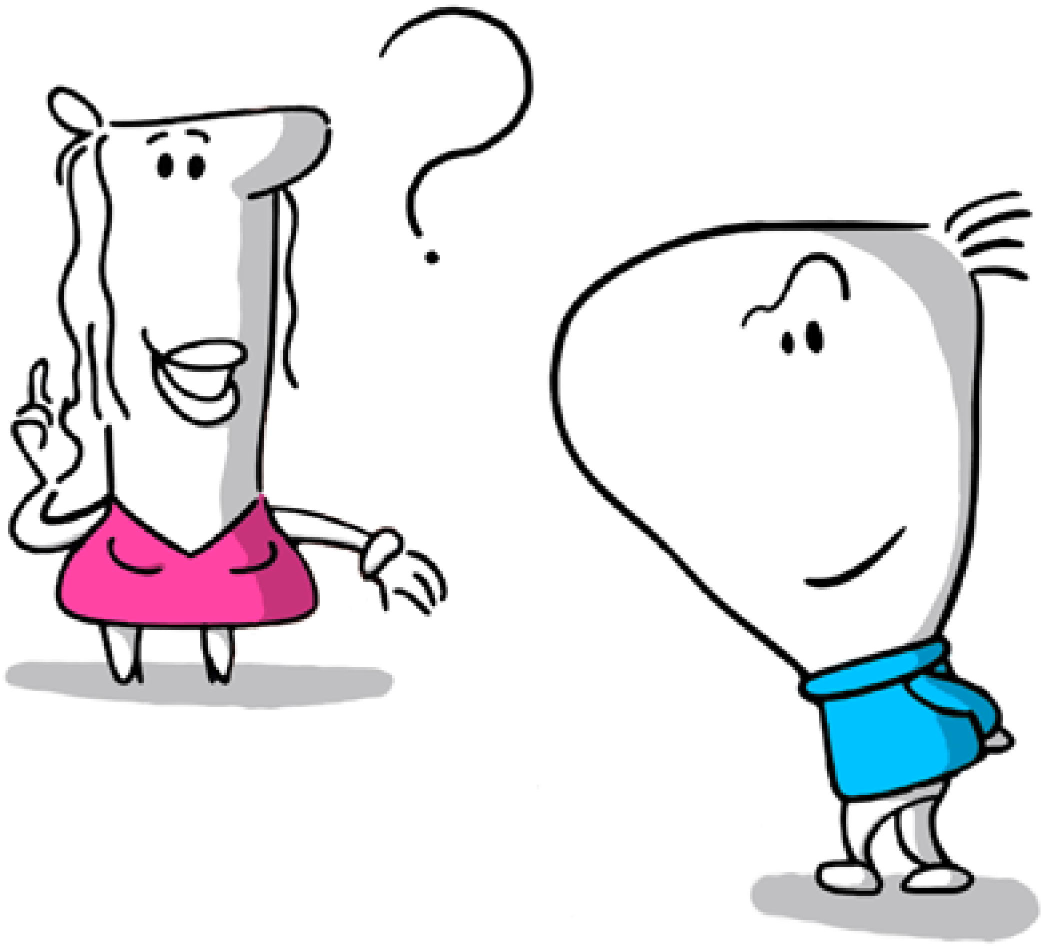
Visibility and Communications for EU-funded Projects

Frequently Asked Questions



EU Neighbourhood Info Centre
An ENPI project

2013 edition

www.enpi-info.eu

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Introduction

Visibility and communication are two requirements for all EU-funded projects and the EU is becoming more and more strict in making sure projects abide by its rules.

EU-funded projects often have questions relating to their visibility and communications. Therefore the EU Neighbourhood Info Centre collected these Frequently Asked Questions from the EuropeAid website and also from questions coming up at the communications workshop it holds in partner countries, together with the EU Delegations.

What follows are questions and simple answers, along with guidance on where to find out more.

Communication and Visibility Manual for EU external actions
referred to as EU Visibility Manual from here on http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/work/visibility/

3 questions: what is the difference…

... between visibility and communications?

When we say visibility we are referring to those elements one can pick up at a glance and understand that your project or activity is funded or otherwise supported by the EU. They are elements like the EU flag or the reference to the fact that it is funded by the EU.

