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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This working paper provides a comprehensive guide for Managing Authorities (MAs) and Intermediate Bodies (IBs) to effectively communicate the achievements and impact of the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF). Drawing from the lessons learned during the implementation of the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF), this document offers tools, methodologies, and templates aimed at enhancing communication strategies, ensuring compliance with regulatory requirements, and improving engagement with target audiences.

Key areas addressed in the working paper include:

- **Regulatory requirements:** An overview of key communication obligations under the Common Provisions Regulation (CPR), including visibility, transparency, and reporting duties.
- **Strategic framework:** Guidance on how to develop a communications strategy, covering objectives, target audience segmentation, key messages, and dissemination channels.
- **Tools and templates:** An annotated communication strategy template is provided to assist in the creation of tailored communication plans. This includes guidance on conducting SWOT and STEEPLE analyses to understand the context of communication efforts.
- **Monitoring and evaluation:** The paper outlines how to monitor and measure the success of communication activities, recommending Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and metrics to ensure data-driven decision-making.
- **Risk analysis:** A framework for identifying and mitigating communication risks is included, ensuring that communication strategies remain adaptive and responsive to potential challenges.

This paper is intended to serve as a practical resource for MAs and IBs involved in the EMFAF, helping them to build capacity for effective communication while adhering to EU regulations. The recommendations and tools provided can be adapted to fit the specific needs and contexts of individual programmes and regions.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Effective communication is not only essential but also mandated by regulations for programmes funded under the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF). The **Common Provisions Regulation (EU) 2021/1060** sets out the communication obligations for Member States under sections related to **Monitoring, Evaluation, Communication, and Visibility**.

While the EMFAF programmes are often small and have limited resources, it remains vital that their achievements are communicated strategically and effectively. In the past, communication efforts under the EMFF 2014-2020 placed too much emphasis on delivering outputs – such as setting up websites – without adequately considering the needs of target audiences and the most effective channels to reach them.

Since the launch of the Inform EU network in 2021 and its extensive training sessions, support for communication officers has improved. However, given the small size of many EMFAF programmes, and the fact that communication officers also often manage larger programmes such as the Rural Development Programme alongside the relatively smaller EMFAF, further methodological support is still required. In today's information-saturated environment, it is crucial for EMFAF programmes to adopt smart, innovative communication strategies to effectively reach their audiences.

1.2. Objectives and target audiences

This working paper will serve as a practical resource to: (1) Support MAs and IBs in meeting the regulatory requirements for communicating under the EMFAF, (2) equip MAs and IBs with the tools and channels necessary for effective and efficient communication, taking into account the relatively limited resources of EMFAF programmes, and (3) enhance the capacity of MAs and IBs to implement communication strategies that are tailored to specific target groups.

The primary target audience for this working paper are:

- **MAs and IBs responsible for communication activities related to the EMFAF.**
- **EMFAF communication officers.**

