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# Methodology for the Stakeholders‘ Coordination

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# Table of Contents

## List of Tables & Figures

# Abbreviations

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|---|---|
| FAIRway Danube | CEF funded Actions "FAIRway Danube in the Rhine Danube Corridor", 2014-EU-TM-0219-S/2014-EU-TMC-0231-S. www.fairwaydanube.eu |
| Preparing FAIRway 2 works | CEF funded Action "Preparing FAIRway 2 works in the Rhine Danube Corridor", 2019-EU-TM-0262-S |
| CEF | Connecting Europe Facility |
| CINEA (formerly INEA) | European Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency |
| KPI | Key Performance Indicator |
| NtS | Notices to Skippers |
| PDI | Pro Danube International |
| SWOT analysis | Strengths/ Weaknesses / Opportunities/ Threats - Analysis |

# 1. Executive Summary

This Activity, under the Action *Preparing FAIRway 2 works in the Rhine-Danube corridor*, delivers a concept for stakeholders' coordination to further optimise project-related communication activities in future.

The presented "**Methodology on Stakeholders' Cooperation**" aims to **support communication practitioners of CEF Actions in inland navigation to plan and implement the strategic cooperation with relevant stakeholders.** An emphasis was set on providing hands-on information which can be easily implemented by practitioners. The methodology therefore presents **practical checklists, guidelines and tools** to structure the stakeholders' cooperation process.

The **short-term goal** of stakeholders' cooperation is to retrieve the best-possible project outcome through strategic involvement of relevant stakeholders. The **long-term aim** is to improve inland waterways infrastructure to further support this transport mode and to foster a sustainable modal shift.

In a first step, strengths and weaknesses of stakeholders' coordination activities put in place in current CEF funded Actions have been analysed. A special focus in the analysis was set on the cooperation between waterway management administrations, acting as project implementing body, and industry stakeholders. The latter stakeholder group can be difficult to target, while the positive effects of coordination between waterway administrations and industry stakeholders have been proven in the past. Results are incorporated in this methodology, which includes **recommendations for establishing a wider concept for stakeholders' coordination at Rhine-Danube Corridor level**.

The Methodology is structured in a way, that enables the reader to study the Methodology from beginning to end or to simply involve with certain chapters, which are of specific interest to the reader.

Following information can be found in the Methodology on Stakeholders' Cooperation:

***Chapter 3*** shortly explains the benefits of stakeholders' cooperation.

***Chapter 4*** outlines the purpose and structure of this methodology in more detail.

***Chapter 5*** describes strengths and weaknesses of current models of coordination between industry stakeholders and waterway management administrations in current CEF Actions. The further elaborated methodology of stakeholders' cooperation is based upon said findings.

***Chapter 6*** presents general recommendations and practical checklists how to get started in the planning for stakeholders' cooperation, while looking into specifics, such as the internal organisation, the necessity to build trust, to incorporate national requirements and the use of gender-sensitive language.

***Chapter 7*** identifies relevant stakeholder groups in inland navigation while focussing on their needs and the required cooperation intensity.

***Chapter 8*** proposes a practical guideline to plan, and structure the communication activities with the help communication matrix, the analysis of given communication channels and the proposal of stakeholder management tools.

The ***Annex*** provides practical tools how to implement the communication activities, including a checklist for the organisation of an in-person, digital or hybrid event ***(see Annex 1)***, a checklist for the monitoring and evaluation of communication activities ***(see Annex 2)***, and a guideline to centrally manage stakeholder feedback ***(see Annex 3)***.

# 2. Introduction

This Activity, under the Action *Preparing FAIRway 2 works in the Rhine-Danube corridor*, delivers a concept for stakeholders’ coordination to further optimise project-related communication activities in future. The Action itself aims to promote the Danube waterway infrastructure in an efficient, sustainable and user-oriented way.

In a first step, the SWOT analysis (sub-activity 5.1) has delivered a report on strengths and weaknesses of stakeholders’ coordination activities put in place in the current CEF funded Actions carried out along the Danube, and in particular the CEF funded actions *FAIRway Danube*.

The outcomes of the SWOT Analysis are incorporated in the frame of this report (Methodology on Stakeholders’ Cooperation) under Sub-Activity 5.2, delivering a concept for organising the stakeholders’ coordination for the Austrian, Croatian and Serbian sections of the Danube. The elaborated methodology and the stakeholders’ coordination concept can be applied in the future for the complete Rhine-Danube Core Network Corridor. This document corresponds to the final report of Activity 5 and is therefore the second and last deliverable under this Activity.

# 3. What is Stakeholders’ Cooperation?

**Stakeholders’ cooperation is a process which strategically involves relevant stakeholders by outlining the level and methods of required engagement to further attain the project goal.**

Stakeholders can have a great influence on the successful implementation of a project and on its outcomes. The establishment of a positive relationship with stakeholders is therefore essential. The positive correlation of stakeholders’ cooperation and the success of project outcomes has been also proved in the frame of CEF Actions.

Generally, **stakeholders’ cooperation is key**

- to **gain support** for projects via **relationship building** and by **alleviating possible objections**,
- to **gather information**, know-how and ideas to be incorporated into a project,
- to **inform** about relevant project activities and outcomes,
- to **facilitate the joint decision finding process**, and
- to **optimise the communication process with all relevant stakeholder groups**.

Early consultations with relevant stakeholders therefore increase the quality of the project, while reducing the risk of objections. Only through strategic cooperation with stakeholders, who will be addressed by the project directly or indirectly, the best-possible project outcome can be retrieved.

# 4. Methodology on Stakeholders’ Cooperation

## 4.1. Purpose

**The Stakeholders’ Cooperation methodology aims to support communication practitioners of CEF Actions in inland navigation to plan and implement the strategic cooperation with relevant stakeholders. The Methodology presents practical checklists, guidelines and tools to structure the stakeholders’ cooperation process.**

The **short-term goal** is to involve all relevant stakeholders to incorporate and satisfy requirements, inform, boost the decision-finding process or alleviate risks. This methodology aims to guide the communication process to secure the successful outcome of an Action and increase benefits for stakeholders.

The **long-term aim** is to improve inland waterways infrastructure to further support this transport mode and to foster a sustainable modal shift by managing stakeholders’ cooperation. This can only be achieved when considering requirements of relevant stakeholder groups.

A **special emphasis** in the methodology on Stakeholders’ Cooperation is put onto the cooperation with the inland waterway transport shipping industry. This target group directly benefits or is affected by CEF funded projects. Therefore, it is essential to consider their requirements into the project and to inform the industry about tangible results. CEF funded Actions, such as FAIRway Danube have proven the positive effects of the coordination between the waterway management administrations and industry stakeholders. At the same time, the SWOT Analysis analysing stakeholders' cooperation put in place in current CEF Actions, finds that the strategic involvement of the shipping industry can still be improved. While the exchange of information with the shipping industry is crucial, in reality it is often challenging to involve this stakeholder group due to their limited time availability.

## 4.2. Structure

**The methodology on stakeholders' cooperation includes practical information on how to plan, structure and implement communication activities to strategically involve relevant stakeholders.**

The chapters are structured as follows:

- ***Chapter 5*** describes strengths and weaknesses of current models of coordination between industry stakeholders and waterway management administrations in current CEF Actions. The further elaborated methodology of stakeholders' cooperation is based upon said findings.
- ***Chapter 6*** gives recommendations how to get started in the planning for stakeholders' cooperation, while looking into specifics, such as the internal organisation, the necessity to build trust, to incorporate national requirements and the use of gender-sensitive language.
- ***Chapter 7*** identifies relevant stakeholder groups in inland navigation while focussing on their needs and the required cooperation intensity.
- ***Chapter 8*** proposes a practical guideline to plan, and structure the communication activities with the communication matrix, the analysis of given communication channels and the proposal of stakeholder management tools.
- The ***Annex*** provides practical guidelines how to implement the communication activities, including a checklist for the organisation of an in-person, digital or hybrid event ***(see Annex 1)***, the monitoring and evaluation of communication activities ***(see Annex 2),*** and feedback management ***(see Annex 3)***.

## 5. Key Issues Identified in Current CEF Actions

The underneath summary of the SWOT analysis (see *Table 1*) delivers a report on strengths and weaknesses of stakeholders' coordination activities put in place in the current CEF funded Actions carried out along the Danube. A particular focus was set on the CEF funded action *FAIRway Danube*.