By communications we mean the concerted effort to reach your target audience, sending them a specific message through using the best available and most effective tools.

Adding the EU logo on materials or having the EU flag at an event is a visibility obligation but should not be considered as a communication action.

Example: A communications activity may be a press conference – visibility would be having the EU flag behind you at the press conference.

... between communication and propaganda?

Propaganda is when you disseminate information, especially of a biased or misleading nature, to promote or publicize a particular political cause or point of view. In communication you always give correct, factual information that you can substantiate with facts.

As EU-funded projects you are not asked to do propaganda but to be transparent and promote the cause you are working for, acknowledging the support you are receiving.

... between my project objective and my communication objective?

Your project objective is what you are trying to achieve through your activities - your end goal. Your communication objective refers to the process through which you will transmit specific messages to your target audience mobilising them in order to achieve your end goal.

Example: Your project objective is to increase literacy in three specific rural areas – Your communications objective is to change the perception of parents in these three areas so they understand the importance of education, convincing them to send their children to school.

Where can I find the EU flag?

The flag is available in the EU Visibility Manual http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/work/visibility/) and also on the EuropeAid website http://europa.eu/about-eu/basic-information/symbols/flag/index_en.htm

Be sure to include the description "This project/programme is funded by the European Union" where appropriate (see pg. 31 in EU Visibility Manual).

The European flag consists of 12 golden stars in a circle on a blue background. It has a specific colour code. None of its elements can be altered in any way. If the flag is placed on a coloured background it should be surrounded by a white frame.

My project is co-funded by the EU and other international organisations. Which logos should I use and in what order?

You can use all the logos and decide on the order based on the amount given by each organisation. The EU has signed a communication and visibility agreement with the UN and the World Bank, based on which the graphic identity of the EU must enjoy an equally prominent place and size as that of the contractor or implementing partner. What you do in case of cooperation with these international organisations is explained in detail in the EU Visibility Manual.

http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/work/visibility/

We have many implementing partners: can we display all the logos along with the EU flag?

The EU flag must be prominently displayed alongside the logos of other implementing partners, in a way that it doesn't compromise the visibility of the EU.

A clarification: An 'implementing partner' is a contractual party and only signatories to the contract are entitled to have their logos displayed as prominently as the EU flag, regardless of how many other organisations are involved in the project.

How should I put the EU flag?

The basic rule is that it should be in a prominent position and visible. People should be able to see it easily.

Templates of the flag, how to use it on all items and the colour can be found in the EU Visibility Manual (see pg. 31) and the links below: http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/work/visibility/index_en.htm

European Union

European Union

There is a European Commission (EC) logo, should I use it?

The EC logo (see below) is only used by EU officials. Projects should not be using it. The only case in which you would use it is if you are a contractor producing on behalf of the Commission, thus your product becomes an official EC product. In such a case adhere to the graphic chart for this logo. The same rule applies to other EU institutions or funding instruments.

Should I refer to EC or EU, which is more correct?

You should always refer to the EU and not the EC. The EU represents all the European institutions. The EC refers only to the European Commission. Delegations in third countries are called EU Delegations.

Example: If you use the EU flag, underneath you would write "this project is funded by the EU".

What is visual identity? Should I create a logo for my project?

A project does not need to have a logo. If however you decide to have one definitely do not incorporate the EU flag either in full or elements of it as that is forbidden. Share the logo with your task manager for approval at the design stage. What you can do instead of a logo, which is also encouraged by the EU, is to create a graphic, visual identity or theme across your communication output. Use the same fonts and the same size in a press release, choose colours that give the sense of what you are doing or where you are working and use them on everything, write your name in the same graphic characters etc.

Example: The EU Neighbourhood Info Centre always uses its name in the same way, that is with a bridge with the people on it. For the Southern Neighbourhood a brownish yellow colour is used and for the Eastern Neighbourhood a green (see www.enpi-info.eu)

Do I have to say that the EU funds my project? Where do I put it?

Yes, it is a contractual obligation to say "this project is funded by the EU". It is also a basic rule of transparency - you say who funds you and are open about it. This phrase usually goes under the EU flag. If it's a publication and you'd like to say a few words more, for example that you are part of a bigger programme, you could also put it elsewhere (e.g. back cover or inside cover).