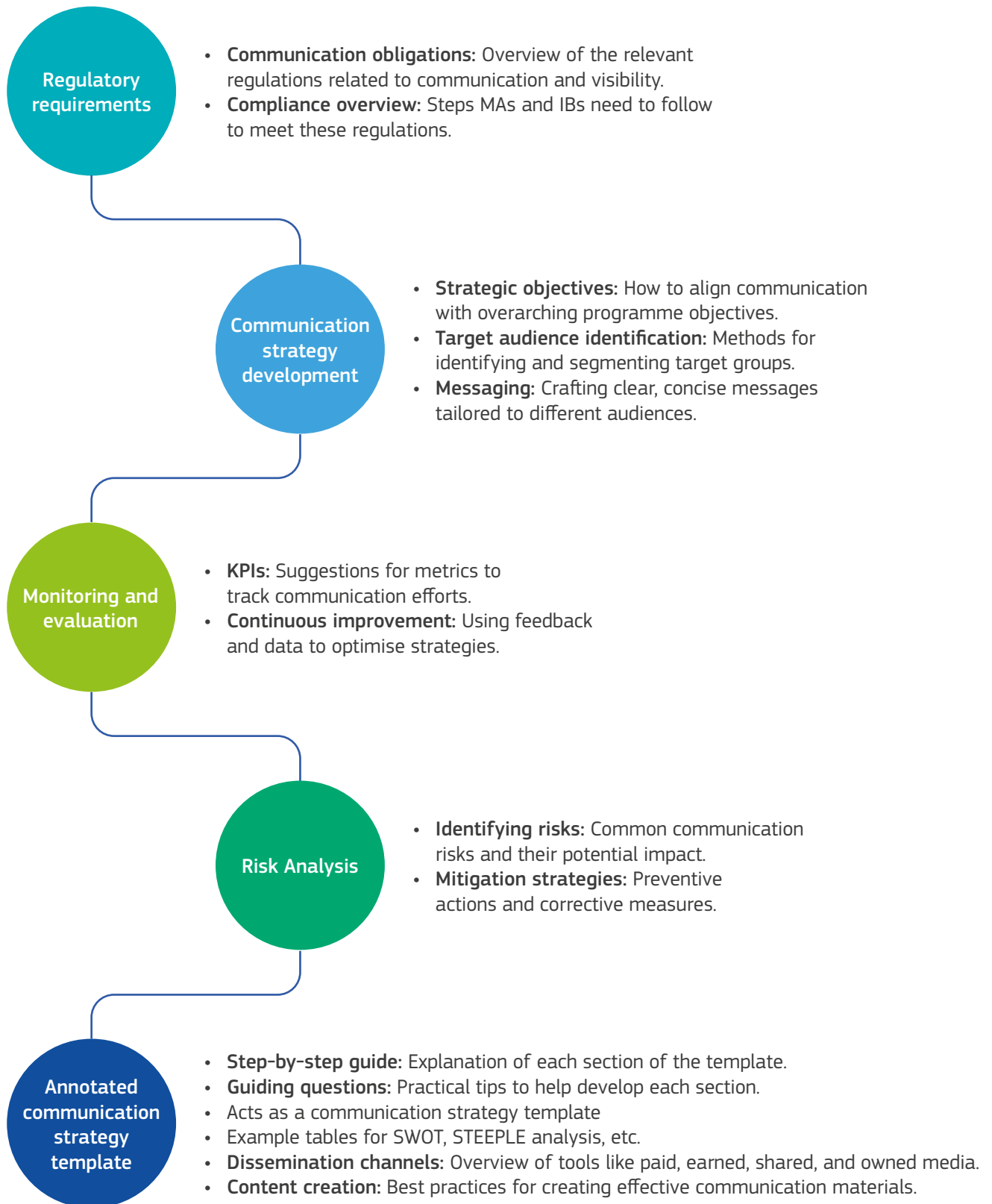
2. USING THE WORKING PAPER

This working paper is designed as a practical tool for MAs and IBs involved in regulatory requirements for communicating under the EMFAF. It provides a structured, hands-on approach that addresses the key aspects of communications related to the EMFAF, focusing on the development of a communication strategy to plan required activities. Whether used as a guide for drafting or as a framework for briefing external consultants, this paper ensures comprehensive coverage of essential communication needs, objectives, and target audiences.

2.1 Working paper roadmap

The roadmap illustrated in Figure 1 outlines how to navigate this working paper, including where to find specific sections and how each part of the document interrelates. This will assist users in making efficient use of the templates and guidance provided, ensuring the communication strategy is both coherent and effective.

Figure 1: Working paper roadmap



3. REGULATION REQUIREMENTS

3.1 Communication obligations

Under the EMFAF and CPR, programme authorities, beneficiaries, and stakeholders in MSs have a responsibility to raise awareness about the achievements of Union funding and to keep the general public informed. Ensuring transparency, effective communication, and visibility is crucial for showcasing the impact of Union initiatives at the local level. These efforts must be grounded in accurate, truthful, and up-to-date information. The CPR has five relevant articles.

Article 46 and 47

Visibility of EMFAF support: MAs are to ensure the visibility of EMFAF funding - visibility of support in all activities relating to operations supported by the Funds with particular attention to operations of strategic importance. MAs and IBs must communicate the role and achievements of the EU financed projects through a single website portal providing access to all programmes involving that MS. Besides, other appropriate communication channels, such publications, and events, may be used. All communication materials must:

- Be based on true, accurate and updated information.
- Acknowledge the EU's contribution, reinforcing its involvement in supporting the projects.

This also includes operations of strategic importance including coordinating cross-border communication campaigns, managing relationships with regional and local authorities, and utilising digital platforms to disseminate information to diverse audiences. Effective communication in the CRP also ensures that stakeholders, including the public, are informed about opportunities for funding and participation, reinforcing trust and engagement in EU policies aimed at regional cohesion and development.

Article 48

Communication coordinator and officer: The CPR requires the identification of a communication coordinator and a communication officer. The communication coordinator is responsible for managing communication activities, ensuring compliance with visibility and transparency rules, and coordinating efforts between communication officers, Commission representatives and other relevant partners (e.g., public authorities, representatives of civil society, and research organisations). The aim is to maintain consistent messaging and enhance cooperation across different levels of governance. Each MS must also identify a communication officer for each programme.¹

Article 49

Responsibilities of MAs: These provisions specify that MAs are responsible for devising and executing communication activities through a website informing on programme's objectives, activities, available funding opportunities and achievements. Besides, the CPR details type and frequency of communication and communications content (publication of calls for proposals, for example).

Article 50

Responsibilities of beneficiaries: Beneficiaries of EMFAF support are also required to ensure that the EU's role is made visible. This includes using the EU emblem on all promotional materials and on physical assets acquired with the support of EU funding and acknowledging EU funding during public events. Beneficiaries must follow the guidelines set by the MAs to guarantee proper visibility of the financial assistance.

¹ A communication officer may be responsible for more than one programme.

Key points:

Communication activities must visibly highlight the EU's role in funding and supporting projects.



A communication coordinator must be appointed to oversee and manage visibility efforts across Funds.



A communication officer must be identified for each Fund.



Both MAs and beneficiaries have obligations to communicate the benefits of EMFAF-funded projects to the public through various channels.

3.2 Understanding key compliance requirements

MAs and IBs must follow a series of specific steps to ensure they comply with communication and visibility regulations under the EMFAF and CPR. Here is an overview of the key steps:

- **Appoint a communications coordinator:** Each MS must appoint a communication coordinator who will be responsible for overseeing communication efforts and ensuring compliance with EU visibility requirements. This individual will act as the main point of contact for communication activities, ensuring consistency across programmes.
- **Communication activities:** Each MS must conduct communication activities that align with the overarching goals of the EMFAF and highlight the role of the EU in funding.
- **Ensure visibility of EU funding:** All communication materials must clearly display the EU emblem and acknowledge the financial contribution of the European Union. This applies to both printed and digital materials, as well as events. It is essential that the EU's role in funding is visible to the general public and beneficiaries.
- **Comply with monitoring and reporting requirements:** MAs must regularly monitor and report on their communication activities, ensuring that they meet the objectives set out in their communication strategies. This includes tracking performance indicators, such as audience reach, media coverage, and public awareness. Regular reporting to the European Commission is required to demonstrate compliance and effectiveness.
- **Engage beneficiaries in communication efforts:** Beneficiaries of EMFAF support must also ensure that the EU's role is acknowledged in their communication efforts. MAs should provide guidelines to beneficiaries on how to appropriately display the EU logo, communicate their project's funding, and highlight the EU's contribution in any public announcements or events.
- **Coordinate with the Inform EU network:** MAs should actively participate in the Inform EU network, which provides training sessions, best practices, and content on how to communicate EU funds effectively. Engagement with this network helps ensure alignment with EU-wide communication goals and facilitates the exchange of knowledge between MAs.

