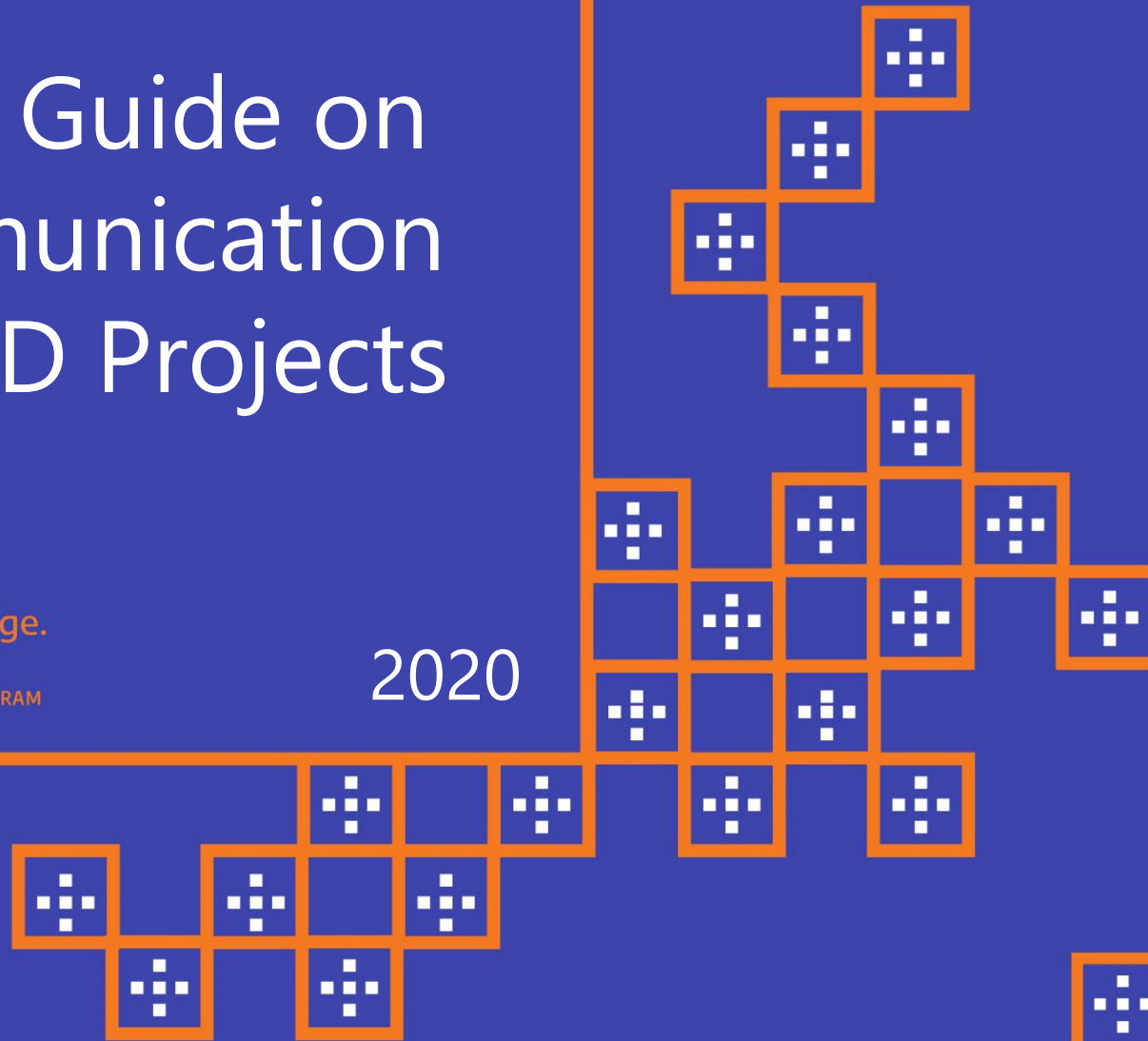


Quick Guide on Communication of R&D Projects

Create knowledge.
Foster change.
UT AUSTIN PORTUGAL PROGRAM

2020



Getting Started



Communicating effectively the value of your project to your key stakeholders calls for strategy, resources, careful planning and the right mix of skills . Once you master it, it will play a big part in the success of your project. This is why communication activities should never be left out of a project's work plan.

