**Twinning Project RO2004/IB/EN-02**

**Implementation and Enforcement of the Environmental Acquis
Focused on Nature Protection, 7 Center Region, REPA Sibiu**

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# Natura 2000

# Guidelines for communication strategies at regional/local levels

# Cuprins

# Preamble

Communications is a main instrument to implement Nature protection goals in general and specifically Natura 2000. Lack of communications and thus lack of information has led to huge problems in the Natura 2000 process in many of the EU-member states whereas early communications and stakeholder involvement has proven to accelerate the process in countries where it was well planned in an early stage and ongoing implemented.

This paper provides a guideline of how to strategically plan communications, to target it on the point and to implement it. It is based on common communications rules and procedures, especially in planning and on the results of several meetings of the "Natura 2000 Information Management Working Group" (IMWG) of the Seven Centre Region, which consists of representatives of the Ministry of Environment and Water Management, the national, regional and all local environmental agencies.

At this point we want to thank all members of this working group for their highly motivated input for this guidance paper: Cecilia Dobrota, Gabriela Capatina, Maria Vandra, Cristina Metea, Silard Szabo, Mihai Petrescu, Tania Alecu, Liliana Dragomir, Nicolae Pienaru, Mirela Moisa, Mihai Proca and Silvia Moise.

The Planning process might seem to be quite intensive and to need a lot of time – both is true! – but we strongly recommend that you take this time as soon as possible and you will see, that a good plan makes work easier, strengthens your efforts and your efficiency – and saves a lot of time afterwards! The planning process should be done in a group.

*Birgit Kohlmaier-Schacht*
*Lea Visser*

*Sibiu, March 9, 2006*

# 1. Background & situation analysis

*What is Natura 2000?*

It is very important, that as a first step you analyse and summarize the frame you work in and agree on a common view. So start with a brief description of:

- the background of the programme Natura 2000
- timetable and deadlines of the implementation process
- the situation at the moment in your region
- the situation at the national and international level
- opportunities and threats
- the strengths and weaknesses of your group

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# 2. Communication analysis

*Where do we stand?*

Describe the existing communication, by answering questions like:

- What is the general attitude towards Nature in general and specifically Natura 2000 in you region?
- What does the public know about Natura 2000?
- Who needs to know and /or to do what, so that our programme goal can be reached? (= first step in defining your target groups – you will work on with this later)
- Are there any conflicts or might there be some?
- Has there already been communication about Natura 2000 in your region?
- What forms of communication? To whom (what target groups)?
- Have there been articles in newspapers or radio/TV?

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# 3. Communication goal(s)

*Why do we want to communicate?*

Describe the communication goal or goals (not more than two!). In general this has to be deducted from the programme goal and is based on the communications analysis you just did. Communication is not a goal as such, but a clear communication goal helps to achieve the programme goal.

Discuss: Do we want to inform? To motivate? To change an attitude? To change behaviour?

The more you want from the public/your target groups, the more efforts you will have to put into communications.

Examples for Communication Goals are:

- Natura 2000 is known to all interest groups and the general public (inform)
- People will have understood what Natura 2000 means in practice (inform)
- Different audiences have lost their fears (change attitude)
- People living in or around Natura 2000-sites accept the programme concerning their regional site/s.
- Many people participate in the process (motivate/change behaviour/action)

# 4. Communication strategy

*How do we want to communicate?*

Describe the strategic approach of the communication and the way you want to use communication in general to achieve your goal(s). Here you define and agree on the style and set priorities for your communication work. Different strategies need different messages, might have different target groups and create different images of your organisation or group.

Examples for Communication Strategies are:

- We use communication from the beginning and concentrate on the most influential stakeholders to convince them on the opportunities of Natura 2000.
- We keep the stakeholders interested and create a public call for better nature protection
- We use 'best practise' examples from different EU-member-states and create an atmosphere of competition within the sites of our region to become model-projects themselves and thus increase their chances of gaining access to EU-funds later on.

# 5. Target groups

*Who do we want to communicate with?*

Describe your target groups. The target audience is developed by examining the stakeholders for the project.

It is essential to answer questions like:

- Who does have direct or indirect influence on achieving your programme-goal?
- Who could or is likely to have negative impact on our efforts?
- Who else is very important regarding our goal?