Recap:

By following these steps, MAs and IBs will ensure they meet the regulatory requirements for communication and visibility, promoting transparency and increasing public awareness of the positive impact of EMFAF-funded programmes.

4. COMMUNICATION STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

While it is not mandatory requirement, each communication activity specified in the regulation requirements generally falls within the typical elements of a communication strategy. Therefore, it is recommended to develop a strategy for planning these activities. This strategy should outline clear communication objectives, identify target audiences, detail the key messages to be conveyed, specify the tools and channels to be used, and include a dissemination plan to ensure broad public awareness of the programme's achievements.

4.1 Strategic objectives

To ensure effective communication within the framework of EMFAF, it is essential to align communication strategies with the broader programme objectives. This alignment guarantees that all communication efforts reinforce primary goals of the programme, ensuring consistency and clarity in public messaging.

- **Define programme objectives:** Start by clearly identifying the core objectives of the programme, such as promoting sustainable fisheries, enhancing environmental protection, or improving local economies. These high-level goals provide the foundation for all communication efforts and help shape the narrative around achievements.
- **Translate objectives into communication goals:** Once the overarching objectives are identified, translate them into specific communication goals. For example, if one of the programme's objectives is to promote sustainable fishing practices, the communication goal could be to raise public awareness about the importance of sustainability in fisheries and highlight funded projects that are contributing to this cause.
- **Consistent messaging:** The key messages communicated through various channels must be aligned with objectives. Each piece of communication – whether it is a press release, social media post, or public event – should reinforce the core messages, such as the EU's role in supporting sustainable development or improving coastal communities. Consistency ensures that all stakeholders, including the public, beneficiaries, and policymakers, receive a unified message.
- **Engaging relevant stakeholders:** Aligning communication with programme objectives also involves engaging the right stakeholders. Identify which audiences – such as citizens, policymakers, or beneficiaries – need to be targeted for each objective, and tailor communication methods accordingly. For instance, a technical objective aimed at improving fisheries management might require targeted communication with industry professionals, while broader public goals could be communicated via mainstream media.

Monitor and adjust: Aligning communication with programme objectives also involves regular monitoring and assessment. By tracking key performance indicators such as public engagement, media coverage, or stakeholder feedback, you can determine whether the communication strategy is effectively supporting the programme's goals. Adjustments can then be made to refine the approach and ensure that the communication continues to support the programme's objectives.

4.2 Target audience identification

Identifying and segmenting target audiences is a crucial step in developing an effective communication strategy. Properly understanding who your communication is aimed at ensures that your messages reach the right people, resonate with their interests, and lead to the desired impact. The following methods will help MAs and IBs pinpoint and break down their target audiences into meaningful segments.

4.2.1 Defining audience categories

Tailoring messages to these specific audience groups ensures that communication is effective, targeted, and aligned with the programme's objectives. By addressing the unique needs and interests of each group, MAs and IBs can maximise the impact of their communication efforts. Start by identifying broad categories of potential audiences relevant to your programme. These might include:

Table 1: Key stakeholder groups and communication strategies for EMFAF

<p>Union citizen</p>	<p>Union citizen includes citizens who are either directly or indirectly affected by fisheries, aquaculture, and coastal development. This group may consist of individuals living in coastal areas who benefit from local fisheries or aquaculture businesses, as well as consumers concerned about the sustainability of seafood products. It also includes those interested in marine conservation and the environmental impact of fisheries.</p> <p>Engaging citizens is crucial for raising awareness about how the EMFAF is contributing to sustainability, local economic development, and marine protection. Messages aimed at this audience should highlight the positive impacts on local livelihoods, the sustainability of seafood production, and the preservation of marine ecosystems, using clear and relatable language.</p>
<p>Policymakers and government bodies</p>	<p>Policymakers and government bodies encompass local, regional, EU and national authorities responsible for creating and implementing policies that align with EMFAF objectives. These stakeholders play a pivotal role in overseeing the management of fisheries, aquaculture, and coastal development, as well as deciding how EMFAF funds are distributed.</p> <p>Communication with this audience should provide them with detailed, evidence-based insights into the achievements of the programme and how they align with national and EU sustainability goals. The focus should be on the wider economic and environmental benefits of EMFAF projects, using data, case studies, and impact assessments to encourage continued policy support and effective resource allocation.</p>
<p>Beneficiaries</p>	<p>Beneficiaries are those who directly receive financial support from EMFAF, such as fisheries and aquaculture businesses, coastal communities, and development projects focused on sustainability and economic growth. These stakeholders are the key recipients of EMFAF funding and support.</p> <p>Communication with beneficiaries should provide practical information about how they can access funds, eligibility criteria, and guidance on implementing sustainable practices. Showcasing case studies or success stories of similar beneficiaries can help motivate others to engage with the programme. Clear communication ensures that beneficiaries fully understand the opportunities available to them and how to make the most of EMFAF support.</p>

NGOs and environmental stakeholders	<p>Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and environmental groups play a crucial role in promoting marine conservation, sustainability, and responsible coastal development. These stakeholders often advocate for stronger environmental protections and sustainable practices in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors.</p> <p>Communication aimed at NGOs and environmental stakeholders should focus on demonstrating the EMFAF’s commitment to sustainability. Highlighting successful collaborations between EMFAF projects and conservation initiatives can help build trust and foster partnerships. This audience is also instrumental in holding the programme accountable to its sustainability goals, so transparent communication is vital.</p>
Industry experts	<p>This group includes academics, researchers, and professionals involved in the maritime and fisheries sectors. These stakeholders are interested in the technical and scientific aspects of fisheries management, aquaculture innovations, and sustainable marine practices.</p> <p>Communication with this audience should be more detailed and technical, providing access to research findings, scientific data, and technical reports from EMFAF-funded projects. Industry stakeholders are key to driving innovation and scientific advancement in the sector, so communication should focus on collaboration, knowledge exchange, and promoting innovation.</p>

4.2.2 Audience grouping

After identifying broad categories, break these down into more specific segments based on demographic, geographic, behavioural, or psychographic factors. This allows for more targeted and customised communication.

