend.

TIP: Join forces with other thematically relevant projects to organise joint events. This can save human and financial resources and even broaden the audience significantly.

External events

WHAT: event or initiative organised by someone else but joined by the project (e.g. organisation of a session at an external event)

WHY: to come face-to-face with the project target group; to promote the project as well as the region or institution involved.

TIP: Choose thematic events that fit well to the project topic.

Examples of major events organised at European level that projects can join:

- **European Cooperation Day** – a Europe-wide campaign called European Cooperation Day (EC Day) with the aim of high-lighting results of European cooperation across borders to the general public. More information can be found on the [EC Day campaign website](#). It takes place in September.
- **European Week of Regions and Cities** – an annual four-day event aimed at giving the possibility to regions and cities to showcase their capacity to create growth and jobs, implement the European Cohesion policy and prove the importance of local and regional level for good European Governance. More information [online](#).



Planning an event can be a challenging experience and, to ensure the success of your event, it is necessary to be prepared and plan it well in advance. The following list includes all the different steps that must be taken in order to avoid organisational problems.



TOOL 13: Event planning checklist

Clarify the purpose of your event	
Why are you holding the event? What is it meant to achieve? What messages do you want to communicate?	
Write down these objectives and have an exchange to ensure that all organisers agree with the plan	
Determine your target groups: For whom is the event?	
What are those people interested in? Will this event be interesting for them? Why?	
Select a date. Check for clashes with other more newsworthy events: political events, holidays, regular press briefings	
Put together a detailed plan as soon as you can and circulate it	
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 in advance for all people involved	
Venue selection. Before researching suitable venues have some idea of:	
How many people you expect to attend;	
How many rooms (including workshops or breakout rooms) are needed;	
What kind of food you want (Breakfast, lunch, dinner, cocktails, coffee breaks, water, etc.)	
Choose a venue that is appropriate and accessible	
Ask what's included in the price (e.g. Staff). 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)	
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-e-mail if the official invitation is delayed	
In the invitation: date, time, place, map, how to get there information, link to registration form, deadline registration form, contacts (e-mail; phone-number)	
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	
Have a specific person to be in charge of maintaining invitation list and all replies	
Remember to include all the necessary logos (project, organisers, EU)	
Equipment	
Assess what you need in terms of equipment	
Liaise with venue as to what they have and what you can use	
Presentations	
Check projectors , lap-tops, screens	
Connection cables, power sockets, transformers, adapter plugs	
Get presentations in advance	
Moderator / Presenter	
Who will introduce the event, provide links between speakers, moderate a Q & A session, close the event?	



Branding / Signage

Check what's required	
Do you need to get it made or can you use existing materials (roll-up, posters,...)?	
Ensure that your event complies with the information and publicity requirements of the European Commission. All events, public or private, require to display: the EU flag, the project logo and ERDF claim. .	
Ensure all spokespeople have names and organisation name displayed	

Photography

Consider hiring a professional photographer according to event budget and importance.	
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 media, if interested in the story, will want a photo. Send a photo with your press release.	
Take the chance to take pictures of the speakers, participants, project team, close-ups...	
Have EU flag on display for event photos.	

Equipment to take with you from the office

Name badges / place labels	
Registration List	
Contact list of all suppliers	
All information including receipts, confirmation of bookings	
Project logo and extra EU flag if needed	

Budgeting



Be thorough and stick to budget. 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.	
Ensure eligibility of expenditure	
Keep track of all paperwork (emails, letters, quotes, contracts etc.)	
Check suppliers' contracts before signature	
Check invoices correspond to contractual agreement before payment	
Meet and greet	
Upon arrival attendees should receive detailed instructions. This might include a welcome pack with:	
Name badge	
Agenda	
Map	
Press pack for media	
Contact details of participants. On the base of the new GDPR regulation, remember to ask for explicit authorisation to publish contact information upon registration.	
Before the event	
Tasks are allocated to all organisers: set up script or roadmap of all details of the event	
Make a block pre-reservation at recommended accommodation that are included in practical information for participants	
A couple of weeks before the event, participants receive a confirmation email with	



the final version of the agenda and practical information	
All organisers are briefed to answer frequently asked questions	
Speakers (and moderators) are briefed	
All presentation are compiled and checked	
Check technical equipment	
All activities comply with the publicity requirements	
Right before the event	
A reception desk is available for registration with:	
Registration sheets	
Name badges arranged in alphabetical order	
Conference packs (if applicable)	
Place labels and water are available for speakers	
Conference room equipment is checked:	
Laptops with presentations	
Multimedia projectors and screen	
Cable and electricity sockets	
Microphones, sound system; persons available for handing out microphones	
Air conditioning and lights	
There are recycle bins in the conference room	
After the event	
Event documents and photos are uploaded to your website	



