Monitoring and evaluation of communication activities
Evaluation and communication

- Evaluating the **effectiveness** and **impact** of communication activities and tools (including programme/project communication, media outreach strategy, internal communication)

- **The basic question is:**
  Are we providing the right communication means and products to the right people through the right channel at the right moment?

  > if the answer is yes to all of these questions, it is quite likely that you are having an impact in terms of communication
  
  (Source: DG Communication, European Commission)
Typical mistakes

- Unrealistic objectives
- Wrong target audience
- Wrong timing
- Unclear messages
- Wrong tools
“You can boost ‘evaluation success’ by setting trivial objectives, or you can promise vast changes you will never deliver. Neither does the standing of the communication department much good.”
Source: DG Communication, European Commission
First step: the communication plan and strategy

- Article 2 of the implementing Regulation EC 1828/2006: The communication plan shall include (...) “an indication of how the information and publicity measures are to be evaluated in terms of visibility and awareness of operational programmes and of the role played by the Community.”

- Article 4(3) of implementing Regulation EC 1828/2006: “The means used for implementing monitoring and evaluating the communication plan shall be proportional to the information and publicity measures identified in the communication plan.”
Article 4 of regulation 1828/2006:
The annual implementation report for the year 2010 and the final implementation report shall contain a chapter assessing the results of the information and publicity measures in terms of visibility and awareness of operational programmes and the role played by the Community.
> Final report 2010 to be submitted by 30 June 2011!

Annex XVIII of 1828/2006 (amended as of 01.09.2009)
Content of annual and final reports:
“Information in accordance with Article 4(2) of this Regulation, including achievements, examples of good practice and significant events.”

Note: Indicators have to be reported as well!
Impact assessment and communication

- Difficult to measure

- Sometimes short-lived, sometimes the impact is much later than expected

- Often simply unlikely to happen at the level of public opinion at large
Which impact are you expecting?

- **Communication output**: is the actual product of a communication activity, what is delivered to the target audience (e.g. conferences held, press releases distributed..)

  - These figures reveal nothing about the quality, reach, impact or utility of your communication activities

- **Outgrowth**: refers to how the target public demands and receives the output produced (response rates which can be measured e.g. by media clippings, attendance figures, web hits...)

  - Provides information on the availability of information and who potentially received it, but not information on how much of the information was retained or led to further impact.
Which impact are you expecting?

- **Outcome I Awareness/knowledge**: impact can be assessed in terms of knowledge gains that can be traced to com activities
  - problem: awareness raising is often too vague

- **Outcome II Attitude/perception**: (Positive) perception of a project or your programme and EU funding in general
  - difficulty: often evaluations of attitudes lack clear objectives; changes cannot be traced back to communication measures

- **Outcome III Behaviour**: E.g. influence on regional policy (regulations..)
  - Most obvious when things have gone wrong (protests, complaints...)
  - However, behavioural communication impacts can hardly be isolated validly
Monitoring your communication activities

Events
- Keep track of participants’ lists and contacts (including journalists!)
- Prepare a questionnaire for feedback or conduct a brief online survey after your event

Online tools
- Monitor your website hits in connection with certain events, after having sent out a press release etc...

Social media activities

Publications
- Keep track of who received your publications (distribution lists) and the number of publications disseminated. Get feedback through surveys or focus groups.
Media Monitoring and evaluation of media impact

Step 1
- Compile an archive including press clippings and screen-shots of websites that mentioned your programme (incl. date!)

- If you cover a large programme area (e.g. transnational programmes) you may also think about hiring a professional media monitoring service, although this can be costly

- Keep also a media archive of radio and TV programmes that mentioned your programme

- Set up a library/archive with your projects’ publications

Step 2
- Evaluate the content of the media and its effectiveness (content analysis)
Event: Direct consultation of the audience

- What do you want to know: content - method - setting/organisation

- Oral evaluation techniques:
  - Thumb
  - Card (green - red - yellow)
  - Feedback: The suitcase and the bin: What will I put in my suitcase - what will I leave there?
  - electronic voting system

- Written evaluation:
  - During the event (evaluation sheet)
  - After the event (online evaluation)

- Focus groups
Evaluation of your communication strategy

- To what extent does the communication strategy respond to the information needs of the target audience(s)?

- How coherent are the tools and messages with the objectives of the strategy, with each other and with other existing initiatives in the field?

- How effective is the communication strategy/policy in improving awareness and knowledge about EU policy in the field x?

- To what extent does the communication strategy/policy contribute to a better understanding/perception of the Commission’s policy in the field of x?
## 3-level classification table

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Compliance with com objective</th>
<th>Efficiency of management</th>
<th>Efficiency of budget</th>
<th>Effectiveness of distribution</th>
<th>Effectiveness of targeting</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Media com</td>
<td>Strengthen presentation of completed projects</td>
<td>Increase budget</td>
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<td>Online tools</td>
<td>Add case study</td>
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<td>publications</td>
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<td>Unified visual identity</td>
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<td>Events</td>
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<td>Create a database of contacts</td>
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**satisfactory** | **room for improvement** | **unsatisfactory**
Be realistic!

- make sure that your objectives are realistic in the first place
- ensure that enough resources are invested in evaluation to get meaningful results, but be proportional
Thank you!
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