Should I have EU visibility elements in our photos?

This is not an obligation, however, it is a good visibility practice. EU presence does not always have to be in the forefront, even a person wearing a hat that has the EU flag on it will do. You can find a choice of free to use EU visibility photos on www.enpi-info.eu/list_galleries_main.php

What you do need to do is respect copyright, referring to the fact that the photo belongs to the EU (©EU).

What is the disclaimer and how do I use it?

The disclaimer is a fixed text that should be used on everything a project produces, from a publication to a website and audio-visual material. This text makes it clear that the EU does not have any responsibility for what a project is producing. The wording is the same for all, but you need to adapt for each product (this publication, this website, this video).

The wording is:

"This *publication* (*website, video*) has been produced with the assistance of the European Union. The contents of this publication are the sole responsibility of <name of the author/contractor/implementing partner/international organisation> and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Union."

Where do I put the disclaimer?

Print publication – it does not have to be on the front page. However, it should be displayed prominently on the inside cover or back cover as appropriate, according to the layout.

Website - the text can be displayed on one page (for example with the title 'Legal' or "Disclaimer"), with the link to that page visible throughout the site. Or sometimes you find it at the bottom of the homepage, in a place that doesn't change.

Audiovisual material – have the text either at the beginning or at the end of the transmission.

Are there any exceptions to the visibility rules?

In general all projects should abide by them, but there will always be situations when it is inappropriate to display EU symbols. Some of them are:

- When political or security situation obliges the EU to keep a low profile attitude.
- When the mention of the EU could be seen as a propaganda and thus damage the visibility objective (i.e. news programme).
- When there is a risk that the visibility could damage the image.

If you have any concerns or doubts discuss them with the EU Delegation.

Where can I find templates to guide me?

The Communication and Visibility manual for European Union external actions contains many templates that you can use, from press releases and newsletters, to commemorative flags and logos on cars. However, these are not strict rules, you are given the elements you need to include and some guidelines.

Example: The press release template is there to show you the main elements, if you prefer use it as it is, otherwise, create your own design which respects EU visibility requirements.

What is expected from budget support projects?

With budget support the situation is a bit different as the government implementing the project also has its visibility rules. However, it is expected that a few basic elements are respected by the partner government, as an obligation, but also as a matter of good cooperation.

In particular: the EU flag and a reference to funding.

When implementing a budget support programme it is important to ensure that sufficient visibility is given to the approach and work of the EU. This requires close cooperation with the recipient government and a joint communication strategy. It is essentially about communicating change.

Is there a text describing the EU that I can use?

Yes, the EU Manual contains a whole section on "Definitions and General statements" (Annex 4 – pg. 41). This section includes a definition on the EU and institutions like the European Parliament, the European Commission, the Council etc.

How to tackle Communications – setting it up

Is communications and a strategy obligatory?

Yes, it is a contractual obligation and the EU is becoming more and more strict in this requirement.

Financing Agreements (2007):

Annex I – General Conditions

18.1 Every project/programme financed by the Community shall be the subject of appropriate communication and information operations. These operations shall be defined under the responsibility of the Beneficiary with the approval of the Commission

18.2 These communication and information operations must follow the rules laid down and published by the Commission for the visibility of external operations in force at the time of the operations

Does a communication plan template exist?

The EuropeAid visibility guidelines include a template (pg. 7) that you can use. The EU Neighbourhood Info Centre has adapted this template for use at its communications workshops. A filled in example is available at the end of this handbook.

When should I prepare our project's communication strategy?

Communication and visibility activities should be foreseen at submission stage and therefore a communication strategy should already be in place. At this stage, though, it does not have to be exhaustive. For example, detailed indicators can be mentioned at a later stage, when the final communication plan is submitted to the EU Headquarters or Delegation.

At the inception phase and in your inception report, a full communications plan should be included.

The budget for communication must be set down in the Financing Agreement/ contract. It is equally important to say who will be carrying out the communication activities.

Who should I discuss my communication plan with?