| **STRENGHTS** | **WEAKNESSES** |
|---|---|
| **Personal exchange** is considered to be very effective in informing stakeholders about the project, retrieving information and **building the relationship**.<br><br>The early involvement of **relevant stakeholders and key persons, who have an impact on the project,** is very important. It helps to **align interests**, to gain trust and approval. Targeted meetings for expert exchange (workshop character) provide a very favourable setting for this purpose.<br><br>**Synergies with other (project) events and working meetings** are seen as an effective method to inform about a project.<br><br>The existing **collaboration with industry associations** is very beneficial and effective to inform about project results and to access necessary information from the shipping industry.<br><br>National User Fora are well perceived by participating bodies (majority from public sector) | **Cooperation of the shipping industry** in project-related activities is partly low to moderate.<br><br>**Project benefits** and/or results are **not always visible** to the shipping industry.<br><br>**Non-centrally managed communication activities** have their advantages (e.g.: reaction to national requirements, especially when having many project partners) but they do not achieve the best possible visibility of the project and its results.<br><br>**Danube ports** should be increasingly involved to optimally tackle ongoing bottlenecks.<br><br>*FAIRway Danube* National User Fora are not always perfectly fitted to target the shipping industry (**targeted approach advisable regarding agenda and presented information**). |
| **OPPORTUNITIES** | **THREATS** |
| Exploitation of a wider set of communication channels is beneficial to efficiently target the stakeholder groups (focus shipping industry). Following channels enable to increase project visibility and to improve project outcomes:<br><br>• Concise, targeted and result-orientated **newsletters**<br>• **Personal exchange** (meetings, phone calls) to foster the relationship and to inform about news, services, projects while receiving constructive feedback<br>• **Targeted meetings for expert exchange** (Workshops, Webinars) in addition to personal exchange, whenever there is something to discuss or to elaborate in a group<br>• **Optimised usage of digital tools** (e.g. hybrid events) for increased involvement of the shipping industry and when invitees are internationally widely dispersed<br>• Finding the **right mix of international and national events** to present the project **usage of event synergies** and **involvement of stakeholders before/after event**<br>• **Involvement of key users** for constructive feedback and active participation<br>• **Increased collaboration** with industry associations and national chambers of commerce (covering the interests of the industry from the Rhine-Danube corridor).<br>• Usage of **social media** platforms, typically used by industry, to inform<br>• **Rare intervals for dissemination of surveys/questionnaires** (e.g. once a year) | **Digital meetings** always happen at the expense of fostering personal relationships and networking options and should therefore **be well considered** (rather implement hybrid meetings, if possible).<br><br>**Language barriers** can be a problem and translations are often necessary.<br><br>Communication activities are only well perceived by the shipping industry, as long as the information provided is **tangible and result-orientated.**<br><br>**Construction activities**, which affect the planning reliability for the shipping industry, should be **communicated as soon as possible**.<br><br>The **good preparation of any communication activities is crucial** before getting in touch with stakeholders to create a positive user experience and connotation with the project.<br><br>**Promises** which are made (to the shipping industry), **must be kept.**<br><br>**Find the right balance** to inform the shipping industry sufficiently and seek their feedback without overloading them with information or seeking feedback too often. |

*Table 1: Key Issues for Stakeholders' Cooperation identified in SWOT Analysis*

# 6. Getting Started with Stakeholders' Cooperation

## 6.1. Basic Recommendations (Checklist)

Ideally, the cooperation strategy builds on common values and vision, which are shared among the project partners. The underneath list displays basic recommendations how to engage with stakeholders outside a project and what to keep generally in mind[1]:

- ✓ *Have a clear scope about the objectives to be achieved in the project and develop communication accordingly*
- ✓ *Develop the stakeholders' cooperation strategy early on to affect operational decisions*
- ✓ *The communication needs to be structured as 'two-way', where all stakeholder groups have the opportunity to exchange views and information, to listen, and to have their issues addressed*
- ✓ *Stakeholders' cooperation needs to be built on trust*
- ✓ *Adapt the communication channels and materials to target audience – do not use the same communication "style" for all stakeholder groups, if not appropriate*
- ✓ *Make sure your communication is meaningful and understandable to those presented*
- ✓ *Use communication that is appropriate for the context and to reflect appropriate timeframes, local realities and languages*
- ✓ *The good preparation of the message, procedures and the timely execution is crucial before getting in touch with the users. This will help to gather feedback efficiently and to create a positive user experience and connotation with the project*
- ✓ *Use a documentation system to keep track of communication activities, stakeholder consultations and key issues raised*
- ✓ *Have a system for following up on issues raised during consultation, as well as clarification of next steps*

These recommendations are incorporated throughout the Methodology for Stakeholders' Cooperation, but are summarised for the better overview in this sub-chapter. It is recommended to have these tips always in mind.

[1] Source: Adapted and expanded from material from Sequeira, Debra et al. 2007. Stakeholder Engagement: A Good & from Jeffery 2009. Stakeholder Engagement: A Road Map to Meaningful Engagement

## 6.2. Planning Stage (Checklist)

When planning the stakeholders' cooperation strategy for a project, it needs to reflect the requirements of the project and most importantly, of relevant stakeholders. The communication manager is responsible to plan and coordinate the communication activities for an Action with all activity leaders, partners and/or relevant organisation units.

By answering the underneath questions, communication practitioners are guided through the basic questions which need to be jointly answered in the planning process:

- ✓ **What needs to be achieved? What are the key issues to be addressed?**
  *Have a clear scope about the objectives and activities to be achieved in the project and for each work package (see **Chapter 8** for more information).*

- ✓ **Which stakeholder groups need to be involved to attain these goals? What are their characteristics, needs and expectations?**
  *Be sure to involve all relevant stakeholder groups, especially those most likely to be affected or where cooperation is necessary. (Relevant stakeholder groups are listed in **Chapter 7)**.*

- ✓ **Who are the appropriate representatives for each stakeholder group?**

  *Make sure to identify important players for each stakeholder group, depending on the Action, underlying activities, geographic area and so on. Develop a contact list for the project (see database possibilities in **Chapter 8.3.2**).*

- ✓ **Is there any previous experience, either positive or negative, of engaging with these stakeholders and what can be learnt from that experience?**

  *Please learn more about strengths and weaknesses in the SWOT analysis under **Chapter 5**.*

- ✓ **What level of money and personnel resources should be allocated to conduct the identified communication activities?**

  *Plan your resources well in advance to allocate the required time and budget for the communication activities of a project (see **Chapter 8** for more information).*

- ✓ **Which communication channels are available on national context by project partners?**

  *Plan the communication activities after knowing which channels are overall available by project partners.*

- ✓ **Which activities will address the right target groups while taking into consideration the addressed purpose (e.g. consultation) and the national context?**
- ✓ **Which timeline needs to be considered?**
- ✓ **Who is responsible for each task?** *Have clear roles how to organise the tasks*

  *Plan the above details of your communication strategy with the help of the communication framework (please go to **Chapter 8**).*

- ✓ **Has the national context been sufficiently included in planned communication activities?**
  *e.g.: language, stakeholders, national holidays etc. (please see **Chapter 6.5**)*

- ✓ **With which regional events/projects/working groups could a collaboration be formed with?**

## 6.3. Central Communication Management (internal organisation)

The central management of communication activities enables to keep the overview, achieve the best possible visibility of the project and to reach the identified goals. The coordination with activity leaders, partners and/or relevant organisation units is however equally important to take all important aspects into consideration.

Activity leaders might know best from a technical viewpoint which stakeholders need to be included at which times. Furthermore, to convey the message successfully to stakeholders, the technical expertise can be highly relevant due to required know-how, and typical jargon used, or simply because translations might be required. In addition, different persons might have varying types of involvement and trust levels towards relevant stakeholders. Therefore, it is necessary to coordinate and possibly delegate the communication activities to certain project members.

In addition, it is recommended to create synergies with similar projects (e.g. FAIRway Danube, FAIRway works!, Preparing FAIRway 2 works, other similar CEF Actions) and to combine the communication of project-related information of these Actions towards the shipping industry. This enables to reach the sector efficiently, while preventing the overload of overly project-orientated information stemming from several sources.

In summary, the communication management entails the planning of the communication tasks and the assignment of roles. Having a complex project however, the details (who executes which activity? What is the status of activities? etc.) can become difficult to monitor. Therefore, centralised communication management tools are recommended to plan and monitor the communication activities. More information on collaboration tools can be found in ***Chapter 8.3.1***.

## 6.4. Building Trust (Checklist)

Building trust is essential in any stakeholders' cooperation process. It enables information to be shared in both ways and facilitates the decision-finding process while problems can be optimally tackled by all involved parties. Therefore, this sub-chapter is dedicated to the question how trust can be built into the stakeholders' cooperation strategy of a project.

The checklist underneath shall support communication managers through the process of building trust:

- ✓ *Acknowledge internally, and if appropriate publicly state, that stakeholders' trust is vital to achieve Actions' goals*
- ✓ *Make only promises which you can hold*
- ✓ *Consult with relevant stakeholders. They need to be heard and have their concerns taken seriously*
- ✓ *If given, present tangible results from the past to relevant stakeholders and explain how the engagement will further increase benefits for involved parties*
- ✓ *Give the project a "personal face" for relationship building: Organise meetings, events and/or schedule phone calls with stakeholders to engage in personal information exchange, where requirements, problems and positive feedback can be shared. Make sure to target each stakeholder group with the right communication channel mix and to exploit the advantages of both, personal and digital communication techniques (see more under **Chapter 8**).*
- ✓ *Manage and document feedback from stakeholders centrally. Recommendations how to structure the process, can be found in **Annex 3.***

## 6.5. National Requirements

It is important to regard for national requirements in the elaboration of a stakeholders' coordination concept, includingly:

- stakeholders
- language, geographical context, customs
- holidays
- related projects, working groups, events
- available communication channels
- available resources for communication (personnel and monetary)

To give examples:

In **Serbia**, stakeholder interaction is taking place for example in the form of stakeholder fora in line with the integrated planning process requirements in order to discuss relevant topics (e.g.: works-related harmonisation of navigation and environmental protection aspects of river training works, modelling of fairway) with stakeholders, such as environmental organisations, local NGOs, international organisations, and governmental organisations. When setting up a communication plan, it is recommended to elaborate which channels are available on national level (e.g.: Stakeholder Fora) and integrate said elaborated channels of collaboration. Other commonly used channels for the involvement of stakeholders in Serbia are bilateral meetings to build the personal relationship, while enabling the constant exchange of professional information. Social media is rather not used to communicate with stakeholders.