Determine the:

- **primary** target groups (the most important target groups)
- **secondary** target groups (less important target groups).

It may help you to use the "Stakeholder-Analysis-Line" (SAL) to set priorities: Write each target group on a sheet of paper and then place them on the floor in relation to your programme tool:

**Target groups for Natura 2000 might be:**

(here are those defined by the Natura 2000-implementation group of Seven Centre Region)



| Stakeholder Natura 2000 Seven Centre Region | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **First Priority** | | | | | |
| Dir. f. research, Inst. f. research, Museums, Universities | Local NGOs | National NGOs | APMs | Park administrations | Something new |
| Mass media | | | | | |
| Civil society | | Land owners | Local council | City halls | Monasteries and churches |
| Prefecture | | | Regional council | School inspectorates | |
| Forest offices | Associations of hunters/fishers | Agricultural directorate at the county level | Regional directorate for forest regimes and hunting | Water administration service | |
| **Second Priority** | | | | | |
| Tourist agencies | | Economic agencies | | Local enterprises | |
| Environmental/civil guards | Hydro electrical companies | | Chamber of commerce | Directorate for country roads | |
| Institutes for land improvement | | | Kataster offices | | |
| Army | | | | | |

(Left-side arrow labels: *Very close/ important* ... *Not that close/ important*)

When you have set your priorities, analyse each target group in detail. Find answers on questions like:

- **What do we want this target group to do?  Be very specific!** for example: not to work against N2000, to spread information; to deliver data; to support our goal by providing funds/help; to influence other target groups; ....
- **Why don't they do that already?** for example: lack of information? lack of interest? lack of motivation? other priorities? other objectives? certain fears? ...
- **What would motivate them?** for example: reputation, money, jobs, pride, .....
- **What are their information needs in relation to their roles and responsibilities with the project?**
- **Which media and information networks do they use – how can we reach them?**
- **What is the size and diversity of your target groups?**
- **...**

Now you are ready for the next step:

# 6. Key messages

*What messages do we want to pass on?*

Describe the key messages for each target group.

Key messages should be:
- positive
- simple to understand
- memorable
- accurate
- realistic

Try to associate with things that people identify with and try to find common interests! Do not expect all of them to become experts – communications and messages often are not meant to transfer knowledge but to create feelings and image.

Natura 2000 general message angles:

- Nature: Saving nature
- People: It's your nature and your children's nature.
- Natura 2000 places people in the heart of the project. It does not prevent development. People will continue to earn a living from farming, foresting, fishing, hunting etc
- It's a European project: all members are involved
- We can be proud that our area is worth becoming a N2000-site
- ....

And here are some examples of key messages for target groups:

Scientific institutions:  We can reach a lot for our nature, if we work together!
Local NGOs:              We can reach a lot for our nature, if we work together!
Park administration:     We can reach a lot for our nature, if we work together!
Land owners:             Don't be afraid of Natura 2000 – it opens opportunities
Churches:                Nature is part of God's creation – spread the word
Schools:                 Nature is our future, enjoy and protect it
Local inhabitants:       Our village can be proud on the nature in your neighbourhood and helped preserving it
Local press:             Natura 2000 is an important international process which affects the people in our region, so spread the word

**and so on .....**

## 7. Tools

*What tools do we want to use?*

Describe the tools you want to use for the different target groups and when you want to use them. In your target group and stakeholder analysis you probably already discussed some of the tools that are best suitable for the different target groups in your region. The tools also have to be suitable for the key messages.

An important aspect is to define whether you need one way communication or two way communication:

- **One way communication** is suitable when you only want to inform a target group. It is a one way message: from you to them. It is suitable when you want to transfer knowledge to a large group. Examples of one way communication are newsletters, leaflets, advertisements and displays. Note that all mass media are one way communication.
- **Two way communication** involves feedback. It is interactive communication. If your message is aimed at changing attitudes or to motivate, than one way communication will not help you. You need to have direct contact with the target group to be able to discuss and generate feedback. Therefore your have to choose two way communication. Examples of two way communication are workshops, discussions and field trips.

**Visuals**
Another important aspect of communication are visuals. One picture can sometimes tell more than thousand words. Pictures can be used in newsletters, leaflets, websites etc. Although listed below under one way communication, visuals can – and should – also be integrated in two way communication, e.g. by showing photos or videos at workshops.