This quick guide offers a series of tips, recommendations and sources on research communication strategy and aim at helping you design and implement a communication plan in order to maximize the communication outreach of your R&D project over the next years.

The UT Austin Portugal Program is available to advise you on how to communicate successfully with your audience and offers you a range of communication channels to get your project's message across.



Why science communication matters

How this guide is organized



Think, Plan and Act Strategically

Turn communication into a continuous effort

Define your Target Audience Early On

Identify and learn about your audience right from the start



Build your Brand

Become a trusted and useful source of information

Be Relevant and Creative

Show impact on society by telling a story and
vamp up the visual communication



Use Different Channels

Tailor your message to different channels and
communication tools

Understand the Media Mindset

Identify relevant media contacts and understand
their language

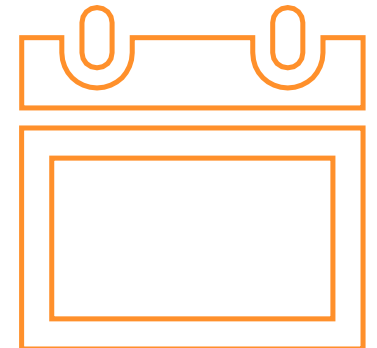


Make sure to cover these questions



- 1 Overview**
 - ✓ What is the project mainly about?
- 2 Goals & Objectives**
 - ✓ Why am I communicating my project?
 - ✓ What are the intermediate and final communication aims of it?
 - ✓ What behaviors, reactions or changes am I seeking to induce by communicating my project?
- 3 Target Audience**
 - ✓ Who do I want to draw attention from?
 - ✓ What do I want people to know about my work?
 - ✓ How do I imagine reaching people?
 - ✓ What messages and channels are most likely to get them on board?
- 4 Budget & Resources**
 - ✓ How much money and time can I spend on communication?
 - ✓ Where will I be allocating the money? Why?
 - ✓ Are other consortium partners contributing to communication activities?
- 5 Activities & Timeline**
 - ✓ How long do I have to tell people about my project?
 - ✓ What are the main communication activities and expected deliverables?
 - ✓ Where do they fit in the timeline?
- 6 Measurement & Evaluation**
 - ✓ What measures do I have in place to monitor outlined goals / objectives?
 - ✓ How often will I evaluate if I am delivering on the project's communication goals / objectives?
 - ✓ What will be the key "takeaways" from this communication journey?

Communication Plan



Think, plan and act strategically | Top tips



1

Draw up a communication plan that includes all the communications activities you intend to carry out, with deadlines, priorities, responsibilities and estimated costs.

4

Determine how you are thinking of engaging with your audiences, the project's internal and external stakeholders. From your team to the general public, everyone matters!

2

Begin your communication plan with a set of clear, specific, relevant and measurable objectives, and actions across the project's lifetime.

5

Be realistic about the resources you have and what you want to achieve, including the money you can spend on communicating your project.

3

Try to ensure that the objectives of your communication strategy don't simply reproduce the objectives of the project itself. They should be different!

6

Try to know your peer institutions and your partners as well as you know yourself. Follow up on what they're communicating and how, and evaluate if it's working out. You can get inspired!

[Webinar on Science Communication and Public Engagement Fundamentals](#)

[EU Guide to Science Communication - Webinars](#)



Think, plan and act strategically

Define your target audience early on



Which audiences do I need to address? Why should they care about my project? How will they help me reach my objectives?

Knowing your audience is of the utmost importance to communicate successfully your project. It is essential to develop an understanding of the relevant groups you'll be reaching, of their needs and interests in order to be able to craft your messages, the means and language accordingly.



The target groups of your project may include: the project team; the consortium partners; the funding entities; the research community; industry; businesses; groups of citizens; governmental authorities; the public sector; policymakers; media and society at large.

Don't stick to one size-fits-all messages!



Define your target audience early on | Top tips



Identify your target audiences by thinking about your project's objectives. Ask yourself who might or should be interested in the subjects you're working on.

1

Use storytelling as a technique to inspire your audiences and personalize your project's message.