Your task manager, either at the EU Delegation or at EU Headquarters in Brussels, is responsible for your communication plan. There are however other people that your task manager can turn to for guidance, these are the Communication / Press officers at the Delegation and External Relation Programme Managers at EuropeAid.

Are we allowed to change the communication plan once it's approved?

A communication plan is not made out of stone. It is there to act as a road map and facilitate the organisation of your communication activities. It is important to evaluate your results (thus you need indicators) and if you establish that some of your communication activities are not working, then adapt them. Of course, all this should be done in close coordination with your task manager.

Is there a minimum amount a project should allocate to communications?

There is a lowest required amount, of 1,000 EUR, that was agreed many years ago and is now being reviewed. So, one can say there is no recommended percentage of the budget, but the cost should be well balanced, with at least enough to have an impact according to the objectives of the communication plan.

The amount remains very much dependent on the project, its scope of work and its overall budget.

Should we have a dedicated communications officer?

That is the ideal situation. However, not all projects can afford to have a person dedicated to communications. If this is the case, in order to facilitate your communications effort it is more effective to appoint someone to be in charge and engaged in the whole communications process. Even if you decide to outsource an activity, for example your project brochure, there should be someone within your project to guide and coordinate the whole effort.

Communications requires team work therefore everyone should contribute to this effort, focusing on results.

Should we have a Website, Facebook and other Social media or a Newsletter?

• Websites are a very effective communications tool, but they are costly and high maintenance. Think of who it would be for and ask yourself questions: is it a tool to help you reach your target audience, what is it that you would have on a website, do you have photos to use etc. You need to have enough news so it's not stagnant and a person who would be responsible in order to keep up a readership. If you would like a website, a budget should be foreseen that will consider all maintenance expenses and not only creating it. The tendency now is for projects to create Facebook pages.

• Social media, and especially Facebook and Twitter, are two tools that are quite popular among EU officials, the Delegations and projects. They can also be useful to you. Before you decide you should know what each social media is for and its particularities. Also consider that someone will have to maintain them and they are rather demanding and immediate tools, which means you can never delay sharing something nor can you remain idle for days.

• In the age of communications immediacy, a newsletter may appear to be a bit old fashioned unless it is high end, with a good layout, appealing graphic, well written short texts and effective photos! A template for a newsletter exists in the EU Manual that includes the main elements you should adopt. There are issues to consider before deciding on a newsletter, like: who will put it together, print or online, how often and do you have enough news or will you be using material like press releases you have already distributed.

Are we allowed to get professional support and outsource photos and writing?

If by outsourcing you create more high standard and appealing communications material, saving your team time, then you should do so. Have in mind though that you will still need to decide the criteria on which you will choose who you outsource to and also brief these professionals on what you want.

What is the use of a project case study and is it obligatory?

Case studies or stories from the field as they are also known have been developed by EuropeAid in order to show the activities funded by the EU and taking place on the ground, to the benefit of the citizens. They are not obligatory but are a good communication tool as they can be used by EuropeAid, uploaded on the Delegation website, and also used by you in whole or parts of it.

There are templates for these case studies, with clear instructions and even a character count. The templates can be found at the end of this publication.

Examples of case studies are available on the EuropeAid website:

http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/multimedia/case-studies/index_en.htm

Are there any rules concerning languages?

The basic rule is that you should use the language understood by your target audiences. If your target audience also includes a large number of people who may speak a language other to that of the country, for example if you would be giving it away at events where foreign journalists and other foreigners may be present, or if the Delegation could have it on display and give away, then have it in another language.

If you do have more than one language a layout issue arises, as it should be done in such a way that your readers immediately see the language that interests them.

Does the EU have the copyright to the material we produce?

Yes, the copyright of everything produced by an EU-funded project belongs to the EU. It is therefore assumed that the EU may freely use the product or part of it without restriction or payment. In the case of photos the copyright should be attributed.

Photo by: EPA © EU/Neighbourhood Info Centre

Photo by: EPA © EU/Neighbourhood Info Centre

For a photo disclaimer and other tips have a look at the EU Neighbourhood Info Centre's "A Photographer's Handbook".

Does the EU need to check our press release or our publication?

Yes, material from projects funded by the EU need to go through a validation process, be it a press release, a publication or even a video. What you produce needs to be signed off by the person in charge of your project – who will basically check that EU visibility is respected, there is nothing offensive and may make suggestions for improvement.