In **Croatia**, stakeholder interaction is also taking place in the form of stakeholder fora (see above) **-** among other channels. Typically being a transit country for inland navigation shipping, the current involvement with industry stakeholders is relatively low. Inquiries from the shipping industry usually involve general information request for navigation on the Danube or to inform about issues on the waterway (e.g.: misplaced buoy). In addition, the Croatian shipping sector is very small. Having only few Croatian industry players, while at the same time sharing a border and many language similarities with Serbia, the combination of stakeholder activities (e.g.: events, workshops) could prove effective. In regards to social media, the currently available (ministerial) accounts typically cannot be used for EU/CEF-funded projects.

In general, the organisation of communication activities includingly their coordination needs preparation time. For example, project partners do not necessarily have a database/contact management system or a dedicated department supporting the communication with stakeholders.

## 6.6. Gender-Sensitive Communication (Checklist)

**Communication can have an important effect in promoting gender equality.** To tackle gender inequality, we must look at the way we communicate.

Gender-sensitive communication ensures that women and men – and those who do not conform to the binary gender system – are treated as persons of equal importance and dignity while challenging harmful norms, attitudes and behaviours that maintain gender inequality and discrimination.

Some of the **key principles** for gender-sensitive communication are:

- ✓ *Explicitly address gender equality as one of the project's main objectives and clearly highlight this, e.g. on the website. This will help to create greater awareness and strengthen commitment.*
- ✓ *Make sure to regard for gender when identifying key players in the target audience.*
- ✓ *Make sure to consider gender-sensitive language during the design of messages, and all public relations material, in order to address women and men equally, while challenging negative gender norms. Take into consideration the semantics of the respective language used.*
- ✓ *Ensure that women and men are equally represented and visible (e.g.: when planning speakers of an event).*

- ✓ *Challenge gender stereotypes and avoid depicting men or women in stereotypical, disempowering or traditional ways.*

- ✓ *Be sensitive to diversity in gender identification and sexual orientation.*

- ✓ *Ensure that gender is integrated into monitoring and evaluation processes, if it makes sense (e.g.: how many men/women attended the event?).*

- ✓ *Distribute guidelines on gender-sensitive language to all persons involved in the project.*

**In addition, communication practitioners should check-off following checklist when designing the communication activity[2]:**

- ✓ Is your message/communication material free from stereotypes?
- ✓ Do you actively seek ways of being inclusive to both women and men?
- ✓ Do you avoid terms that may be patronising or belittling to one gender?
- ✓ Would the adjectives that you use to describe one gender be equally applicable to another gender?
- ✓ Did you check your document for gender-biased language?
- ✓ Have you avoided describing women solely in relation to men?
- ✓ Do you avoid using 'man' or 'he' to describe the experiences of everyone?
- ✓ When describing professional occupations, have you used gender-neutral terms, such as chair, spokesperson and headteacher?

**If the above questions have been answered with "yes", chances are high that the message is free of gender bias.**

# 7. Stakeholder Groups in Inland Navigation

## 7.1. Identification and characteristics of stakeholder groups

Only by identifying relevant stakeholder groups in inland navigation and by understanding their needs and expectations, it is possible to align communication activities accordingly. *Table 2* shows the target groups and displays their needs and expectations, as identified in the SWOT Analysis (SuAc. 5.1).

| Target group | Needs/Expectations/Characteristics |
|---|---|
| **Shipping industry** | • Very time-sensitive stakeholder group<br>• Interested to receive information on tangible project results, which are important for the daily business<br>• Will contribute their time in project-related matters (only) when they see benefits and outcomes<br>• Expect to be heard and need to have their problems being taken care of |
| **Waterway administrations**<br>(as project beneficiary) | As beneficiary of a CEF-Action,<br>• The successful project outcome is relevant for this stakeholder group<br>• Need to know relevant stakeholders and their needs and expectations<br>• Need to manage communication activities for collaboration purposes and information exchange with given time and money resources |

[2] Source: https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/toolkits/gender-institutional-transformation/step-7-communicating-gender-mainstreaming

| | |
|---|---|
| **Waterway administrations**<br>(as non-beneficiary of the project) | As non- beneficiary of a CEF-Action,<br>• Responsible for all concerns connected to the responsible national river section<br>• Need to consider national/organisational interests, working programmes and budget<br>• The close and fast collaboration with this stakeholder group is indispensable in case of problems concerning their competence area<br>• This can be achieved through an early involvement before/during the project (regular exchange of information via phone or personally, relationship building)<br>• For recurring problems, involve relevant waterway administrations – e.g. in the form of a working group – to jointly tackle the problem |
| **Industry Associations of shipping industry** | • As representatives, want to be involved whenever shipping industry's interest is touched<br>• Early involvement in project necessary to retrieve commitment<br>• Once committed: Willing to support dissemination and informational activities when benefit for shipping industry is seen<br>• Willing to dedicate time (including travelling) for attendance at conferences, meetings to represent the shipping industry |
| **European Union Institutions** | • Need to be involved at all relevant project stages and expect collaboration from project beneficiaries |
| **International Organisations** | • Depending on the tasks defined in the underlying convention, their interests can be touched with a project<br>• In that case, early involvement is advised, especially if the collaboration is seen as beneficial |
| **National Government Authorities** | • Depending on the Actions' aim, the interests and competence of certain national government authorities are likely to be touched<br>• Need to be involved as soon as possible about planned activities, to gain support for the project (especially if permits or similar is required) and have concerns alleviated, if given |
| **Non-Governmental Organisations** | • Depending on the Actions' aim, the interests and competence of certain NGOs can be touched<br>• Need their views and demands to be heard and tackled on project level from an early stage onwards<br>• Willing to dedicate time (including travelling) for attendance at conferences, meetings to represent certain fields of expertise (e.g. environmental) and give feedback on specific topics<br>• Their early involvement will help to alleviate possible concerns, if given and minimise the risk of bad PR |
| **(Consultative) working groups, related projects** | Collaboration on certain topics can be beneficial for both parties. It is therefore beneficial to identify working groups and/or related projects, which can support the project outcome. |
| **General public** | This stakeholder group can have an influence on the project. Especially, concerns or aversion against the project should be prevented though information campaigns addressed to the general public from an early stage onwards. This stakeholder group should be therefore involved with moderate communication activities in order to receive their general approval, while not overloading them with information. |

*Table 2: Stakeholder Groups in CEF Projects for Inland Navigation*

## 7.2. Influence and Power

Stakeholder groups can feature different levels of interests and influence towards a project.

Interest defines the degree to which stakeholders might be affected by the project or from its outcome. Influence describes the degree to which stakeholders might promote, support, disrupt or stop the course of the project.

Based on these differences, we can identify the level of required cooperation. This will help to prioritise time and resources and align communication activities in order to:

- **satisfy powerful stakeholders.** Communication activities should build on intensifying the cooperation towards a project by increasing commitment and/or alleviating possible concerns from powerful stakeholders – even if their interest towards the project might be little.

- **involve interested stakeholders.** While these stakeholders might feature relatively little influence, "interested" target groups are often the main beneficiaries of a project. Therefore, their requirements, ideas and know-how need to be considered from an early stage onwards. At the same time, they are interested in tangible project results, as it can improve their daily operations.

When mapping the influence and interests of identified stakeholders in inland navigation, following output was received (see *Table 3*).

The underneath stakeholder map should be regarded as suggestion, as it should to be aligned to each Action individually and might even change throughout the project preparation and implementation phase, e.g.: if new observations about a stakeholder (group) are gathered.

**Stakeholder Influence**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Low interest, high influence**<br><br>• International Organisations<br>• National Government Authorities<br>   o Relevant national authorities for the EU Water Framework Directive<br>   o Relevant National bodies for conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (e.g.: Habitats Directive / Birds Directive / Natura 2000 legislation)<br>   o Other authorities on international, national, or regional level (e.g.: for infrastructure provision, to issue permits, etc.)<br>• Non-governmental organisations | **High interest, high influence**<br><br>• Waterway administration/ other project beneficiaries<br>• European Union Institutions |
| **Low interest, low influence**<br><br>• General public | **High interest, low influence**<br><br>• Shipping industry<br>   o Shipping companies & ship brokers, forwarding companies with inland navigation in service portfolio<br>   o Port and terminal operators<br>   o Skippers<br>   o Cargo owners and other potential waterway users<br>• Industry associations<br>• (Consultative) working groups & Related projects/ initiatives<br>• Other experts in the field of operation, who can contribute with know-how |

**Stakeholder Interest**

*Table 3: Stakeholder mapping by stakeholder interest and influence*

## 7.3. Cooperation Intensity

Based on the interest/influence ratio (see Table *3*), the cooperation requirements for each stakeholder group are classified within

*Table* 4.