4

After identifying your target groups, write down descriptive characteristics. Use these descriptions to create a "persona" for each group. Then craft your message accordingly.

2

Get to know what medium works best for each target group. The various audience groups might have different interests and consequently, different levels of engagement.

5

Prioritize your target audiences and user groups according to their importance and influence in relation to your objectives.

3

After learning who your audience is, seek their feedback. Establishing meaningful relations will help build trust and tailor your communication actions.

6



[Corporate Storytelling: What it is and why it's important?](#)

[Understand your Audience](#)

[Science comics: drawing people into research](#)



Build your brand



From the moment your project starts, you already have a brand identity.

Your brand is everything the world sees and hears about you – how your team communicates with third parties (emails, phone calls), how your website works, how your materials look like... **A brand is made of values, positioning and tone.**

When you plan and clarify your goals and communicate what you stand for, you will build trust and establish meaningful relations. **And only meaningful information (relevant to the audience) will be remembered.**



People will relate to:

- Visual information (infographics; charts and graphs; conceptual diagrams, etc.);
- Short, clear information (just cut to the chase!);
- Stories (compelling, relatable messages);
- Meaningful content (use simple, relevant language but do not oversimplify it)!
- Emotions (your brand always inspires emotions, even if you are not aware of them!)



Build your brand | Top tips



1

Define the principles you believe in and what motivates your work and project and stay true and faithful to your mission.

2

Understand the persona of your target audience – it is a fundamental step of your project's brand building process. You want the right people following your project!

3

Try turning the intangible essences of your project into a **vocabulary that is concrete and cohesive**. Use the Golden Circle Model to formulate the purpose behind your project's brand.

4

Establish what you want your project to be known for. Think about inspirational key words that will get your messages across.

5

Have consistency in your message, in your materials, and follow up on them to understand whether they are helping reinforce your brand.

6

Remember: a brand is not a logo. A logo is a graphic identity system that reinforces a brand. A brand is the essence of an organization, the promises you make to your audiences and the relationships you build with your stakeholders.



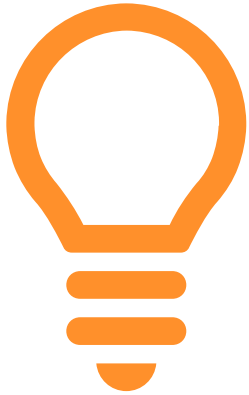
[11 Simple Steps for a Successful Brand Building Process](#)

[Golden Circle Model](#)



Build your brand

Be relevant and creative



Convey a single idea or benefit – think about addressing an issue, not just a project!

Be meaningful and memorable!

Frame your messages to ensure relevance to your audiences!

Your project has to have an impact on people's lives.

At first sight you might not be able to figure it out, so take the time to think about how your project will be meaningful to your audience.

Reflect on the innovation potential and capacity of your project and frame your message. Tell a story, bringing your project's goals and results to the attention of your audiences.

Visual identity is a crucial component of a strong brand. It's composed of the images and words that identify your project.

Identity starts with the name, the first thing people will learn about you. **Think about the visual elements that represent it. Be creative, simple, yet powerful.**

Bear in mind that visual identity must work across all communication vehicles and supports.



Don't be afraid to call on your creativity, but without being too personal or romantic.

Every time you develop something, share it with your friends and ask random opinions.



Be relevant and creative | Top tips



Identify the sectors / areas where your project opens up new opportunities and describe how its results will be used with real examples.

1

Do not change the graphic elements regularly. Even if your visual elements can be updated over time, your identity will remain, so think long-term.

4

Go beyond the obvious! Does your project stand in a broader socio-economic and policy context, thereby connecting with society at large? Then show it!

2

Try to develop a visual identity that translates well in both digital and print environments as well as in different sizes.

5

Be personal! Increasing the human element of your message makes audiences warm up to it and relate to the information you are presenting.

3

Everyone in your project should know how to use your logo, and other visual elements. Make sure they are always in the know about the visual rules and guidelines.

6



[Using Multimedia and Visuals \(Brown University - Quick Guide to Science Communication\)](#)



Use different channels



When starting their communication journey, many organizations try to be part of every channel – be everywhere everyone else seems to be at. **But the needs of every project differ.**

With such a wide range of options available (from websites to social media, print brochures, among others) it may be challenging to choose the right ones.