Feedback questionnaire and thank you notes sent to all participants and guests	
Conclusions made based on feedback forms and debriefing	
All costs and fees are taken care of	

J. Publication

Leaflets and brochures need to convey a rounded impression of your project in a way designed to draw attention and create interest.

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. Remember to respect your project corporate design, avoid using too many colors, and prefer your project priority color.

Be realistic about **how much information** can be conveyed in the space available. Accessible designs include a substantial amount of white or empty space to make the content easier on the eye.

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, therefore it is advisable to be as **clear and concise** possible.

Vary the format of your content, avoiding large blocks of text. Use boxes, lists, bullet points, and 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 on angles that are likely to be interesting to the target audiences that you have in mind.

When publishing an informative document, the **quality of the contents** is as important as the one of design and layout. The goal is to engage an audience and influence their views or behaviour in line with your communication strategy. In this context, a beautiful brochure



can still be perceived as boring or unclear if not enough effort is put in the development of contents.

K. How to write in a clear and effective way

When trying to communicate with the audience through creative tools, like a presentation or an article, it is essential to keep in mind a few useful rules on how to write in an effective and clear way.

STRUCTURE

The **most important information** should be at the **beginning of the text**.

Bullet points can be considered instead of long paragraphs.

TONE

Use a **conversational** tone rather than an academic one.

The tone used should be able to **engage the reader**.

SENTENCE LENGTH

Use an average sentence length of **15-20 words**.

Say only one thing per sentence.

VOCABULARY

The vocabulary used should be the one of everyday life and **accessible** to every reader.

CONTENT

Follow the **5Ws rule**.

Make sure you answer this questions: Who? What? When? Where? Why?

TOOL 14: Storytelling in few steps

Conveying information through stories not only makes our content more interesting to our audience; it makes it much more likely that they will remember it. You can use storytelling to give your project a human face.



This 'narrative template' can be used to get you past that blank sheet of paper; it can be a useful starting point for developing your story.

We believe in a world where...

This is the focus of the story expressed as a belief about the world.

e.g. we believe in a world where regions work together to solve problems.

We know that in this world

This is what you know about the world that brings tension

e.g. we know that cooperation isn't always easy. There are complex rules to follow, cultural barriers to overcome, and compromises to make.

So we make sure...

This is what you do to resolve the tension

e.g. so we make sure to help transnational projects to develop their activities, navigate the project process and work better together with their partners.

Which is why we...

This is what you do in terms of product, services and overall behaviour

e.g. which is why we support territorial cooperation and believe that Interreg projects bring regions closer and help Europe solve common problems.

You can choose to highlight a character, someone who benefited from your project, and add facts and figures that support your story. Just make sure you don't overload your audience with information.

Example:

A few decades ago, Ana's grandmother had to be moved into a retirement residence, far away from her own home, due to a lack of medical support available in the small village in the Western Alps of Piemonte where she lived.

Today, Ana's mother can keep on living at home in the same village, thanks to regions joining forces in an Interreg project which develops an innovative third age health and social care model and trains family and community nurses capable of supporting Ana and her mother on a daily basis.

Interreg is the European Union's tool for funding cooperation projects. Interreg made this possible. And third age health and social care is just the tip of the iceberg – other Interreg



projects are reducing unemployment, increasing renewable energy and improving transportation.

To find out how Interreg projects are benefitting your area, please visit www.alpine-space.eu.