Stakeholder Influence

| | |
|---|---|
| **Involve**<br>This stakeholder group needs to be satisfied but at a balanced ratio: they should not be overloaded with information. Concerns need to be alleviated at an early stage. | **Collaborate**<br>Full engagement of this stakeholder group is required; application of greatest efforts to satisfy this group. |
| **Inform**<br>This stakeholder group should be informed at moderate levels, but should not be overloaded with excessive communication. | **Consult**<br>This stakeholder group must be involved regularly by exchanging information on project results and by retrieving insights on underlying requirements, know-how and similar information. People in this stakeholder group can often be very helpful with the details of the project in a supportive role. |

Stakeholder Interest

*Table 4: Cooperation intensity depending on interest/influence-levels*

*The above-mentioned cooperation intensity (*

Table 4) can translate into following forms of involvement for each stakeholder group (see Table 5). These outcomes will be incorporated in the communication guideline.

| **Stakeholder Group** | **RANKING/ required cooperation intensity** | **Resulting form of involvement** |
|---|---|---|
| General public | 1<br>low | Keep informed<br>**Goal:** Inform this stakeholder occasionally, however observe if more involvement is required |
| International Organisations<br>National Government Authorities<br>Non-Governmental Organisations | 2 – 3<br>moderate to high | Involve → Keep satisfied<br>**Goal:** Mobilize stakeholder involvement and exploit necessary collaboration early-on and at all required stages during the project to seek approval and to keep stakeholders satisfied |
| Shipping Industry<br>Waterway administrations (as non-beneficiary of the project)<br>Industry Associations<br>(Consultative) working groups<br>Related projects | 2 - 3<br>moderate to high | Consult → Information/know-how exchange<br>**Goal:** Align project with user requirements and retrieve best-fitted project results while keeping stakeholders informed about tangible outcomes |
| Waterway administrations (as project beneficiary)<br>European Union Institutions | 4<br>very high | Collaborate → Manage closely<br>**Goal:** Collaborate closely for the successful project outcome by informing, involving, consulting |

*Table 5: Form of involvement per stakeholder group*

While the necessary cooperation intensity can be elaborated based upon the interest/influence-ratio, it is recommended to further

- take into consideration **prior behaviour and underlying expectations** of stakeholder groups/stakeholders in past Actions (please see also ***Chapter 7.1***)
- organise **consultative meetings** with relevant stakeholder groups. To receive additional inputs for the required cooperation intensity, it is recommended to tackle following questions:
  - ✓ What are your views on the proposed project?
  - ✓ What do you think are its positive aspects? What are its expected benefits?
  - ✓ What aspects of the project are you concerned about and should be improved? What are your recommendations?
  - ✓ What do you think would be the reactions or responses of your members or persons in your community/organisation (…) on the proposed project?
  - ✓ Which further information do you think is needed for a better understanding of the proposed project? What is the best way to receive this information and general feedback from members of your community/organisation (…)?
  - ✓ Other context- and project-specific questions

This will help to align the message of each communication activity to the identified requirements (see more under ***Chapter 8.1.2***).

# 8. Communication Framework

This framework enables communication practitioners to define the basics to strategically plan the effective interaction with the intended audience. The communication framework needs to address following issues:

- the communication purpose
- the intended message
- the target audience
- the channels to be used
- timelines and frequency
- responsibilities
- given budget

The communication framework is elaborated in the concept and design phase of an Action.

After each communication activity, it is advised to monitor the performance of the communication activity and to select feedback, if given, centrally. Please see more information in *Annex 2* and *Annex 3*.

## 8.1. Communication Matrix

*Table 6* shows how practitioners can plan their communication activities while regarding the necessary aspects (purpose, message, target audience, dissemination channels, deadlines, frequency, responsibilities and budget).

| **Purpose**<br><br>*WHY do we communicate? (e.g.: inform, consult,..)* | **Message**<br><br>*WHAT do we communicate?* | **Target group**<br><br>*To WHOM do we communicate?* | **Dissemination Channel**<br><br>*HOW do we communicate?* | **Timeline**<br><br>*WHEN do we communicate?* | **Frequency**<br><br>*How OFTEN do we communicate? (if repetitive)* | **Responsible**<br><br>*WHO communicates?* | **Budget**<br><br>*HOW MUCH budget is necessary & available?* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Consult<br><br>(align with user requirements) | Proposal of project idea (e.g.: digital submission of control forms to authorities) | Shipping industry | Personal exchange (e.g.: phone, meeting), *focus: relationship building, retrieving information* | **xx.xx.202x** | **-** | **Person A** | |
| | | | Multilateral meetings for expert exchange *focus: retrieving information via discussion* | **xx.xx.202x** | **-** | **Person A** | |
| | | | Regional events | **xx.xx.202x** | **yearly** | **Person B** | |
| | | Industry Associations | Personal exchange (e.g.: phone, meeting) | **xx.xx.202x** | **-** | **Person C** | |
| | | | Multilateral meetings | **xx.xx.202x** | **-** | **Person C, D** | |
| | | | Regional events/ Advisory Committee Meetings | **xx.xx.202x** | **yearly** | **Persons A, C, D** | |
| Involve<br><br>(seek collaboration) | Proposal of project idea (e.g.: digital submission of control forms to authorities) | National Authorities | Personal exchange (e.g.: phone, meeting, E-mail) | **xx.xx.202x** | **-** | **Person A** | |
| | | | Multilateral meetings | **xx.xx.202x** | **-** | **Person A, C, D** | |

*Table 6: Communication Matrix*

More information on the respective elements of the communication matrix, can be found in ***Chapters 8.1.1*** to ***8.1.5***. In reality, these elements will usually be elaborated jointly, as they are strongly interconnected.

### 8.1.1. Communication Purpose & Objective

Based on the cooperation intensity for each stakeholder group (see more information in ***Chapter 7.3***), following purposes and objectives of communication) have been identified. The message and communication channels need to be adapted accordingly.

| **Purpose of Communication Activity** | **Objective of Communication Activity** | **Typical Stakeholder Groups** |
|---|---|---|
| Inform | Inform stakeholders occasionally, however monitor in case more involvement is required | • General public |
| Involve | Mobilize stakeholder involvement and exploit necessary collaboration early-on and at all required stages during the project to seek approval, alleviate objections and to keep stakeholders satisfied | • International Organisations<br>• National Government Authorities<br>• Non-Governmental Organisations |
| Consult | Align project with user requirements, while keeping stakeholders informed about tangible outcomes to retrieve best-fitted project results | • Shipping Industry<br>• Waterway administrations (as non-project-beneficiary)<br>• Industry Associations<br>• Working groups & Related projects |
| Collaborate | Manage closely for the successful project outcome by informing, engaging, consulting | • Waterway administrations (as project beneficiary)<br>• European Union Institutions |

*Table 7: Communication purpose and objective*

#### 8.1.2. Message

Every message, irrespective of its format should include as much information as necessary, while keeping it as concise as possible.

There are two types of messages:

- the core message (includes main information), such as the project's key features, addressed problems, expected outcome, timeframe, location (…)
- the customized message (designed for each stakeholder group)

**It is recommended to customize the core message**

- to each target audience (e.g.: use of right jargon)
- to each communication channel
- the specific purpose (inform, involve, consult, collaborate)

In addition, each customized message needs to consider possible or known objections of stakeholder groups to alleviate them. For example, if the reason for objection is based on mistrust towards the project proponent or the political environment, then the message could focus on the project's standards or measures to ensure transparency, accountability and/or the improvement of the current framework. It could further build on past success stories, if given, and/or to seek stakeholder's suggestions to improve the current level of mistrust. If the reason is the expected nonsatisfaction of the proposed Action, then the message should seek further information on needs of affected stakeholders, which need to be further included in the project design.

**Also take into consideration alternative types of messages: Short videos**

A presented idea by Pro Danube International is the production of a short video (duration of approximately 10 sec.), whenever something "major" is happening (e.g. lock upgrade, procurement of service vessels, upgrade of mooring place). The video can be used to show results and communicate the key message via social media channels (reaching a broad target group including the general public) or via more targeted channels in order to increase the project (result) visibility to the shipping industry.

#### 8.1.3. Target Group

As mentioned above, each communication activity addresses a respective audience. It is important to know the needs of each stakeholder group and adapt the message accordingly. For more information, please go to ***Chapter 7***.

#### 8.1.4. Selection of Communication Channel

It is important to select the right communication channel for your intended purpose and target group. A general suggestion is provided in *Table 8*. In addition, more information about each dissemination channel can be found in ***Chapter 8.2***.

| | | Meeting | | Event | | | | | | | | | Social Media | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Dissemination channel --> | Bilateral meeting/ personal exchange (phone, e-mail) | Multilateral meeting *for short, expert exchange* | Logistics event/ fair | Related projects/ working group event | Regional User Fora | Int. Advisory Committee Meeting | Public information events / workshops (for works - projects with high public interest) | Newsletter (NL) | Website Updates & Contact point for requests/ feedback | Publication in article/ press releases | Survey | LinkedIn | Facebook | (Permanent) billboard/ signage erected on site (works-projects) |
| **Target Group** | **Shipping industry** | x | x | x | x (key users) | x | x (Key Users) | | x | x | x (logistics magazines) | x | x | x | |
| | **Waterway Administrations** *project Beneficiary | **joint collaboration in all dissemination activities** | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | **Waterway administrations** *non-project beneficiary | x | x | | | x | x | | x | x | | | x | | |
| | **Industry associations** | x | x | | | x | x | | x | x | | | x | | |
| | **European Union Institutions** | x | x | | x | x | x | | x | x | x | | x | x | |
| | **International Organisations** | x | x | | | x | x | x | x | x | | | x | | |
| | **National Government Authorities** | x | x | | | x | | | | | | | | | |
| | **Non-Governmental Organisations** | x | x | | | x | x | x | x | x | | | x | | |
| | **Consultative working groups, related projects** | x | x | | x | | | | x | | | | x | x | |
| | **General public** | | | | | | | x | | x | x | | x | x | x |

| Purpose of Communication Activity | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Inform** | **Involve** | **Consult** | **Collaborate** |

*Table 8: Selection of communication channel for intended purpose and target group*

#### 8.1.5. Frequency

Communication guidelines often follow a certain pre-scheduled frequency of repetition. While this is important in order to plan resources in advance, this approach holds one disadvantage: It does not consider opportunities or threats that arise along the way. Especially in complex projects, it is necessary to be agile and respond to emerging issues.

