**Draft of Communication Strategy**

# Communication objectives of external communication

Usually, the objectives of external communication are to raise awareness by explaining what the project is about and how the project helps citizens and regions.

The FUTURE ECOM project has 3 following objectives:

* **Raise awareness about the project**
* **Enhance the stakeholders' understanding**
* **Drive action**

The public and … should aware of the work in FUTURE ECOM. This is the lowest level of dissemination and will be aimed to audiences who do not need a detailed knowledge of the work and results. For FUTURE ECOM project, awareness includes:

* What the FUTURE ECOM project is about – goal of the project
* Who is involved
* What is the work being carried out
* Where to find information about the results of the work

Answers to these questions formulate the **message of the project**. A message is a simple and clear idea that acts as a guiding principle for all kinds of communication.

The proposal of the message:

**The overall objective of FuturE.com is to improve the effectiveness and impact of the policy instruments addressed within the partnership stimulating the exploitation of digitisation in SMEs in order to improve their competitiveness in the future and thereby to grow.**

Possible examples of messages in one sentence:

FUTURE ECOM is helping European policy makers to make more informed decisions

FUTURE ECOM – making action innovation plans better

FUTURE ECOM helps with continuous innovation of the regions

FUTURE ECOM stronger linking among Innovation, Transport and Investment on regional level

Each target group can have different message. Therefore, in the communication strategy it is necessary to identify different **target groups**.

### **Target groups and activities for the communication objective - Raising awareness about the project**

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* Regional Networks
* National and Regional associations (The Enterprise Europe Network for Midlands)
* EU professional associations (POLIS network)
* Policy makers, industry, universities
* General public

**Activities**

*Offline media*

* **A3 Poster**

 A3 poster will offer a concise way to disseminate information to broader audiences. The FUTURE ECOM poster will be done in the **first semester**. Each project partner has to place at least one poster with information about the project (minimum size A3), including the financial support from the ERDF, at a location readily visible to the public

We have already text proposal and graphics. FUTURE ECOM partners will be responsible for translation, printing and dissemination in their region.

* **A5 Leaflet**

The FUTURE ECOM leaflet will be done in the **second semester**. Should be downloaded from the FUTURE ECOM website in PDF format. FUTURE ECOM partners will be responsible for translation, printing and dissemination in their region.

*Online media*

* **Website**

The FUTURE ECOM will have its own website during the **first semester**. There should be link to social media (LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook) The webpage should meet the publicity requirements and remains available for a minimum of five years after the closure of the project.

Interreg Europe designed and hosts FUTURE ECOM project website and its use is mandatory. They are an integral part of the already existing ‘mother’ website: www.interregeurope.eu. News and events published on the project website will appear as well on the Interreg Europe homepage level.

**The FUTURE ECOM website structure**

* Home button/About project section which includes:

Project summary field

Budget & duration details

Partnership on interactive map

Policy instruments details

* News section
* Events section
* Library section
* Contact us section

The partners are asked to publish information about the project on their organisation´s website. Project partners should provide a short description of the project, its aims and results, partnership, and highlight the financial support from the European Union (Interreg Europe/ ERDF). The information about the project has to include the programme logo set in a visible place, meeting the general visibility and publicity requirements of the programme. A link to the project website should be added for more information about the project activities.

* **Social Media** (Creation of accounts on LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook)

Facebook is the biggest social network with over 850 million users worldwide. It is a website mainly used for getting in contact with friends, but can also be used as a tool to raise awareness about causes and initiatives. Facebook allows to quickly build up a very large list of members. However, not all of them will be active members.

* **Participation in relevant events and conferences**

Participating in international and regional events is a unique opportunity to communicate the results of the project to a broad audience consisting of professionals from the wider transport and innovation sector.

* **Mass media approached by articles and press releases**

**Different types of media**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Media**  | **Target group**  | **Specific features**  |
| National, regional and local newspapers  | Can target the national, regional or local population, but also specifically people working in business, intellectuals, people supporting a specific political party, etc.  | Afternoon deadlines for morning distribution and around lunchtime for evening distribution. Style ranges from serious politics to soft gossip.  |
| Magazines  | Can be focused on news, general consumer (e.g. men or women), specialists (e.g. fishing, health), industry or trade (e.g. transport, technology)  | Articles are sometimes planned months in advance; there is an opportunity to pitch your stories for next issues.  |
| TV and radio  | Can be focused on an age group or a specific area. Often produce own news. Often have shows targeting a specific audience.  | News is fast moving and immediate; stations often work to very tight deadlines.  |
| News agencies and wire services  | Deliver raw news to all major media to adapt for their own input, often report local news to international audiences.  | 24/7 news coverage, work very fast and often break news first; strict deadlines.  |
| Internet news  | Main sites are affiliated to larger newspapers, magazines, TV and radio stations. In addition, there are Internet media portals, specific industry sites, and newsgroups.  | Internet news provide endless PR opportunities.  |

Source: Project Communication Guide, Prepared by Pinnacle Public Relations Training in cooperation with the INTERREG IVC communication staff, 2012,pg. 22 http://www.interreg4c.eu/uploads/media/pdf/resources\_Project\_Communication\_Guide.pdf

Articles in newsletters and relevant magazines and newspapers.