K. Media

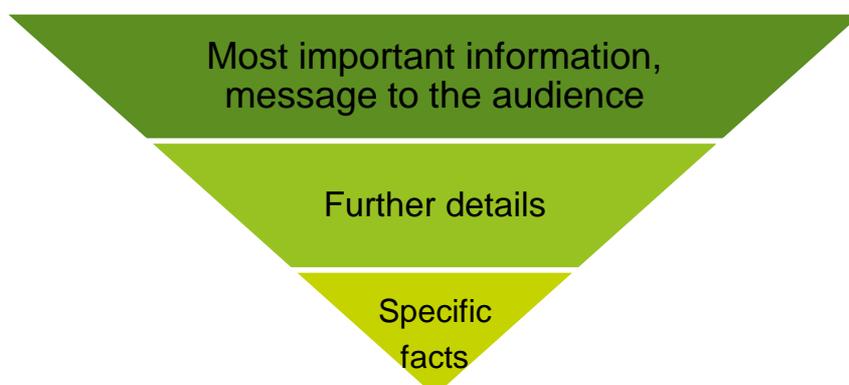
How to deal with the media? Every organisation has its own strategy and social skills. However, experience shows that some factors are helpful when contacting the media and “selling” our information.

Journalists have little time. How to catch their attention? Keep it simple. Don’t overload an article with complex jargon and acronyms that only EU actors understand. Words such as “eligibility”, “ETC”, “work package”, “decommitment” and “thematic objective 11” are unlikely to be known by people outside the EU project world.

Concentrate on the everyday related content, practical benefits, and leave out the technicalities about your project. Present a story that the media and society can identify with.

TOOL 15: The inverted pyramid

The “inverted pyramid” is the model for newswriting. Thanks to this, even a person who doesn’t read the whole article gets the main idea, the message you are trying to highlight.





TOOL 16: Creative news

The key to writing a good press release is to identify and focus on an aspect of what you have to say that will engage your target groups. 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 group. To make something newsworthy, you should do the same.

Here’s a list of possible press release angles:

Advice	“Ice to the Eskimos”	Personal profile
Animals	A service to an unexpected group of people	Project profile
Award	Improved product	Quote
Bid for a tender	Improved service	Report
Briefings	Interview	Seminar
Calendar events	Investment	Speech
Case study	Job advert	Spokesperson
Celebrities	Letter to the editor	Sponsorship
Children	Link to current event	Sundays and holidays
Columns	Link to forthcoming news	Supplement
Competition	“Man bites dog”	Survey
Conference	Something upside down	
Employee activities	Management appointment	
Event	New contract	
Exhibition	New premises	
Expansion	New process	
Expert opinion	New product or service	
Human interest	Picture story	



Look for an angle that will connect your agenda to something that your target group cares about. In general, news is about people rather than things, and concrete events rather than abstract ideas.

TOOL 17: Promoting your message to media in different countries / regions

Key facts you should know about when dealing with the media in different countries:

- Local spokespeople and local angles are essential.
- Be prepared to answer why your news is important to a specific country/region; however, give the activity wider significance, for example in a context of collaboration between the participating countries.
- Be prepared to speak the language of the country / region.
- Media materials must be in the format, style and language of the country's media.
- Phone calls and e-mail are the most popular way to pitch (i.e. raising interest of the journalists).
- Be ready to respond instantly with facts, statistics, visuals, spokesperson, etc. Photos of activities and pre-recorded TV footage can extend coverage.
- Press conferences are only for big announcements. One-on-one meetings with journalists work well otherwise.
- 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 Alpine Space Programme and the European Union.

TOOL 18: Press release template

Structuring a press release well is important to have your message delivered in the appropriate way. Please find a press release template in the toolkit annexes.



L. Video

Producing videos can be a good way to lift project awareness among the target groups, although projects must be really careful in developing the video consistently to the target group they want to reach and in line with the project corporate design.

TOOL 19: CIPRA Video script template

A project video script should include the following information:

Information on the programme; aim of the project; target groups; messages; film content (general, pictures, protagonists and interviews); film structure (general remarks; storyboard; further information); organisation (timetable, responsibilities)

Please find in the annexes the video script template.

M. Presentation and interview tips

Being able to present the goals of your project as well as the results obtained is fundamental to share your work and make it understandable not only to those who are directly involved, but also to a more general public. During the various phases of your project life, it will be necessary to share your work in different ways, addressing different audiences. The format could change, varying from a presentation to a media interview. In either option your inputs should be carefully prepared. Here below you will find some tips that should be taken into account.

TOOL 20: Presentation tips

PREPARE. This means practice what you will be saying, and how you will answer possible questions. This will help you feel more confident and avoid mistakes.