As this may take some time, make sure to have everything ready well in advance.

When we are organising an event, should we contact the Delegation about it?

It is to your benefit to involve the EU Delegation as it can raise the profile of your event, it increases the possibility of interest from the media and they may also be able to provide you with some give-aways. In such a case you must contact the Delegation with your request well in advance as the officials, and especially the head of Delegation, have a busy schedule.

Visibility: Don't forget, the EU flag should appear on the invitation and be displayed during the press conference.

Does the EU have rules regarding what kind of events we organise, or where, or even what we give out, etc.?

There are no rules, apart from those related to visibility, like displaying the EU flag. So as your event is competing with many others, try to think out of the box and choose a venue that will attract interest and send out its own message. Or choose give-aways that make an impression or that are useful.

For example you don't always have to hold a press conference at a hotel, you may choose an impressive cultural site.

Communication and Visibility Manual for EU external actions

It sets out requirements and guidelines for briefings, written material, press conferences, presentations, invitations, signs, commemorative plaques and all other tools used to highlight EU participation. In addition, it offers tools designed to enable the development of a dynamic communication strategy that will highlight the achievements of EU support.

Useful links

EuropeAid online Communications FAQ
http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/work/visibility/faq-where-to-find_en.htm

Capacity4Dev
http://capacity4dev.ec.europa.eu

EU Neighbourhood Info Centre
www.enpi-info.eu

EU Neighbourhood Info Centre LinkedIn communications groups
www.linkedin.com/groups?gid=4285753&trk=myg_ugrp_ovr

DG Comm – Visual identity of the EU
http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/communication/services/visual_identity/index_en.htm

A closer look at a communication plan

Communication Plan Template

The original of this plan has been put together by EuropeAid and is available in the EU Visibility Guidelines for external relations. It has been slightly adapted for the EU Neighbourhood Info Centre communications workshop.

TEMPLATE

Project title

Project objective

Project implementing partners

Project timeframe

General communication objectives

(eg. Create advocates, change perceptions, attract donors, build awareness, show transparency)

Target audiences break down as much as possible (eg. Women between 35-50 in cities XYZ).

Target A	Target B	Target C	...

Specific communication objective for each target audience

Target A	Target B	Target C	...

Messages for each target audience

Target A	Target B	Target C	...

Communication tools for each target audience (eg. Press conferences, events, publications, website, social media, etc). One tool can apply to more than 1 target audience.

Calendar of activities Create a calendar of activities (If media are one of your target audiences, also create a media plan)

Indicators:

Quantitative (eg. Number of articles, people attending, publication disseminated, website visits, etc)

Qualitative (eg. Tone and position of articles, questionnaire given to people attending, most visited pages, etc)

Resources

Human Resources (both inhouse and outsourcing)

Financial resources

Communication Plan An example from Tunisia

What follows is an example of how to go about putting together a communications plan, with a short practical outline of what is required. It is based on just one target group, and was done during a communications workshop in Tunisia.

EXAMPLE

Project title Employment, training and higher education programme

(A four-year budget support programme involving four ministries in Tunisia).

Project objective

Improve access to and quality of education and training to ensure better alignment with labour market needs.

Project implementing partners

Project timeframe

General communication objectives Make known the improvements in education and training.

Make known the possible synergies between education, training and employment.

Target audiences (break down as much as possible, eg. Women between 35-50 in cities XYZ).

Target A Students.

Specific communication objective for each target audience

Target A Inform students of what reform will mean for them.

Messages for each target audience

Target A Your study choice is the key to your career; More languages for a better job.

Communication tools

Education reform in 10 key points (to help teachers explain).

Involvement of local businesses in the career days.

Facebook group for students.

Calendar of activities

Reform days where teachers explain changes to students; Career open days.

The open days will be used to promote reform to the media and to take photos and gather testimonials from companies and students that you can then use for publications etc.

Indicators:

Quantitative Number of days, students reached, Facebook likes.

Qualitative Interactive online questionnaire.