Below you will find a list of possible communication tools.

**One way communication:**

<u>Printed:</u>
- letters
- leaflets
- brochures
- magazines
- newsletters
- information sheets
- reports
- press releases
- newspaper articles
- advertisements
- cartoons
- postcards/calendars
- educational material
- ...

<u>Other (visual, audio, information technology):</u>
- website*
- CDRoms
- DVD
- displays
- multimedia programs
- theatre
- films
- videos
- photos
- radio/tv commercials
- ...

> *\* Note: websites can also involve some two way communication if they contain interactive parts like chatboxes or the possibilities to ask questions per e-mail.*

## Two way communication:

Stakeholder oriented:
- one to one discussions, phone calls
- meetings
- workshops
- management forum
- field visits
- ...

General public oriented:
- guided tours
- open days, events, festivals
- ...

Media oriented:
- press conferences
- radio/tv interviews
- ...

Longer term:
- education for school children
- training programmes
- ...

After you have identified the suitable tools for each target group, you can make an overview by inserting them in a schedule. Below you will find an example of such a schedule.

*Example of tools/target groups schedule*

| | Scientific institutions | Local NGO's | APMs | Park adm | Land owners | Churches | Schools | Local inhabitants | Local press |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | | | |
| newsletters | X | X | X | X | X | X | | | |
| leaflet | X | X | X | X | X | X | | X | |
| workshop | X | X | X | X | X | X | | | |
| website | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| press release | | | | | | | | | X |
| field trip | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| educational material | | | | | | | X | | |
| *tool* | | | | | | | | | |
| *Etc.* | | | | | | | | | |

*This schedule shows that 1) newsletters, leaflets and workshops are suitable for most of these target groups; 2) a website and field trips are interesting for all of the target groups 3) some tools are only suitable for specific target groups like press releases and educational material.*

# 8. Organisation of the communication

*Who is doing what and who is responsible for what?*

It is important to define and agree on the dividing of the tasks and responsibilities. If you do not define this, it could happen that nobody feels responsible for the implementation of the strategy and no work will be done, or that several people do the same work.

It is good to do the planning of your communication work in a group. The work itself could be done either by one person, a small team or each of your group takes over some of the responsibilities. In this case it might not be easy to do it within your daily workload, but please take at least half an hour a day for communication.

## 9. Timetable & budget

*When do we do what? What are the costs?*

After you have identified the target groups and tools, you should make a planning of activities. A possible way to do this is by putting the tools in a timetable.
The benefits of such a timetable are:
- it gives you an overview of the activities
- it helps you to organise the implementation of the strategy
- it helps you to find out when you reach a peak in activities, so you can organise capacity.

Below you will find an example of an annual timetable.

*Timetable example*

|  | Jan | Febr | March | April | May | June | July | Aug | Sept | Nov | Dec |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| newsletters | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| leaflet |  |  |  | X |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| workshop |  | X | X |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| press release |  |  |  | X |  |  |  |  | X |  |  |
| field trip |  |  |  |  | X |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| *tool* |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| *tool* |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| *Etc.* |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

*This timetable shows that: a) you have a monthly newsletter, 2) a leaflet will be ready and sent to the relevant target groups in April; 3) workshops will be given in February and March, 4) press releases will be sent in April and September, 5) a field trip will be organised in May.*

If you have a lot of tools and activities for a particular target group, you can make a specific timetable for this target group.
If you have a lot of activities in a particular month, you can make a specific timetable for this month.

### Budget
Besides an overview of the planning of activities, you also need to have an overview of the costs. Make a list of the cost per tool/activity.

Tools/activities                        Costs
Tool 1                                  ...
Tool 2                                  ...
Etc.

# 10. Evaluation

*How do we know if we have succeeded?*

To know whether your strategy succeeds, it is necessary to evaluate. Not only should you evaluate  the strategy after the implementation, but it is also recommended to evaluate in between. This way you can find out whether your strategy is a right one or that you should make some changes along the way.

Below you will find some basic methods of evaluation;

- Ongoing internal review and monitoring: This can be done through regular reporting or special monitoring meetings, but also on an informal day-to-day basis.

- Stakeholder consultation and review :  this can be done informally through day-to-day contact and formally e.g. through surveys and meetings.