Therefore, at the beginning of the process, each activity leader together with the communication manager should assess from a technical perspective at which project stage it is necessary to inform, consult and /or collaborate with relevant stakeholders and whether a repetition of the communication activities is desired. In addition, it is important to monitor the situation throughout the project and set complementary activities in case the need arises.

The involvement of the shipping industry is crucial for the successful project outcome. It is important to find the right balance to inform the sector sufficiently and seek their feedback without overloading. Therefore, the coordination of communication activities (e.g.: newsletters, social media updates, information meetings, surveys) within the project, as well as in cooperation with other projects and departments, is recommended.

### 8.2. Dissemination Channels

The right choice of communication channel enables to optimally reach targeted stakeholders with the intended message and purpose.

Following main channels have been identified:

- ✓ meetings
- ✓ events
- ✓ newsletters
- ✓ website updates
- ✓ press releases
- ✓ surveys
- ✓ social media
- ✓ reporting tools

This section describes the strengths and purpose of each communication channel while providing checklists and/or recommendations for further usage.

#### 8.2.1. Meetings

**Meetings are valuable communication channels to <u>inform, involve, consult and collaborate</u> with stakeholders.**

**Bilateral exchange**

The shipping industry likes being heard and is willing to provide feedback, if an improvement of an important issue concerning inland navigation can be achieved. The bilateral exchange ideally takes place in form of personal meetings to effectively build the relationship. Alternatively, bilateral meetings can be conducted in the form of phone/video calls in case a meeting is not feasible due to timely or geographical constraints,

Bilateral meetings provide the ideal setting to

- ✓ exchange information, consult, collaborate, find joint decisions,
- ✓ while building the relationship and trust,
- ✓ on a regular basis.

The effectiveness of meetings in order to build the relationship is a very important aspect, that does not only hold true for the shipping industry, but concerns all stakeholder groups.

**Multilateral exchange**

In addition to the personal exchange, targeted meetings with a few players from the sector and other important stakeholders are ideal to

- ✓ Facilitate expert exchange on a certain topic.
- ✓ Expert meetings should be conducted whenever information is required and/or interests need to be aligned.
- ✓ Are often conducted in the form of a workshop, webinar
- ✓ These meetings are ideally concise and address concrete topics, which touch their (daily) field of operations.

**Meeting Format**

The next chapter (events) provides useful insights which format (personal, digital or hybrid) to choose when setting up an event. This information can equally serve as decision aid as to whether to organise a personal or digital meeting.

### 8.2.2. Events

**Events are valuable communication channels to <u>inform, involve and consult</u> with stakeholders.**

Information gathered from the interviews suggests, that stakeholders, including the time-sensitive shipping industry, is generally in favour of events, when having the right framework and interesting topics. When it comes to the question which of the underneath formats to choose, it becomes more tricky.

**In-person, digital or hybrid format?**

Following event formats have been identified:

- In-person event – All attendees are physically present in one location
- Digital event – All attendees participate digitally in the event, which takes place entirely online
- Hybrid event – Some persons attend in person, others online

The pro's and con's of each format - based on the interviews with stakeholders in the frame of the SWOT Analyis – can be found in the next section:

**In-person**

<u>Pro:</u>

- In-person events provide the best opportunity for networking, relationship building and enables a higher level of experience, which cannot be replaced by digital event formats.
- From the interviews (Act. 5.1) it is possible to conclude: This event format is generally favoured by the shipping industry and other stakeholders, including waterway administrations, public entities (including public ports/port operators) and industry associations.

<u>Contra:</u>

Despite the general preference for in-person meetings, the shippig industry would rather select the digital format as preferred event option, if long-distance travelling is included. This is because:

- Time and personnel resources are often limited, which makes face-to-face participation at an event difficult. This limitation increases further, if long-distance travelling is involved.
- Having different job roles in an organisation, the participation of more than one person of the same organisation at the event is advisable, however difficult as resources are limited. This problem could be solved with the set-up of hybrid or digital meetings.

The **in-person event format** is suitable for:

- long meetings (broad agenda)

- events, where focus is set on networking/relationship building, workshop
- for discussions with a broad target group
- meetings among decision makers and/or public sector

**Digital**

Pro:

- It enables to involve a bigger audience and speakers (covering the whole Danube), as the digital event format bypasses geographic or capacity restrictions (a high number of attendees can participate from everywhere)
- low organisational cost (no expenses for the venue, catering etc.)
- can be deployed quickly (lower preparation time required)

Contra:

- Networking and relationship building are difficult to impossible at a digital event
- Participants are more likely to be distracted when they are participating virtually at an event. Therefore, also for long programmes (more than 2-3 hours), digital events are not optimally suited
- For coordination meetings with a broad target group, involving also decision makers and the public sector, **in-person (or hybrid) events** are better suited.

The **digital event format** is suitable for:

- short events (narrow agenda)
- events, where focus is set on informing stakeholders or
- for expert exchange with a specific target group (meetings having a working-group character and which can be conducted in form of a webinar.), and/or
- for meetings/events which might need to be organised quickly (e.g.: due to a crisis) and/or with little budget,
- events, where audience is geographically widely dispersed

**Hybrid**

Pro:

Hybrid events combine the advantages of both, the in-person and digital event format. This enables persons to personally or digitally participate at an event, depending on their preference and possibility.

Contra:

The organisation of hybrid meetings can be costlier and is organisationally more challenging, as it basically encompasses the organisation of both, an in-person and digital event. The good layout of the room is required to guarantee that speakers are well heard and seen (both, in-person and digitally).

The **hybrid event format** is suitable for:

- events aiming to reach the biggest possible audience
- events, where the targeted focus is on shipping industry
- focus is set on networking/relationship building and/or joint decision-making while having
- many different stakeholders with different travelling conditions (national and international stakeholders)
- suitable for both, long and short meetings (when having a broad agenda: the programme should be splitted into thematic modules, so that virtual attendees can attend at prefered presentations)

Since the hybrid event format is relatively new for most organisations, this Manual recommends practitioners to consider following organisational aspects:

### Technical Equipment (hybrid events)

It is recommended to provide/organise:

- 2 projectors/screens: 1 projector displays the presentations/discussed documents, the other displays the virtual participants and the chat box, if applicable
- 2 laptops: one laptop is used to display the presentations; the other is used to take notes, write e-mails etc.
- Provision of a sufficient number of microphones (for each speaker per panel discussion and the audience)
- Visual representation of physically present attendees: The use of a Webcam has proved sufficient for smaller groups (e.g. <20 participants). For a bigger audience/more formal event character, a professional set-up is recommended (camera operator in combination with professional technical equipment and support).

### Task-Sharing (hybrid events)

For the implementation of a hybrid event, more personnel resources are required to take care of tasks conducted both, on-site and virtually. Please find a few examples what needs to be considered:

- Nominate contact persons for the digital audience in case of technical issues
- Nominate person(s), who participate digitally and check the voice/display quality of the event
- Nominate persons, who handle tasks on site: catering, technical issues, check-in,...

Please find more information in the checklist under ***Annex 1.***

### Communication before and during the meeting (hybrid events)

- Communicate to the virtual participants
    - what is expected (e.g.: muting when not speaking / hand raising-function and/or usage of chat box, etc. in case of questions/feedback)
    - contact information in case of technical problems
- Ask on-site participants to clearly speak into the microphones, so that digital attendees can clearly understand the questions or discussions.

## Checklists

Please find checklists, which will support communication practitioners in the organisation of an event, in ***Annex 1***.

## General Recommendations

### Find the right mix

An opportunity is seen in organising or participating in the right mix of international (e.g. Danube Business Talks, Transport Logistics Fair Munich) and national events to target the right stakeholder groups. It also makes sense to investigate which given events could be targeted in order to involve the favoured target group.

### Event Synergies

#### Logistics events

As the shipping industry is often difficult to target, it is advisable to look out for logistics events which gather the industry attention. A typical example is the Transport Logistics Fair in Munich. It can make sense to set up a booth in order to inform about the project and to retrieve necessary information on requirements and know-how, while most importantly, building the relationship.

Another event with high participation rates from the shipping industry, due to the provided networking possibilities, are the Danube Business Talks. This event presents a good opportunity to network with both, the shipping industry and public sector representatives while informing about a project, and retrieving necessary inputs (e.g.: requirements of the sector). The event therefore provides the opportunity to improve the project visibility while reaching and building relationships with an international audience.

**The formation of synergies with related projects, or working groups** can prove effective to jointly tackle a specific problem or issue. At the same time, the joint organisation of events has proven effective to communicate a desired message, retrieve information to and from stakeholders, while not overloading them with similar information from various angles. It is advisable to investigate on national and international level ongoing projects, and working groups, which are thematically connected to the own Action or where any sort of synergy could be formed (e.g. by targeting the same audience and general topic, e.g.: digitalisation). The joint look out for collaboration possibilities is recommended together with all project partners at the beginning of each project and on a regular basis afterwards (e.g.: once every quarter).

### Regional User Fora & International Advisory Committee Meetings

Both, the user fora and advisory committee meetings are valuable channels to inform about a project, collaborate and form relationships. The **recommended audience** are mainly experts from the public sector, industry associations and European, international and/or non-governmental organisations. The industry viewpoint is of course also necessary and important. The next section (see "increase involvement of the shipping industry at events") provides practical ideas how to increase their involvement.

#### Regional User Fora

The National User Fora were organised in the frame of FAIRway Danube nationally once per year. The aim was to discuss project-related news and general trends and problems of inland navigation on national level with national stakeholders.