- **Demographic groups:** Classify your audience based on characteristics such as age, gender, education, and occupation. For example, a message aimed at local fishers may differ from one intended for younger citizens interested in sustainability.
- **Geographical groups:** Divide audiences based on their location. Coastal communities will have a more direct stake in EMFAF projects than inland populations, and messaging can be adapted accordingly.
- **Behavioural groups:** Identify groups based on their relationship to the programme, such as how familiar they are with EMFAF or how likely they are to engage with the project. This helps tailor messaging for more informed stakeholders versus those who are new to the topics.
- **Psychographic groups:** Consider the values, attitudes, and interests of your audience. For instance, stakeholders passionate about sustainability might be more interested in projects focused on marine conservation, while others may focus on economic development.

4.2.3 Data and research

Leverage data from previous communication campaigns, surveys, or reports to refine your audience segments. Tools such as stakeholder analyses, surveys, and focus groups can provide insights into who your audiences are and what they care about. If possible, use data from local authorities or industry associations to further fine-tune your audience profiles.

4.2.4 Profiling and personas

Developing audience personas can aid how you profile your audiences. Personas are fictional, detailed representations of your ideal audience segments, that can help you focus your communication efforts. These personas should include specific details such as age, occupation, interests, communication preferences, and the type of content they are likely to engage with.

Example: A persona might represent a small-scale fisherman who is looking for information on available funding opportunities and prefers to receive updates via local radio or social media.

4.2.5 Align audiences with communication objectives

For each segment, define what you want them to understand, believe, or do as a result of your communication. Aligning your communication objectives with your target audience ensures that your strategy is purpose-driven and tailored to achieve specific outcomes.

Example: Your communications might aim to raise awareness among coastal communities about upcoming funding opportunities, while for policymakers, the objective may be to demonstrate the impact of completed projects.

4.2.6 Align channels with audience profiles

Different audience segments consume information in various ways, so it is essential to tailor your communication channels accordingly.

Example: Older audiences might prefer more traditional media such as radio, newspapers, or community meetings. Younger audiences or those more familiar with technology may engage better through social media, websites, or online newsletters. Technical stakeholders or industry experts may require more formal reports, webinars, or conferences.

4.3 Messaging

Key messages are the core ideas and information that you want your target audiences to understand and act upon. These messages need to be clear, concise, and tailored to resonate with different groups, ensuring that they effectively communicate the objectives and impact of the programme.

Start by identifying a central message that captures the essence of the programme or project. This message should be broad enough to apply across different audience segments but specific enough to convey the key point you want everyone to understand.

Example: “The EMFAF is improving the sustainability and economic resilience of coastal communities through targeted support for fisheries, aquaculture, and environmental protection.”

4.3.1 Tailoring your messaging to different audiences

When your key message is established, it can then be adapted for the specific needs, interests, and concerns of your various audience groups. Different groups will have different priorities, so it is important to craft messages that speak directly to them.

Consider the following examples:

- (For policymakers) “The EMFAF is driving sustainable growth in coastal regions, helping to achieve national and EU environmental goals while supporting local economies.”
- (For beneficiaries) [e.g., Fishers, aquaculture producers]: “The EMFAF provides vital funding opportunities to help you adopt sustainable practices and grow your business.”
- (For citizens) “Through the EMFAF, the EU is protecting marine environments and supporting coastal communities, ensuring a better future for generations to come.”

Each of these messages is tailored to address what matters most to the specific group while maintaining consistency with the overarching goals of the programme.

4.3.2 Consistency across channels

Key messages should be consistent across all communication channels and materials, ensuring that the audience receives a cohesive and unified narrative. Whether you are sharing content via social media, press releases, or public events, the same core ideas should be reinforced, even if the format or language is adapted to the medium.

Example: A detailed report might include more technical information, while social media posts may be shorter and more engaging, but both should convey the same essential message.

4.3.3 Storytelling and emotion

Messages that evoke emotion or personal connection tend to resonate more strongly with audiences. Try to frame your communication in a way that appeals to values such as community, sustainability, or future prosperity. Appealing to shared values can help foster a stronger connection between the audience and the goals of the programme.

Example: “By protecting our oceans, the EMFAF is securing a brighter future for our children and coastal communities.”

5. MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF COMMUNICATIONS

Effective communication strategies require more than just initial planning and implementation; they demand ongoing assessment, adaptation, and optimisation. To ensure that communication efforts are impactful and aligned with overarching programme goals, MAs and IBs must continuously monitor performance, gather data, and adjust their strategies as needed.

This section focuses on two key areas essential to maintaining and improving communication efforts: Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)² and continuous improvement.

Firstly, KPIs are suggested metrics that enable communication teams to track the success of their efforts in a structured, measurable way. These indicators help assess reach, engagement, awareness, and overall effectiveness, ensuring that communication activities are achieving their intended outcomes.

Secondly, continuous improvement is an ongoing process that uses feedback, data, and lessons learned to refine communication strategies. By regularly analysing the results of communication efforts, MAs and IBs can identify opportunities for improvement, adapt to changing circumstances, and ensure that their communication remains relevant, efficient, and impactful.

Together, these processes enable communication teams to maintain high standards, improve over time, and ensure that their strategies are as effective as possible in achieving their goals.