Resources

Human Resources (both inhouse and outsourcing)

Financial resources

A closer look at case studies

EuropeAid Case studies
To fill in a case study, access the online application.
You will be prompted for your ECAS login details.
The template will require you to fill in the following fields:

CASE STUDY STEP-BY-STEP

Project reference * This is the relevant CRIS number (or OLAS for ACP projects).

Country * This is the main country in which the project is implemented (multiple countries selection available for regional projects).

Title Give your case study a title which is brief and understandable by a non-expert, including the country (even if this title is not the same as the official project title). Keep it short, simple and devoid of technical and/or EU administrative jargon or acronyms (90 characters max).

Subtitle A brief elaboration on/clarification of the main title, if necessary (100 characters max).

Abstract * A short summary of the project; this will be used for publication on the web to give people a taster for the project (250 characters max).

Quote Include a quote from a beneficiary or a person responsible for the project; attach a photograph of that person or one related to the project. Photos should be of the highest resolution possible with a minimum requirement of 800x600 pixels. NB: a caption is mandatory (it is not possible to save the picture without one).

Context What is the background against which the project has been developed; what is the core problem this project sets out to address and why. Keep your text short, simple and devoid of technical and/or EU administrative jargon.

Objectives What is the main goal of this EC supported project and what are its key objectives (max 5 bullet points).

Impact What has been achieved; what are the key tangible, measurable achievements of the project so far (max 5 bullet points).

Testimonial To give the case study a real-life impression and make it more interesting, try and find a person/group of people whose life has been affected by the project. Tell their story, the human voice/experience in a short paragraph and use photos to illustrate this. Always include a caption for the picture.

EXAMPLE

Facts & Figures The key facts & figures relevant to the project.

Figures

- Identify the amount of the EC's contribution to the project & include '% of total'
  > example: EC Contribution: € xxx xxx (% of total)
- use a space to separate thousands (no dots or commas)
- round figures up or down (this is not an accountant's report)
- use the '€' symbol – do not spell out 'euros' in full

Facts

- indicate the start and end dates (years) of the project > example: Duration: 4 years (2008 – 2011)
- these should not be the same as 'impacts' (or at least not in as much detail)
- identify, if possible, the areas/regions covered by the project
- identify, if possible, the beneficiaries of the project > example: 5 000 families from indigenous and rural areas

Final useful footnotes Include at the bottom of the page the statement 'For more information:' followed by an appropriate web address.

Final PDF Check before sending for validation. Check the PDF pages created, by clicking the top right button PDF preview (Page 1) and PDF preview (Page 2), to make sure all your text fits in the final document. If not you will need to delete some text and re-check.

Validation The electronic tool provides an automated validation circuit; it avoids emailing material back & forth.

1. Get your case study approved at the Delegation level before validating it in the system
2. Once the case study has been validated at Delegation level in the system, a notification for approval is automatically sent to your relevant Information Correspondent at Headquarters

   The Information Correspondent will then either:

   a. approve the case study, in which case a notification is sent to Devco's Communication unit for final approval and publication

   b. return it to the author with comments/suggestions for corrections
3. Once the case study has been validated by the Information Correspondent, a notification for approval is automatically sent to Devco's Communication Unit.

   The editorial contact for validation will:

   a. approve the case study, a notification is sent to author

   b. return it to the author with comments/suggestions for corrections
4. Once the case study has been approved by the Communication unit, you will notified and it will be published on: the Delegation's website, the External Devco website, Multimedia section, Case Studies and the intranet case study search engine.

General information • presenting information in 'bite-size' chunks facilitates the reader's navigation around the case study and allows him/her to focus in on what is of key interest to them.
• use EN spelling, not US
• abbreviations should only be used when the word has been spelt out in full at least once before.

** These fields do not appear on the final case study. They are included as reference and research criteria only.*

Other Info Centre Handbooks for EU-funded projects are available online:

[Writing to Grab Attention]

[A Journalists Handbook]

[A Photographers Handbook]

[EU Funding for the Neighbourhood and Russia]

[Neighbourhood Glossary South]

[Eastern Partnership and Russia Glossary]

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EU Neighbourhood Info Centre
An ENPI project

The EU Neighbourhood Info Centre is an EU-funded Regional Communication project highlighting the partnership between the EU and Neighbouring countries.