The regional (and in-person) setting of the user fora in the project FAIRway Danube was well-perceived by experts from the public sector, industry associations and European, international and/or non-governmental organisations. Benefits are that national characteristics and requirements can be well incorporated. In addition, the low travel times are regarded as very positive. To involve stakeholders on regional level while supporting transnational collaboration and the exploiting of the advantage of low travel times, it is recommended to organise the user fora on regional level.

Following **regional settings** for the future organisation of the user fora can be envisaged in the future (e.g.: Upper Danube / Middle Danube /Lower Danube). The **most important factor** however, when deciding about the details of the event location, should be the underlying **topic.** An issue might primarily affect two or three countries in the Danube region from both, the Upper and Middle Danube for example.

While the feedback by the above mentioned (public) stakeholder groups towards the User Fora has been very positive, this format is not well-fitted for a (high) attendance from the shipping industry. The presentation materials are sometimes too broadly defined and too project-orientated (talking about National Action Plans, and ongoing or planned Activities). It has been further mentioned that trust towards the political environment is partly very low. At the same time, the sector is very time-sensitive, where events are only attended, if a benefit is seen. Please see in the Chapter below ("*Increase involvement of shipping industry at events*") how involvement of the shipping industry can be boosted.

#### Advisory committee meetings

The FAIRway Danube Advisory Committee Meetings have proven to be very successful to present ongoing activities, to foster decision-finding and to represent the sector on international level. This sort of involvement is recommended for future activities. Please see how the sector can be further involved in future in the next chapter.

### Increase involvement of shipping industry at events

- ✓ **Involvement of key users** *(shipping industry)*
  Some users of the shipping industry are active feedback givers. They regularly attend events concerning inland navigation, while providing feedback, or asking critical questions. During the

interviews it has been gathered, that some are also open to the idea to actively present during events. Usually, a good relationship has already been established with these key users, and they are regularly involved and consulted when feedback or expert know-how is required. Feedback is likely to be constructive and helps to improve the project outcome and subsequently, the situation for the industry. A great opportunity is therefore seen in the closer involvement of key users from the shipping industry in the future.

- ✓ **Seeking individual consultation before the event** (in the form of e-mail correspondence, phone calls, personal meetings, digital expert exchange), which will be later incorporated during the events

  E.g.: If physical participation at an event is not possible (and it is not a hybrid event), stakeholders of the shipping industry can be invited to submit questions or feedback, if given, prior to an event. These questions or comments can then be integrated by the moderator. Resulting answers or general discussion points will then be forwarded to all participants and non-participating invitees after the event.

- ✓ **Collaboration with industry associations**
  The existing network of industry associations can be an opportunity to inform about project results and to retrieve necessary information from the shipping industry, who is usually lacking time to attend such meetings. The communication should in this case tackle place via the industry association. The collaboration is therefore seen as beneficial.

### 8.2.3. Newsletters

**Newsletters are designed to <u>inform</u> stakeholders about a project outcome or relevant news.**

As every message, also newsletters should be adapted to targeted stakeholder group(s). Since the shipping industry is very time-sensitive and values short, tangible and relevant information for their daily operation, newsletters should be specifically targeted to this stakeholder group.

Recommendations when targeting the shipping/private sector:

- ✓ Make the newsletter as short as possible. All information should be displayed on one page (without scrolling) when opening the e-mail on a computer.
- ✓ Make sure to use the right jargon while skipping terms, which are not relevant to the audience (e.g.: milestones, National Action Plans)
- ✓ It is advisable to include links within the e-mail which direct interested readers to further information (e.g.: detailed information can be published on project website). Also, flyers with further information can be attached.
- ✓ Make sure to include tangible and relevant information (preferably: Services which can be used by the sector). Avoid the mentioning of studies, in case they do not present tangible results.
- ✓ As information should be tangible and relevant, it does not necessarily make sense to set up a regular newsletter service (e.g. once a quarter) for this stakeholder group - unless there is really something to inform about.

Recommendations when targeting the public sector:

- ✓ Newsletters can be lengthier and more detailed including the usage of project-related jargon
- ✓ The presented information can be "less tangible", meaning: Ongoing studies and their results are also of interest

### 8.2.4. Website

**Websites are designed to <u>inform</u> stakeholders about key features and activities of a project, expected outcomes and relevant news.**

News on project websites are usually not followed on a regular basis. Regularly visited websites by the inland waterway transport shipping industry are those, which include necessary information for the daily business, such as fairway-related websites with e.g. water level information and water level forecasts.

However, it makes sense to include the link to project-related websites within all sorts of communication activities: newsletter, social media postings, surveys, presentations during events and meetings etc. In case the information is perceived as interesting, stakeholders will follow-up more information directly on the website.

**With the inclusion of a contact point/form on the website, stakeholders are furthermore provided the possibility to be involved and consulted.**

This can be an important feature to receive feedback from the general public.

#### 8.2.5. Press Release/ Publication of article

**Press releases are used to inform the general public about project-related information** (e.g.: announcement of an event, finalisation of a project outcome,…)

Following aspects are recommended to be considered when designing a press release:

- ✓ Written in a clear, concise manner that easily and quickly conveys its message to the reader
- ✓ The first two paragraphs should include the most relevant information

**Publications in pre-selected media formats (e.g.: logistics magazines) enables to inform pre-defined stakeholder groups about project-related information.**

In addition to the above, following aspects are recommended to be considered when designing an article for a pre-selected media format.

- ✓ Research which magazine/newspaper is best suited to reach the intended audience
- ✓ Adapting the jargon/information to the stakeholder group

#### 8.2.6. Surveys

**Surveys are designed to consult with stakeholders by assessing their requirements on a certain topic from a stakeholder group.**

Surveys are not popular but they are usually perceived as necessary by the shipping industry. When surveys address a current need, they will be further distributed by the management level to the skippers. In general, results suggest that surveys should not be conducted too often. Furthermore, the introduction of the survey (invitation) should clearly stress the benefits for participating in the survey (*e.g.: the survey collects requirements on (topic). These needs which will be further integrated within the project design/construction phase (..) in order to improve the current situation*). Furthermore, it should be stressed that the survey initiator has the scope for action to tackle the outcomes of the survey.

**An interesting approach**: PDI is disseminating short surveys including only the main questions. In the end, the participants are asked if they can be contacted via-Email/phone or invited to an (online) meeting to retrieve further information. This approach is well appreciated by the sector.

#### 8.2.7. Social Media

**Social media is used to inform, involve or even consult with the broad public as well as targeted stakeholders while building the relationship, if conducted correctly.**

The opinions on social media might be mixed – from the results gathered in the interviews (SuAc. 5.1), it is known that the relative majority of the interviewees of the inland navigation shipping industry is using social media, both as active and passive users.

While social media cannot be seen as main source for the dissemination of project results, it is definitely worth to be considered for the future communication plan. This will help to make project results more visible to a broad target group. Some of the typically used platforms (inland navigation industry) include:

LinkedIn (interesting in order to reach out to the industry)

- LinkedIn is a business-focused social media platform
- Can therefore serve as valuable tool to position the project, especially among the shipping industry, by providing expert information/updates on a certain topic while building up a network

- It is important to have quality content and use the relevant jargon of an industry, as it will influence the reachability of a posting
- Due to algorithms used, it is important to share information regularly (the best reachability can be achieved by posting once or more a week). Also, the receival of comments under a post and the sharing of the post are highly valued due to algorithms used, through which a post will receive higher reachability
- LinkedIn Analytics can support an organisation to identify the reachability (and success) of a posting

Facebook (interesting to reach out to the broad public)

- Facebook is the most popular social network among middle-aged adults, where 70% of users logging on daily and 43% logging on more than once daily. This makes it a valuable communication tool to target a broad audience
- Enables an organisation to be creative by publishing "common postings", as well as stories, creating events, groups and so forth
- Facebook Analytics can support an organisation to identify the reachability (and success) of a posting
- Every person who likes one's organisation or project page, will become a follower and these posts will appear in their news feed. If there is no interaction (clicking on the post, likes, comments or shares), it is likely that these posts will disappear from the follower's news feed.

<u>Depending on the respective target group, it might make sense to look into posts on Youtube, Twitter or Instagram.</u>

**<u>Organisation of social media activity</u>**

It is recommended, that the social media texts are prepared centrally by the communication manager and coordinated together with the project members (to include all necessary information).

Working together with project partners, it is important to investigate their available dissemination channels and whether a social media profile of the organisation is available. Depending on the availability, the finalised postings can be published on LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter by each organisation having an account. The sharing of the posts by individual members of the team should be encouraged to increase reachability of the posts.

**The advantage** of this approach: Assuming the organisations have already built up a follower base, project-related posts can build up on that, thus generating higher visibility.

**The disadvantage:** Usually there are big differences in the usage of social media in different organisations. The effort to coordinate the publishing of the content on each platform is also relatively high.

**Alternatively**, it might therefore make sense to set up a project profile in typical social media accounts (Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter). In this case the follower base has yet to be build up, but communication practitioners can plan their social media activities independent from the available communication channels of partnering organisations. Please read also through following recommendations.