* **Press releases**

Press releases will be published at strategic times when major achievements have been made or to announce FUTURE ECOM upcoming events.

### **Target groups and activities for the communication objective - Enhance the stakeholders' understanding digital business innovation opportunities and financing**

Stakeholders and other audiences need to have a deeper understanding of the FUTURE ECOM' work then public. This is because they can benefit from what the project has to offer. They should know why the objectives are relevant for them how to get involved in the Network of Stakeholders and how to benefit from the project.

* Policy makers at regional, national and Pan European (Coventry City Council, Birmingham City Council, Joint Research Centre, IPTS ( RIS3 team)
* Councils, Municipalities, MEPs, Ministries
* Industrial players
* Associations who focus on innovation
* Universities
* Similar projects to FUTURE ECOM

**Activities**

* **Newsletters**

An electronic newsletter will be sent every 3 months. This will include the projects highlights and main results achieved. The newsletter template will be done in the first semester. It will be designed in accordance with the visual identity of the project website with the incorporated logo set of the programme. All the partners should contribute to the content of the newsletters by articles.

Newsletters are a good medium to let people know about the project, inform readers regularly about recent changes, new initiatives, events, or interesting case studies.

They also provide a written record of the activities and can create interest in upcoming events. An electronic newsletter will be available on the website and in an email version. Publicity requirements also apply for all electronic information. Similar projects can publish an article about FUTURE ECOM project in their own newsletter or get copies of FUTURE ECOM project newsletters.

* **Organisation of interregional thematic workshops and study visits**

The workshops will enhance the participants understanding and knowledge on the subject matter and will also allow them to provide some feedback on the project's results and findings. A total of 4 workshops will be organised.

* **Local meetings with stakeholders**

The meetings will be organised with the regional stakeholders to inform them about the project results and obtain their views on good practices and policy interventions. These should be informal and will occur on a frequent basis.

### **Target groups and activities for the communication objective - Drive action policy improvement and change**

'Action' refers to a change of practice resulting from the adoption of the FUTURE ECOM action plans and recommendations. Therefore, this level of dissemination is targeted at policy makers.

* Regional and local policy makers
* City councils, municipalities and relevant national authorities

To be effective there is the need to engage with individuals whom we will need to offer the full knowledge and understanding of the project’s work in order to establish a close relation with, allowing their future involvement with the project.

**Activities**

* **High level Final Conference**

At the end of the project a final event will be organised. Invitation will be sent mainly to the policy makers and stakeholders involved in the project. The event will feature presentations from the partners on the results and key note speeches from industrial and academic players who will demonstrate the importance of disruptive ecommerce business models and the need to develop relevant policies and funding schemes.

* **Development of the main findings and dissemination of reports**

Development of visually appealing online and hard versions of the main findings which will be distributed to the policy makers: this includes the White book, the generic Business Model Platform, Policy recommendations and Action Plans

* **Organisation of interregional disruptive workshops, study visits and good practice workshops:**

The workshops and the visits will provide the opportunity to the policy makers to experience disruptive practices and their impact. This is help to develop the strategic vision for each of the regions

* **Active participation in the INTERREG policy platform.**
* **Publication of main achievements and results**

# Communication objectives of internal communication

### **Establish an efficient communication between the consortium partners**

Interreg Europe programme provides the FUTURE ECOM project with a communication toolkit, including:

* Project logo set
* Project poster template
* Suggested PowerPoint template
* Project website
* Project-specific branding guidelines

Templates with corporate identity of FUTURE ECOM project will be prepared and made available to project partners. An intranet area which will act as a common project document base will be developed. Logos and other templates will be made available on the Interreg Europe website to download. From each partner’s project management team a communication manager will be identified.

# Partners responsibilities

**Activities that project partners should regularly undertake include:**

* Translating, adapting and distributing information (poster, leaflet, newsletter) from the publicity manager to target audiences in your country
* Informing local internal audiences about what is happening with the project
* Initiating news releases and developing PR opportunities for local activities
* Handling local media enquiries and developing relations with local press
* Performing media monitoring about the project in their country and/or region. Feedback about public relations activities is crucial to measure the impact of the different communication outputs and results. Partners need to keep a copy of articles (scanned article with a visible date and source, image clip of an online article with a link and date) to be uploaded to the project website library.
* Reporting about the results to the overall publicity manager
* When presenting the FUTURE ECOM project use templates with projects logo and logos of the EU
* Provide the communication team with infographics, pictures/photos for web site and print materials (newsletter). Using a professional photographer can be recommended.
* Provide text articles for web, social media, newsletter
* Provide contacts on European level for sending a newsletter
* Provide tips for projects with similar objectives