HUMAN-ENVIRONMENTAL SYSTEMS RESEARCH CENTRE

GUIDELINE: RESEARCH PROJECT COMMUNICATION AND DISSEMINATION STRATEGY

1. AIM

To demonstrate the project's impact beyond academia. This guideline outlines key elements to include in your project proposal's communication strategy, with specific tools for implementation.

2. TARGET AUDIENCES

The communication strategy should be tailored according to the research project nature and target audiences.

It is crucial to identify the target audiences and prioritise them according to project aims.

Target groups:

- General public
- Policy makers
- Specific industry sector, NGOs
- Scientific community

Communication to each group requires different approach.

3. COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

The research project should have its own place on the internet used for communication and beside that, there should be other various channels used for the communication.

Webpage:

Web page contains the general project info (funding info, aim, team) and is used for continuous communication of various news (new publication, press release, event invitation).

The webpage could be individual for the project or used as a subpage of research group/researcher that is responsible for the project.

Where to create the web?

- University platform,
- Individually.

General public:

- Press releases and media outreach (target science journalists or relevant publications)
- Public lectures and science cafes (consider hosting them online or in collaboration with museums/science/NGOs centres)
- Social media engagement (create a project-specific account on platforms like LinkedIn, X (former Twitter), Facebook, or Instagram. Share updates, visuals, and behind-the-scenes glimpses)
- Educational resources (infographics, explainer videos, and downloadable materials) shared via social media and web page.
- Citizen science initiatives (where applicable, involve the public in data collection or analysis or different activities).
- Popular article and opinion-based article published at the project web page linked to the research project topic.

Policymakers, specific industry sector, NGOs:

- Policy briefs (documents summarizing research findings and policy implications)
- Meetings with relevant decision-makers
- Workshops and seminars (tailored presentations and discussions with policymakers)

Scientific community:

- Peer-reviewed publications
- Conferences and presentations (consider live streaming or recording for wider access)
- Online scientific platforms (e.g., ResearchGate) and social media (Twitter, LinkedIn)

4. DISSEMINATION ACTIVITIES

- Describe specific activities planned for each communication channel.
- Consider collaborating with communication specialists, science journalists, or public engagement groups.
- Outline a timeline for dissemination activities throughout the project duration.

5. EVALUATION AND METRICS

- Define success metrics for each communication channel (e.g., media mentions, website traffic, downloads of educational materials, social media engagement).
- Explain how you will track and evaluate the effectiveness of your communication strategy (e.g., website analytics tools, social media insights, feedback from public events, number of posts).
- Example: During the first year of the project, we published in total 50 posts at the projects websitescovering project news, event invitations, popularisation of our research project. In total XXX readers visit the project webpage.

6. BUDGET

Allocate a budget for communication activities, including outreach materials, event costs, website development, and potential travel expenses for public engagement activities.

7. ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATION

- Address potential ethical considerations related to data privacy or public perception of research findings.
- Consider incorporating accessibility features (e.g., translated materials, sign language interpretation) to reach a wider audience.
- Highlight open access publishing options to maximize the reach of your research.

8. EXAMPLES:

Free public transport

https://freepublictransport.net/

- The main aim is to provide essential information on where certain municipalities are located. Focus on scientific communities, the general public, activists and NGOs. Mainly a static page, where the core element is the map. Additional explanation is provided in blog posts that are published haphazardly.

Carin-pt + Putspace

https://carinpt.eu/, https://putspace.eu/

- Large research project. The communication is complex, which corresponds with the projects It focuses on 1) providing general info about the project to the general public, 2) communicating news within the project to research partners, academia and the general public, 3) sharing research outputs (articles, books, chapters, reports) that are the result of such a project.

9. ADDITIONAL RESOURCE:

Hutchins J. A. (2020). TAILORING SCIENTIFIC COMMUNICATIONS FOR AUDIENCE AND RESEARCH NARRATIVE. Current protocols essential laboratory techniques, 20(1), e40. https://doi.org/10.1002/cpet.40

Borowiec, B. G. (2023). Ten simple rules for scientists engaging in science communication. PLOS Computational Biology, 19(7). https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pcbi.1011251

Creating a simple and effective academic website: https://www.elsevier.com/connect/creating-a-simple-and-effective-academic-personal-website

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