**<u>Recommendations to build a social media presence:</u>**

- Identify your target audience for each platform (see above)
- Add relevant keywords in your profile (hint: do not exaggerate at the same time)
- Share content-related to your target audience —including keywords and hashtags in your posts
- Connect with popular accounts in your industry to additional exposure (hint: don't be afraid to follow others)
- Develop SMART goals for the social media activity
- Include good photo or video material in the postings (people are very drawn to the visual contents)
- Show also the personal side of your project in the posts to form meaningful connections (seek relationships, not only metrics)
- Create an editorial calender to plan your social media activities
- Focus on helping (if a question is being asked, make sure to respond in timely manner and to help them out)
- Include links (icons) to your Facebook and LinkedIn profile on your website to further grow the follower base

- Try to post on issues which are currently trending (and related to the project)
- Consider to experiment with paid advertisements (or even influencer marketing)

Furthermore, CINEA has published guidelines for social media (as of 12. November 2021), which need to be considered. This can be assessed under following link: https://cinea.ec.europa.eu/publications/social-media-guide-cef-beneficiaries_en

### 8.2.8. Billboards/visual aids

**(Permanent) billboards/signages and similar visual aids are a way to inform the broad public about the aim, relevant details and benefits of a works-project.** These should be set-up at the relevant area of the works-project before the start of construction works and can be later on replaced by a permanent plaque.

**Other visual aids** (brochures, flyers, billboards, goodies,..) **can be another example how to inform about a project.** These should be target to the addressed stakeholder group.

### 8.2.9. Reporting tools

**This section describes a yet hypothetical communication channel. The idea is that (key) users can electronically report encountered problems during a voyage to the respective waterway administration.**

During the interviews, it was gathered from the shipping industry, that the majority would benefit from a tool, via which stakeholders could report various issues, such as encountered problems in the fairway.

This could enable the faster communication and resulting reaction to problems in any river section. Furthermore, gathered statistics of the reported issues could provide very useful in the concept and design phase of future projects.

Implementation-wise, this tool could be provided as Web- or App- application to users. When using the tool, users could then indicate the respective country/river-km and report a problem directly to the waterway authority. A pre-requisite for the regular usage of the tool is that reported problems are tackled immediately by the responsible administration. In addition, the reporting party should receive a notification via e-mail, once the reported problem is solved. This could be supported in the form of a chat box implemented directly within the reporting tool to enable the direct communication between key user and waterway administration, e.g.: if further clarification is required.

## 8.3. Stakeholder management tools

This chapter aims to summarise digital solutions in order to support communication managers when organising the communication activities internally.

### 8.3.1. Collaboration platforms/internal organisation of communication

Many project management tasks evolve around co-ordinational tasks. Centralised communication management tools support project managers in planning and monitoring all (communication) activities. This is especially helpful in teams involving external partners from different organisations, who might be geographically wide dispersed. Resulting benefits of collaboration platforms are effective collaboration, facilitated planning and increased transparency due to following functions:

- Facilitated and centralised tracking of the communication tasks (past, current and future)
- Overview on the status of tasks and to do's (while decreasing the amount of e-mails sent)
- Facilitated prioritisation or (or shifting) of tasks in the timeline
- Clear assignment of tasks to roles/persons
- Increased productivity

When deciding on technical solutions for a collaboration platform, following criteria can be considered:

- ✓ **Which minimum requirements are recommended to be fulfilled**, e.g.:
    - Task management (display of list of tasks, assignment of roles, status overview)
    - Management of milestones (e.g.: possibility to create Gantt Chart)
    - Collaboration tools (chat box, comment functions, video conference tools)
    - Creative sessions (Whiteboards, Idea mapping tools)
    - Upload, editing and approval of documents
    - Integration with other tools (e.g.: Google/Microsoft Apps)
- ✓ **How can external parties use the collaboration platform from a technical perspective?** The focus here should be set on the easy involvement of project partners, who might have different software solutions pre-installed.
- ✓ **How easy is it to implement the collaboration platform**? e.g: import of data
- ✓ **Does the platform provide technical support/platform hosting?**
- ✓ **How self-explanatory is the collaboration platform**? Minimise time for initial training
- ✓ **How much money can be spent?**

### 8.3.2. Databases

In this section, possibilities for the simple and fast set-up of functional and reasonably priced databases will be presented.

#### MS Excel-like solutions

It is possible to create a very basic database by exploiting MS Excel (or MS Access), which is usually pre-installed on most computers. This could be used with little effort and high accessibility as well by other parties in the same network.

**Pro:**

- little effort and high accessibility
- usually pre-installed, no extra money has to be spent

**Contra:**

- limitation of additional functions (e.g.: newsletter dissemination)
- the more entries, the more difficult to understand, if not organised/filtered adequately
- locally stored – joint collaboration possibilities are thus limited

#### CRM (Customer relationship management) Systems

CRM Systems are intentionally meant for managing interactions and relationships with customers or potential customers. The system can however be used to store contact information, record interactions (e.g. surveying, call) or even send out direct messages to the customer (e.g. Newsletter).

Open source systems (distributed with all rights to be used by public) are available, and the majority can also be extended for a small surcharge (some tools might be locked or not included in the open source system). It is however important to check the data protection/terms of usage of data of the respective software provider.

**Pro:**

- enables automation for repetitive tasks
- allows for easier collaboration
- bigger data can be processed than with MS Excel for example

**Contra:**

- needs to be set up properly
- can be costly (open source systems are available, see above)

### Data protection notice

Contact details like e-mail addresses or phone numbers of persons count as personal information and have to be treated confidentially. The listed people and organisation have to be informed and agreed to the terms of use.

Consent must be given by a clear affirmative act indicating that the data subject consents to the processing of his or her personal data. This consent may be given in writing, electronically, orally or by any other clear conduct (e.g. posing for a photograph).

To be valid, a consent form must cover the following content:

1. Listing of data types
2. Description of purpose
3. Information on withdrawal at any time and rights that can be asserted (e.g. right to information)

However, using **legitimate interest** as a lawful reason for processing data is legal if it touches the interests of a pre-defined stakeholder group/individual. **Please contact your privacy officer/data protection officer for current regulation in your country/organisation**.

## Annex 1: Checklist for organising an event

The checklist shall guide communication practitioners through the organisation and implementation of an event (in-person, digital or hybrid). Please take into consideration the colour code to guide you through the various aspects of each event format, if given.

# Checklist

# Preparation of events

**takes different aspects into consideration when organising an on-site, digital or hybrid event.*

| |
|---|
| Event |
| Expected date |
| Expected time |
| Internal lead |
| Cost unit/ paid by |

**Colour Code** (applicable for all organisational phases/ sections of the checklist: preparation, implementation & the follow-up)

| | |
|---|---|
| Provided information is relevant for all event formats | |
| Provided information is relevant for on-site events | |
| Provided information is relevant for digital events | |
| Provided information is relevant for hybrid events (when organising a hybrid event, please consider the complete checklist) | |

| Topic | Check | Person(s) in charge | Completion until | ✓ |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Preparation** | | | | |
| **Target definition*** | Determine the objectives of the event | | | |
| | Involve project partners in the definition of objectives | | | |
| | Goal setting of the session and the individual sessions: | | | |
| | • What message should be conveyed to whom and in which format? | | | |
| | • Which decisions need to be made? | | | |
| | • Are there overlaps with other sessions? | | | |

| Topic | Check | Person(s) in charge | Completion until | ✓ |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | • What is the role of the digital audience (e.g. part of discussion, only listeners, presenters) and how will they be involved? | | | |
| | • What is the role of the on-site audience (e.g. part of discussion, only listeners, networking, presenters) and how will they be involved? | | | |
| | Draw up a meeting plan: Time, duration, objective, method, format, material/documents to be prepared per session, allocation of roles. | | | |
| | Set up draft Agenda | | | |
| | → Include different requirements of participant groups (e.g. shorter breaks and spare time at the end for networking of the on-site audience, plan some spare time in case of technical problems) | | | |
| **Date determination** | Check the event calendar of the project partners and most important participants. | | | |
| | Clarification of basic scheduling options (doodle?) | | | |
| | Is a back-to-back organisation with another meeting useful/desirable/advantageous? | | | |
| | Set date in consultation with client/project partners | | | |
| | Different time zones have to be kept in mind when organising an international event | | | |
| **Task sharing** | Who is primarily responsible for organising the meeting? | | | |
| | Who invites? | | | |
| | Who moderates? | | | |
| | Who presents? | | | |
| | Who is responsible for the minutes? | | | |
| | Who coordinates the speakers? | | | |
| | Who is the contact person for third-party service providers/local hosts? | | | |
| | Who is responsible for compliance with Corona regulations? | | | |
| | Who will organise the technical equipment and a technician? | | | |
| | Who will manage the technical support (for on site, digital or hybrid event)? | | | |
| | Who will take the (group) picture(s)? | | | |
| | Who will moderate the digital chatroom? | | | |
| **Date announcement** | When should the first announcement be sent out? | | | |
| | Is the invitation list available? | | | |
| | Send out appointment notice together with draft agenda by e-mail<br>→ Prepare well in advance. The preparation time of | | | |

| Topic | Check | Person(s) in charge | Completion until | ✓ |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | the meeting depends on the type of meeting (in-person event with more than 100 participants – preparation starts 12 months in advance (usually with the booking of room/setting of the date); smaller/digital events have shorter preparation time) | | | |
| **Data protection** | Clarify the data protection issues regarding event (publishing of pictures, recordings, etc) | | | |
| | Inform the participants, that pictures, recordings, etc. at the event will be taken | | | |
| **Choose the application** | Clarify which application is most fitting for the event. | | | |
| | Check the settings of the application. (e.g. in—meeting translation, smaller work-rooms, etc) | | | |
| **Venue/Catering** | Clarify the given options | | | |
| | Specify scope of services (coffee, snacks, lunch, seating arrangements, technical equipment (projector, microphones), room requirements, registration desk, etc.) | | | |
| | Provide for an informal dinner? | | | |
| | Commission venue/caterer | | | |
| | Will WLAN be provided? | | | |
| | Who will be responsible for organising and set up of the necessary equipment (camera, projector, etc) | | | |
| | Back-up set in case of technical problems? | | | |
| **Security** | Are security measures to be provided (VIPs, etc.)? | | | |
| | Is liability insurance required for the venue? | | | |
| | Have the fire safety regulations been clarified? | | | |
| | Emergency number known? | | | |
| | First aid available? | | | |
| | Is a special safety briefing for participants required (e.g. on the ship, Corona)? | | | |
| | Check current Corona safety regulation and who is responsible for checking the participants. | | | |
| **Communication** | Prepare e-news, social media, press release? | | | |
| | Hire photographer? | | | |
| | Schedule group photo (in-person and/or digital)? | | | |
| | Host gift for local host? | | | |
| **Registration** | Set up online registration? | | | |
| | → with options to choose between on-site and virtual participation | | | |
| | Set deadline for registration | | | |
| | Target required participants | | | |