5.1 Key performance indicators

KPIs are essential tools for measuring the effectiveness of your communication strategy. By tracking relevant metrics, MAs and IBs can assess the success of their communication efforts and make data-driven decisions to improve their impact. Here are some suggested KPIs to help monitor and evaluate communication activities:

Table 2: Key KPIs for monitoring communication effectiveness

Audience reach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website traffic: Monitor the number of visitors to websites, including unique visits, page views, and the duration of time spent on key pages. • Social media reach: Track the number of followers, impressions, and reach on social media platforms. This helps determine how many people are exposed to your messages. • Newsletter distribution: Measure the number of subscribers and open rates for newsletters, along with click-through rates (CTRs) on links provided in the communication.
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² KPIs are measurable values used to track and assess the effectiveness of an organisation, team, or individual in achieving specific goals and objectives.

Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social media engagement: Track the number of likes, shares, comments, and retweets on social media platforms. These indicators reflect how much your audience is interacting with your content. • Event participation: For webinars, workshops, or in-person events, monitor registration numbers, attendance rates, and post-event feedback. • Content interaction: Measure engagement with other content such as videos (views, likes), infographics (downloads, shares), and articles (clicks, comments).
Conversion metrics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call-to-action responses: Track how many people respond to calls to action, such as signing up for a newsletter, applying for funding, or attending an event. • Funding applications: Monitor the number of funding applications or enquiries resulting from communication efforts. • Project involvement: Track the number of beneficiaries engaged with programme initiatives, including stakeholders applying for grants or participating in projects.
Awareness and perceptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media coverage: Track the number of mentions and the tone of media articles about your programme in press, blogs, and industry publications. • Survey feedback: Use pre- and post-campaign surveys to assess changes in awareness and perception of EMFAF initiatives among target audiences. • Brand sentiment: Monitor online conversations and sentiment analysis to gauge public perception of the programme.

5.2 Continuous improvement

Continuous improvement is essential for ensuring that communication strategies remain effective and relevant over time. By using feedback and data from past efforts, MAs and IBs can optimise their communication plans to better meet their goals and adapt to changing circumstances.

- **Regular monitoring and evaluation:** It is crucial to regularly review the KPIs and metrics mentioned earlier. Regular monitoring allows communication teams to identify trends and patterns, such as which messages resonate most with target audiences or which channels are underperforming. Schedule periodic reviews of communication efforts (monthly, quarterly, or annually) to assess progress and determine if the current strategy aligns with overarching goals.
- **Better understanding of your audiences:** Use surveys, polls, and focus groups to collect direct feedback from your target audiences. Understanding how well your messages are received, and if there are areas for improvement, can provide valuable insights for refining your strategy. Encourage stakeholders to provide feedback at key touchpoints, such as after events or during engagement campaigns, to capture their experiences and suggestions.
- **Adaptation and flexibility:** Based on the data collected, be prepared to adjust your communication strategy. For example, if website traffic is high but engagement is low, the issue might be with content quality rather than reach, prompting a focus on improving the relevance or appeal of the material. Stay responsive to changes in external factors such as new regulations, public opinion shifts, or technological advancements. This adaptability will help keep your communication strategy current and effective.

- **Testing new approaches:** Experiment with new communication tools, formats, or channels to improve engagement and efficiency. For instance, testing new social media platforms, using different content types (e.g., video vs. written content), or adjusting your messaging tone can provide useful insights into what works best for your audience. A/B testing – a method used to compare two versions of a piece of content – is a valuable tool for comparing different versions of messages or content to see which performs better. This enables you to refine your messaging based on real-world data.
- **Refine KPIs:** As your communication efforts evolve, so too should your KPIs. Continuously refine your metrics to reflect your changing goals or audience needs. For example, if you have achieved high levels of awareness, you may want to shift focus towards more specific engagement or conversion KPIs.
- **Knowledge transfer:** Make a habit of documenting lessons learned from communication activities and sharing them within your team or organisation. This knowledge-sharing promotes continuous improvement across all projects and helps prevent repeating mistakes. Collaborating with other teams or organisations, such as through the Inform EU network, can provide additional insights into successful communication strategies and best practices.

6. RISK ANALYSIS

Communication strategies, while essential for promoting programmes and achieving objectives, are vulnerable to various risks that can undermine their effectiveness. This section provides an overview of the common risks associated with communication efforts in the context of EMFAF and how they can negatively impact programme success if not properly managed.

The first part of the section, 'identifying risks', outlines typical communication risks such as misinformation, inconsistent messaging, failure to reach target audiences, negative media reactions, and information overload. Each risk carries potential consequences, such as damage to credibility, loss of stakeholder trust, or reduced engagement.

The second part, 'mitigation strategies', focuses on proactive measures that can be implemented to minimise these risks. Strategies include rigorous content review processes, the development of consistency guidelines, and the use of audience segmentation to ensure tailored messaging. In addition, the section discusses the importance of having a crisis communication plan in place and regularly monitoring media and audience feedback to adjust strategies as needed.

Overall, this section emphasises the importance of foreseeing potential communication challenges and taking preventive and corrective actions to ensure that communication efforts remain clear, consistent, and effective, ultimately contributing to the success of the programme.

6.1 Identify risks

Effective communication strategies are not without risks, and failure to identify and manage these risks can significantly undermine the success of your efforts. Here are some common communication risks and their potential impact:

Table 3: Communication risks and impacts in programme management

	Risk	Impact
Misinformation or inaccurate messaging	If inaccurate or unclear information is communicated, it can lead to misunderstandings, confusion, or damage credibility.	This can result in loss of trust from stakeholders, reduced engagement, or negative public perception. For beneficiaries, it could mean misinterpretation of funding guidelines or opportunities, leading to a decrease in participation.
Inconsistent messaging across channels	When different communication channels (e.g., social media, websites, press releases) provide inconsistent information, it can confuse the audience.	Inconsistency dilutes the message and may cause stakeholders to question the reliability of the information. It can also diminish the perceived professionalism of the MAs or IBs.