TAILOR YOUR MESSAGE. Try to ask yourself which type of information your audience



would be interested in. Remember that, depending on the public you have to address, the type of language that you have to use may also vary.

CONNECT WITH YOUR AUDIENCE. The rule of five:

Greetings	<i>Good..</i>
Statement	<i>As we all know</i>
Common ground	<i>We all..</i>
Who/what you are	<i>We are an Interreg Alpine Space project...</i>
Call for action	<i>So, let's all</i>

NO MORE THAN 3 MESSAGES. Your audience will remember 10% of what you will say: you have the chance to choose which 10% you want them to remember by underlying it many times and by offering a short summary at the end of your presentation. Make sure that your presentation ends by closing the loop.

UNDERLINE IMPORTANT WORLDS & SECTIONS. The tone of your voice can underline some special words, use it in the appropriate way.

NON VERBAL COMMUNICATION. It is powerful but also tricky, especially if you talk to an international audience. Be aware of this!

TOOL 21: Interviews do & don'ts

In the framework of your project activities' promotion, you will sometimes be asked to release interviews, providing information on various themes regarding your project's life. An interview can be a tricky experience if you are not adequately prepared. It can be perceived as game, an intellectual challenge, and ultimately a contest between the interviewer and the interviewee for control of the story.



The following list of do's and don'ts could be a valid base to feel more confident when being interviewed.

DO's

- **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.
- **Use facts, examples and anecdotes.** To illustrate, substantiate and bring to life each of your messages.
- **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.
- **Use basic universal language and no jargon.** Technical terms and abbreviations that are everyday to you will often be meaningless to outsiders. Adapt your language to the level of expertise of the lowest common denominator, i.e. 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.
- **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.
- **Keep it simple.** Don't get bogged down in unnecessary detail.
- **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, end up mentioning topics which can deviate the subject of discussion, being then forced to talk about arguments that were trying to avoid.

- **Be succinct.** Make your point quickly and directly; then stop talking.
- **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.
- **Object to loaded questions.** A question is based on incorrect information or a biased proposition, say so. Otherwise you may seem to accept this view implicitly.

DON'Ts

- **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
- **Don't be afraid to give an honest answer** even to a negative question. It can be as simple as saying, "Yes, but..."
- **Don't speak "off the record".** If you don't want to say something, don't say it.
- **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 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.
- **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
- **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 or too much.** 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, 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.



Annexes

Annex 1: Press release template

Logo of the project and the partner institution if relevant

Place (City), Date (Day, Month, Year)

HEADLINE (the title of the article)

Sub headline answering the 5 “W” (who, what, when, where, why) in 1-2 lines.

Lead/introduction

Paragraph 1, 2 and 3

Subhead (a one-line headline inserted in the body of a story to break up the monotony of paragraphs – if relevant).

Paragraph 4

Conclusion

Short “About” paragraph about your project

ProjectName core mission is to ...

ProjectName has been financed by Interreg Alpine Space, one of the 15 transnational cooperation programmes covering the whole of the European Union (EU) in the framework of European Regional policy. The programme involves Switzerland, Slovenia, Liechtenstein, part of Germany, Italy and France.



Annex 2: Video script from CIPRA international

1. Aim of the project

Describe the main objectives of the video in the most detailed way possible.

2. Target groups

Describe the main target groups of the video in the most detailed way possible. How should they be addressed (which images, which language?).

3. Messages

Formulate the main messages of the video, adapted to the target group.

4. Film content

4.1 General

Write a general description of the video.

4.2 Pictures

Plan and write which type of pictures you will want to have in the video.

4.3 Protagonists and interviews

Who should be featured in the movie and how?

Questions for the interviews should be prepared and sent to the interviewees in advance.

5. Film structure and storyboard

Detail all take/frames of the video in the table below.

Take/frame	Content	Thematic chapter	Possible images	Sound	Protagonists	Moderation	Time



6. Further information

Include the additional necessary information e.g. final credits, sponsors, logos, year...

Language

7. Organisation

Detail the necessary elements for the organisation of the film: e.g. timetable, responsibilities, etc.



References

Communication Toolkit, Interact Programme

Communication manual, Interreg MED

<https://www.englishmatters.at/>, Annabella Ölz