| Topic | Check | Person(s) in charge | Completion until | ✓ |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Create list of participants – regard for on-site (signature needed?) and/or digital participants | | | |
| | Prepare badges? | | | |
| | Prepare table signs (double-sided)? | | | |
| | Communicate final number of participants to venue/caterer | | | |
| | Clarify/finalise any reimbursement of travel expenses for speakers | | | |
| | Send invitation reminder | | | |
| **Final Invitation** | Send final invitation and agenda of the meeting (incl. preparatory documents) | | | |
| | Prepare different draft invitations for on-site and virtual audience, as they need different information (e.g. access link, information on system used (GoToWebinar, MS Teams, etc) or travel information, information on location) | | | |
| | Send reminder regarding registration deadline | | | |
| **Prepare moderation content** | Identify and notify/letter contributors (e.g. opening speakers, lecturers, experts, ...) in good time (communicate topics and duration, travel plan, etc.) | | | |
| | Request and review inputs (e.g. presentations, meeting concepts) in good time (approx. 1½ weeks) before the meeting. | | | |
| | Send any feedback on inputs to the presenters in good time (approx. one week) before the meeting (content alignment/shortening, etc.). | | | |
| | Schedule rehearsal of presentations if needed. | | | |
| **Prepare/Check technical equipment** | What sort of cables could be helpful as a backup? (HDMI, VGA, LAN, phone, 3,5mm cinch, (AUX), display port adapter, laptop charger etc) | | | |
| | What wireless equipment could be helpful? (headset, mouse, etc) | | | |
| | Check Camera equipment/ professional camera crew? | | | |
| | Prepare projector or screen, and at least two laptops with equipment | | | |
| | Prepare microphones (if not available at venue) | | | |
| | Check, if Presentations are locally saved, use USB as backup | | | |
| | How many laptops are needed (for presentation, minutes)? | | | |
| **Documents** | Do heavy/bulky documents need to be transported to the venue? | | | |
| | Prepare session folders? | | | |
| | Have presentations printed out? | | | |
| | Have a printed agenda? | | | |

| Topic | Check | Person(s) in charge | Completion until | ✓ |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Take printed list of participants? | | | |
| | Set up roll ups? | | | |
| | Put up brochures? | | | |
| | Who will take the respective documents with them? | | | |
| **Digital documents** | Prepare necessary documents and save them locally. | | | |
| | Have List of Participants, agenda, presentations and other important meeting related documents at hand. | | | |
| **Implementation** | | | | |
| **Venue Check** | Handling | | | |
| | Arrive at the meeting location well in advance | | | |
| | Set up and test the technical equipment on site (projector, laptop, microphones) | | | |
| | Check the internet connection/access of the meeting link with preferably another laptop/check the projector or screen | | | |
| | Acceptance of the agreed seating arrangement | | | |
| | Check arrangement of lectern/projection area/audience | | | |
| | Registration desk available? | | | |
| | Who is in charge of the arriving guests? Check the participants according to the current Corona Regulations. | | | |
| | Banner / roll-up set up? | | | |
| | Table signs set up? | | | |
| | Explain the rules for the virtual participants (black screen, chat box, hand raising, etc) | | | |
| | Use the recording function for further documentation? | | | |
| | Signposts set up for guests? | | | |
| | Tidying up the meeting room? | | | |
| **Application check** | Start meeting **approx. 1 hour before** official time | | | |
| | Set up and test the technical equipment of the moderator and the speakers (microphones, screen sharing, etc) | | | |
| **Follow- up** | | | | |
| | Who will be in charge to gather and manage the feedback? | | | |
| | Summary of the topics, where further actions need to be taken | | | |
| | Reflection/evaluation of the session by the internal project team | | | |
| | Reflection/evaluation of the session by participants required? | | | |

| Topic | Check | Person(s) in charge | Completion until | ✓ |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Were the objectives of the meeting achieved? | | | |
| | Evaluation of preparation works & turn-out (clear distribution of roles, were deadlines met, participation rate, other KPIs)? | | | |
| | How was the practical organisation of the meeting (logistics, venue, catering, technical support, quality of audio/video etc.)? | | | |
| | Did the venue meet the expectations? | | | |
| | Did the application meet the expectations? (GoToWebinar, MS Teams, etc) | | | |
| | Did the catering meet the expectations? | | | |
| | Record lessons learned in writing | | | |
| | Write minutes of the meeting, if required | | | |
| | Send draft minutes+presentations+list of participants to participants **no later than 2 weeks after the meeting**, if required | | | |
| | Set deadline for feedback on minutes, if required | | | |
| | Have e-news published within **2 days** | | | |

*Table 9: Checklist for organising an event (in-person, hybrid or digital)*

# Annex 2: Monitoring & evaluation of communication activities

The monitoring and evaluation of communication activities is an integral part of communication strategy. This process enables to identify the effectiveness of activities to the pre-defined objectives, based on performance indicators and targets. Table 10 presents example performance indicators and their means of verification, which should be assessed by the Communication practitioner of an Action. The recommendation is to conduct the assessment after each communication activity.

| **Evaluation of communication & dissemination activities** | |
|---|---|
| **Organisation of bilateral/multi-lateral meetings** | **Meeting** *(insert date, venue, purpose of event)*<br>• Number of participants per stakeholder group<br>e.g.: public sector (EU, national, regional and local administrative etc.) or private sector actors (e.g.: shipping industry)<br>• Evaluation of KPIs of meeting questionnaire (if applicable): (e.g.: how interesting was the meeting on a scale from 1-5?) |
| **Organisation of events** | **Events** *(insert name, date, venue, purpose of event)*<br>• Number of participants per stakeholder group<br>e.g.: public sector (EU, national, regional and local administrative etc.) or private sector actors (e.g.: shipping industry)<br>• Evaluation of KPIs of event questionnaire (if applicable):<br>e.g.: how interesting was the event on a scale from 1-5;<br>how would you evaluate the event/venue/topics/speakers/moderator (…) on a scale from 1-5;.. |
| **Distribution of newsletter** | **Newsletter**: *(insert dissemination date, purpose/affected stakeholder groups)*<br>• Delivery rate (number of stakeholders reached, extract bounce rate)<br>e.g.: Number of participating public/private sector actors reached<br>• Open rate (in %, if applicable): Evaluation of percentage who opened the Newsletter<br>• Click rate (in %, if applicable): Evaluation of percentage who clicked onto link in Newsletter (this rate shows interest in presented newsletter-topics) |
| **Promotion on project website** | **Project website:** *(insert channel of promotion, e.g.: website link disseminated via social media, newsletter etc.)*<br>• Tracking of KPIs (e.g.: via Google Analytics)<br>  • Number of sessions/page views<br>  • Number of new/returning visitors<br>  • Bounce rate (in %): evaluation of visitors, who only view one page/ quickly leave the website<br>  • Average duration of website visit |
| **Publication of press release** | **Press Release** *(insert link to publication/newspaper/magazine; article name; date)*<br>• Number and type of target audience reached |
| **Distribution of surveys** | **Surveys**<br>• Delivery rate (number of stakeholders reached, extract bounce rate)<br>• Feedback rate (in %): Evaluation of percentage who partially/fully completed the survey |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Postings on social media** | **Social media** *(insert link/information on posting: date, purpose/target audience, channel)*<br>• Number of post views<br>• Number of comments<br>• Number of shares |
| **Other:** | **Communication, dissemination, promotion activities** not listed above<br>(provide details about these activities) |

*Table 10: Monitoring and evaluation aid for communication activities*

If it makes sense, please include gender-related monitoring aspects (e.g. number of males/females reached by an activity)

## Annex 3: Feedback Management Organisation

When handling stakeholders' cooperation, feedback is a vital part for the success of an Action. It can effectively improve the outcome of an Action by including important know-how, or by alleviating concerns of stakeholders and risks. Having a complex project with many project partners, it can be important to centrally manage the gathered feedback. This will help:

- to guarantee that every feedback is being processed; thus, to make sure that every stakeholder is being heard
- to manage the necessary action for each feedback includingly responsibilities and timeline
- to monitor the status of actions
- to record all generated feedback,
  - which will help to improve future actions and
  - which can be a source for innovation (new project ideas due to registered needs of stakeholders)

Following table can help practitioners to organise the feedback management of an Action:

| **Issue** *Describe the reported issue* | **Topic** *Categorize the topic of reported feedback for easy filtering; e.g.: digitalisation, RIS, infrastructure,* | **Provided by** *First/last name* | **Provided by** *Organisation, company* | **Date** *Feedback received* | **Proposed Reaction/ Action by project team** | **Responsible person** | **Due date** | **Status of task** *(completed, in Action, not started, delayed)* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | |

*Table 11: Central Management of Feedback*