	Risk	Impact
Failure to reach target audience	Not delivering messages to the intended audience or failing to tailor communication to their needs.	The communication campaign may not generate the desired engagement or outcomes if key stakeholders, beneficiaries, or the public are not properly informed or do not connect with the message.
Negative media or public reaction	Media or public backlash can arise from misunderstandings, controversial messages, or perceived failures.	This can lead to reputational damage, reduced public support, or even challenges in programme execution.
Overload of information	Providing too much information or too many messages at once can overwhelm the audience.	Audiences may become disengaged or miss key details if they are overloaded with content, reducing the effectiveness of the communication effort.
Inadequate crisis communication	Not having a well-prepared plan for crisis situations, such as funding cuts or project failures.	In the event of a crisis, inadequate communication can lead to panic, misinformation, and long-term damage to reputation.
Infrequent updating and obsolete content	Failure to update content regularly could result in outdated information, which may mislead stakeholders, reduce engagement, and damage the credibility.	Obsolete content can lead to decreased user trust, reduced traffic or engagement, missed opportunities for stakeholder involvement, and potential reputational harm if users rely on outdated information for decision-making.

6.2 Mitigation strategies

To minimise the risks outlined in the above section, MAs and IBs can implement a range of mitigation strategies. These preventive actions and corrective measures help ensure communication remains clear, consistent, and effective, even when faced with challenges. By proactively identifying communication risks and implementing these mitigation strategies, MAs and IBs can ensure that their communication efforts remain effective, clear, and impactful, even in the face of potential challenges.

Table 4: Key strategies and preventive actions for effective communication management

	Strategy	Preventive action
Fact-checking and content review	Implement a rigorous fact-checking process to ensure that all messages are accurate and clear before dissemination. Review content by multiple team members to avoid errors.	Establish a standard protocol for message approval, especially for sensitive information, ensuring accuracy before any communication goes public.
Consistency guidelines	Create and enforce communication guidelines to ensure that all messaging across different platforms is consistent in tone, style, and information.	Develop a centralised document for key messages and distribute it to all team members responsible for communication. This ensures everyone is aligned and reduces the risk of conflicting information.
Audience analysis and segmentation	Conduct thorough audience research to understand your target groups better and tailor communication methods accordingly.	Use audience segmentation techniques to ensure that different groups receive relevant, clear, and targeted communication. Regularly review audience feedback and engagement metrics to refine messaging.
Crisis communication plan	Develop a comprehensive crisis communication plan, including predefined messages and response protocols for different scenarios.	Train staff on crisis communication and ensure that a designated team is ready to respond quickly. Prepare draft statements for potential risks to save time in the event of an emergency.
Content scheduling and prioritisation	Avoid overloading your audience by strategically scheduling content and focusing on the most important messages.	Implement a content calendar to manage the timing and frequency of communications, ensuring a balanced and manageable flow of information.
Media monitoring and feedback loops	Monitor media coverage and public reactions to your communications to identify any potential issues early.	Set up feedback mechanisms (such as surveys or direct engagement) to gather audience reactions. Use this feedback to correct any misunderstandings or adjust future communication strategies.

7. ANNEX I: ANNOTATED COMMUNICATION STRATEGY TEMPLATE

This annotated communication strategy template is developed and designed by FAMENET and serves as a comprehensive guide to assist MAs, IBs, and communication officers in creating effective, structured communication strategies for EMFAF-funded programmes. The template provides step-by-step guidance, enabling users to align their communication efforts with both regulatory requirements and the overarching objectives of the programme.

Effective communication strategies are crucial for enhancing visibility, promoting transparency, and ensuring public awareness of the benefits delivered by EMFAF-supported initiatives. However, due to the varied scope and scale of these programmes, there is no one-size-fits-all approach to communication. This annotated template serves as a flexible framework that can be adapted to suit the unique needs and contexts of individual programmes, allowing for a tailored communication approach while maintaining compliance with EU regulations.

Purpose of the annotated template

The template provides structure for the development of a communication strategy by breaking down the necessary components into manageable sections. Each section is annotated with:

- **Explanations:** A description of the purpose of the section and its role within the overall communication plan.
- **Guiding questions:** Key questions to help users think critically and develop content relevant to their programme.
- **Practical tips:** Useful insights and best practices for enhancing the quality of the communication strategy.

1. Executive summary

This section should include the main points of your strategy and give the reader an idea of what they are about to go through. The executive summary should be detailed enough and contain the key information so that the reader can walk away with the main information without reading the entirety of the report. It should be 5-10% of the length of the total document.

2. Background

2.1 Sender

Depending on your reader, you can choose to include the definition of sender, or at least the understanding you have chosen to use for your document. This will make it easy for the reader to follow your thinking. Depending on your target and purpose, you can also choose to include what the sender is expected to do and why.

Sender: The institution initiating the communication and/or the organisation, which is perceived as the source of the messages by the target audiences. It is important to define this in the early stages of the strategy, as it will influence the following definitions and steps.

Practical tips/Questions to consider:

- Is there a single sender?
- Do you have multiple senders?
- How are these senders perceived by the target audience?

2.2 Strategic Objectives

Define the objectives, talk about why they are important, the benefits or effects of achieving them, and what achieving these objectives will bring to the overall communication activities.

Strategic Objective: A higher-level objective than the communication objectives. Strategic objectives help guide overall communications and ensure that all communications, senders and key messages are aligned and working towards the same aims.

Practical tips/Questions to consider:

- Think about long-term objectives, or overarching priorities you would like to align with. E.g. priorities as a Member State cross different funds.

2.3 Policy background

The policy background summarises the current policy status and includes statement of the policy issue, history and key challenges. This section is optional depending on relevance for your strategy and can be built into either your background section or your context section.

3. Context

When building the context think about all the information a first-time reader, or colleague implementing your strategy would need to have or know. This section allows you to establish the environment in which your communication activities are taking place and include relevant information about that environment that influences your choices. This section can be as brief or extensive as needed, depending on the final audience and strategy use. The suggested sub-sections can be included or removed depending on the type of strategy you are writing.