You will need to understand the opportunities you have for interacting with your audiences, what channels work best for each target group and what you hope to accomplish with each channel.

A Quick Note on Social Media

Social media is the word of mouth of the 21st century. It has fundamentally altered the communication landscape. It is unthinkable to leave it out of any communication strategy. **You can use social media to build awareness, tell your story, share multimedia content and be creative with it, and directly engage with audiences.**

However, a strong and relevant presence on social media will not be achieved if it is not sustained over time. You need to know when and how to use social media as a part of your outreach efforts, to be fluent in the conversation, listen and engage.

Don't forget to include social media on your communication plan from the very beginning. Beware, though, that not every social media channel will work well for your project.

Social media is more effective when it reinforces your other channels!



Use different channels | Top tips



1

Decide what communication channels you want to be in.

2

Make sure your message is consistent across all the channels you've picked, but do not forget that each channel is unique, so adapt the tone of your message accordingly.

3

Take time to consider your audience and their habits in consuming information through the various channels. The key is to give them what they are seeking.

4

Always assume that your audiences are knowledgeable of the channels you are using to communicate your project.

5

Keep in mind that social media is a tactic, not a strategy. Be clear about what you want to get out of it, who your audience is and how they respond.

6

Digital communication is usually cheaper than traditional channels such as advertising and written publications. When used correctly, it can help raise awareness of your project among target groups.



[Communicating Science Online](#)

[Social media guide for EU funded R&I projects](#)

[How to Use Social Media for Small Business: 11 Simple Tips](#)



Use different channels

Understand the media mindset

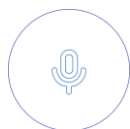


One of the fastest ways to build awareness of your project among mass audiences is by obtaining press coverage.

There are no written rules on how to deal with journalists and manage media relations. However, experience shows us that there are some factors to bear in mind when contacting the media:



- ✓ **Journalists have little time:** So keep it simple, share key elements of a story. They will appreciate clear and straight forward information that can be easily understood by who is curating the piece but also who will be reading it.
- ✓ **Make sure your story is newsworthy or interesting for the outlet in question:** Tailor your pitch accordingly.
- ✓ **Pitch the right media:** It can be more effective to have a story in a smaller, niche or thematic publication for it might attract the audience or readers you want to reach.
- ✓ **Journalism, as science, has its own rules:** Get to learn them and stick to them, but without ever compromising your integrity.



Understand the media mindset | Top tips



When contacting journalists, keep your message simple and understandable. Avoid complex jargon and acronyms that only researchers might understand.

1

If you say you are available, be truly available. Not only when the article is released but also if the journalist needs to contact you for further information or any follow-up action.

4

Present a story that both the media and society can identify with or that might attract interest – think about your expected impact.

2

Be a valuable resource. The more resourceful you are to the media, the more they will come to you to enquiry about a certain topic or request references.

5

Always make sure to provide full information on sources of funding, important partners and other valuable sources. Don't leave meaningful actors out of the narrative.

3

Don't expect journalists to meet your agenda. You may think you have a great story, but it doesn't make a big headline. Journalists will work on the story they want to publish, how and when they want to.

6



[Working with Journalists](#)

[Get the media onboard](#)





Our Communication Team is fully available to guide you on communication and media matters.

Feel free to reach out to us at communication@utaustinportugal.org



Other Sources Used

- [American Association for the Advancement of Science Communication Toolkit](#)
- [Communications Toolkit: A Guide to Navigating Communications for the Nonprofit World](#)
- [Horizon 2020: Communicating EU Research and Innovation guidance for project participants](#)
- [Impact Toolkit - Developing a communications and impact strategy](#)
- [INTERACT – Communication toolkit](#)
- [Introduction to Integrated Marketing Communications](#)
- [Making Data Meaningful – A Guide to Communicating with the Media](#)
- [Making the Most of Your H2020 Project](#)
- [The complete guide to social media for small businesses](#)
- [Video: #CommsWorkout – 60 Minutes workout to increase the communication impact of your project](#)
- [21 most essential media training links](#)

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