The context: describes the parts of environment in which the communication takes place that are relevant for the communication project/initiative. The context heavily influences how target audiences will receive messages, which tools can be used, and what channels are available.

Practical tips/Questions to consider:

- Consider how extensive your context needs to be depending on the target audience for your strategy and how it will be used during implementation
- For a simpler strategy we recommend including at least one type of analysis, the SWOT is straightforward but effective and can help with development of the risk analysis.
- Including more types of analysis allows for greater understanding of your context, and can be used to brief new colleagues, or those unfamiliar with your context. However they take more time to produce.

3.1 Steeple analysis

A STEEPL analysis is a framework for evaluating external factors – social, technological, economic, environmental, political, legal, and ethical – that may influence an organisation or project’s success and strategic planning. It can provide valuable contextual information and understanding for those implementing the strategy. The contents of the analysis can also be used to adapt to environmental changes. Some examples are included in the table below for reference.

	Factor	Description	Impact	Mitigating action
Social	Public awareness	Low public awareness and understanding of EMFAF’s contributions	May lead to a lack of public engagement and reduced visibility	Targeted outreach with relatable messages that highlight local impact and community benefits
	Cultural diversity	Diverse languages and cultural backgrounds across EU Member States	Language barriers and cultural differences can hinder message clarity and acceptance	Translate materials and adapt messages to respect cultural context; utilise local partners for localisation
	Community engagement	Importance of involving local communities and stakeholders in communication	Stronger local involvement can build trust and credibility	Organise local events, collaborate with NGOs, and engage community leaders

	Factor	Description	Impact	Mitigating action
Technological	Digital communication tools	Use of digital platforms like social media, websites, and email newsletters to reach stakeholders	Facilitates timely, widespread dissemination of information but may exclude those with limited digital access	Ensure digital platforms are accessible; consider print or alternative formats for underrepresented groups
	Data analytics and feedback mechanisms	Implementing analytics to track engagement and collect feedback on communication effectiveness	Allows data-driven improvements to messaging but may require additional resources and technical expertise	Invest in simple analytics tools and provide training to team members to interpret data
	Cybersecurity and data privacy	Protecting communication data, especially in line with GDPR requirements	Risk of data breaches that could undermine public trust and project credibility	Employ cybersecurity best practices, including data encryption and regular security audits
Economic	Funding availability	Limited budget for communication within smaller EMFAF programmes	Limits the scope and reach of communication activities	Prioritise high-impact, cost-effective channels like social media and leverage partnerships for shared resources
	Economic uncertainty	Potential economic instability affecting EMFAF funding	Could impact continuity of communication efforts and stakeholder engagement	Establish contingency plans and keep stakeholders informed of any changes to funding
	Regional economic benefits	Economic benefits provided by EMFAF initiatives, such as job creation	Positive economic impact can enhance public perception and support for the project	Highlight local economic benefits in communication materials and success stories

	Factor	Description	Impact	Mitigating action
Environmental	Environmental impact of fisheries	Public concern over the environmental impact of fishing and aquaculture	Misconceptions about sustainability can lead to negative perceptions	Emphasise EMFAF's environmental objectives and sustainable practices through clear, accessible messaging
	EU Green Deal alignment	EMFAF's alignment with EU's Green Deal and sustainability goals	Creates a positive association and may increase engagement with environmentally conscious audiences	Align messages with Green Deal objectives and communicate EMFAF's role in promoting sustainability
	Climate change awareness	Growing awareness and concern about climate change	Potential to attract stakeholders interested in sustainable fisheries	Integrate messages on climate resilience and sustainable practices within all communication efforts
Political	EU policy and regulatory alignment	Need for communication to reflect EU policy and regulatory compliance	Ensures that the public and stakeholders are aware of your programme's alignment with EU regulations	Highlight regulatory compliance in messages and work closely with policymakers for consistent messaging
	Changes in political support	Shifts in political priorities within EU member countries	May affect public opinion and government support	Maintain clear communication of project goals and benefits, adapting to any shifts in policy where possible
	Stakeholder influence	Importance of maintaining strong relationships with key political stakeholders	Stakeholder support can boost project credibility and engagement	Regular meetings and tailored briefings for high-influence stakeholders

	Factor	Description	Impact	Mitigating action
Legal	Communication and visibility obligations	EMFAF projects must comply with specific EU visibility regulations	Non-compliance may result in penalties and reduce project credibility	Adhere to visibility guidelines by including the EU emblem and acknowledging EU funding
	Data protection regulations	Communication activities must comply with GDPR and EU data protection standards	Potential risks associated with non-compliance	Implement a GDPR-compliant data management system and provide training on data handling
	Intellectual property and copyright compliance	Proper use of EU symbols, logos, and third-party content	Misuse could lead to legal issues or fines	Ensure all materials are reviewed for compliance with copyright and IP regulations
Ethical	Transparency in funding and results communication	Importance of transparency in communicating funding sources and project impact	Increases trust with the public and stakeholders	Regularly publish clear, accessible information on funding and project outcomes
	Ethical considerations in content representation	Ethical portrayal of communities, beneficiaries, and vulnerable groups	Misrepresentation can damage credibility and trust	Create content that respects dignity, inclusivity, and accuracy; consult with communities for consent
	Fair representation of EU support	Requirement to accurately represent the EU's role in funding and supporting projects	Avoids potential criticism of EU funding misuse or misrepresentation	Consistently attribute support to the EU and follow prescribed communication guidelines

3.2 SWOT analysis

The SWOT is an analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats related to the communications of your programme. You can use a SWOT to illustrate your context and identify relevant elements that could affect your choice of communication activities. This could include (but are not limited to):

- Specific knowledge about a target audience and how they prefer to receive messages.
- Information on similar campaigns and events happening in the same timeframe as your activities.
- Potential partnerships that could be leveraged for communication activities.

The SWOT is influenced by other elements in the framework, e.g. objectives and target audiences and should be adapted after considering those elements. Your strategy should use strengths, compensate for weaknesses, demonstrate how to take advantage of opportunities, and show preparation for threats. Some examples are included in the table below for reference.

<p>Strengths</p> <p>Internal factors which may support and help achieve the communication objectives and goals</p> <p>[BODY NAME] has already implemented campaigns in related spaces or themes, such as [CAMPAIGN NAME]. The success and recognition of previous campaigns is an existing foundation on which to build and that some members of the target audience will recognise and trust.</p>	<p>Weaknesses</p> <p>Internal factors which may hinder the activities and prevent the achievement of communication objectives and goals.</p> <p>Limited resources or budget constraints: Insufficient funding or staffing to carry out comprehensive communication campaigns may limit the scope and effectiveness of outreach efforts, particularly when competing with larger or more well-funded campaigns.</p>
<p>Opportunities</p> <p>External factors which may support and help achieve the communication objectives and goals.</p> <p>Media and public interest: Recent and current media and public interest in marine, aquaculture, tourism, spatial planning, MPOs and general blue economy topics is an opportunity to continue communication on the topic and engage an already receptive audience with our specific communication.</p> <p>EU Green Deal: The continued importance and influence of the EU Green Deal and the increasing traction of sustainable business practices are opportunities to further tailor communications to follow this trend and ensure relevance for our target audience.</p>	<p>Threats</p> <p>External factors which may hinder the activities and prevent the communication objectives and goals from being achieved.</p> <p>Lack of understanding from the general public on what the funds do and contribute to: The public perception of the European Commission and the funds can sometimes lean to negative or apathetic. This presents a challenge to alter perceptions and bring understanding of funds to local and regional contexts that are tangible for the general public. This threat will be mitigated by supporting multipliers in direct contact with citizens with tools and training on best practices for communicating with the general public.</p>

Practical tips/Questions to consider:

- When developing your SWOT it can help to divide into internal (strengths and weaknesses) and external (opportunities and threats) elements.
- Think about answering questions when building your SWOT analysis. Some generic questions are included below to guide your analysis.

Questions related to internal elements	Questions related to external elements
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What internal resources can be dedicated (people, time, budget)? Are they sufficient? • What are the (specialised) knowledge and skills within your team? • Is there existing knowledge or work that can be used/ built upon? • What are the communication channels and tools already in place for the various target audiences? Are they monitored? Have they been assessed? • Are you / your sender already recognised as a source of information by the target audiences? • Are there established relationships with different target groups and stakeholders? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who/what could support the communication objectives and how? • Who/what might cause problems and how? • Are there existing partnerships? Are there possibilities to strengthen or factors that could weaken them? • Are there other current campaigns organised by other actors on the same or similar topics? Are they conflicting or could they be collaborated with? • Is there an emerging trend, news or a development on the topic area, at EU, international or national level? Is it positive or negative? • Are there any new or upcoming regulatory (or non-regulatory) initiatives or policy actions? • Are the relevant public opinions favourable towards the topic? • Are there specific issues/topics that should be avoided/ are particularly sensitive for the public? • Has there recently been any incident/story that drew positive/negative attention to the topic? • Are there specific dates or timings during which it would be appropriate to communicate?

4. Target audience

This section of your strategy should be used to identify and explore your target audience. It is an opportunity to break down typical groups like “general public” that are too large and lack specificity, into identifiable groups that can influence your choice of dissemination methods and activities.

You can also choose to divide your audiences into “primary” and “secondary” to allow prioritisation of activities if you need to reach many groups. This approach can also be used if you are unable to reach your target directly and must go through an intermediary or a multiplier.

Target audience: The primary recipients of a communication effort, those you are speaking directly to. They are identified based on specific demographic, geographic, and behavioural characteristics, such as age, location, interests, and behaviours.

Audience segmentation: The process of dividing the identified target audience into sub-groups (segments) based on shared characteristics.

There are different ways to structure your target audience section depending on how specific you need to be and the existing knowledge of your reader. Some templates are included below which can be adapted to your needs.

Template 1: Target audience segmentation

Depending on the complexity of your strategy or your needs, you can add or remove columns from this template.

Segment	Profile	Needs	Expected actions	Channels
Specific segment	Describe who they are, include potential examples	Describe what they need e.g., type of information, specific action, etc.	Describe what you expect/want this segment to do	List where you can reach your segment
Beneficiaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Those who directly receive financial support from EMFAF, such as fisheries and aquaculture businesses, coastal communities, and development projects focused on sustainability and economic growth. These stakeholders are the key recipients of EMFAF funding and support. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practical information about accessing funds, eligibility criteria Guidance on implementing sustainable practices Examples, case studies and success stories of similar beneficiaries Overview of opportunities available via EMFAF support. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access the main funding portal/website for further information Apply for funding opportunities Get inspired by similar beneficiaries and be motivated to apply Ask for further information about specific funding opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Main funding portal Local notice boards Social media Local community publications Local community events

Practical tips:

- Be as specific as possible – this will aid in the selection of activities and design of your dissemination plan. An effective plan will be based on choices, to focus or exclude segments, activities or approaches.
- Consider building personas – fictive individuals to help get an understanding of your target audience and to brief others on the type of individual your communication is for.

Template 2: Target audience segmentation

	Members	Rationale
Primary target audience	Describe the different segments or members of your target audience (can be a bullet point list)	Explain why they are included in your segmentation, their needs, actions etc.
Secondary target audience	--	--

5. Communication objectives

Communication objectives are more concrete than the higher-level overarching strategic objectives and seek to establish the purpose of communication activities and what they are working towards or trying to achieve. In this section think about what the result or direct effect of your communication actions should be.

Communication objectives: refer to the final aim, and about what change in existing behaviour you would like to cause in the target audience because of your communication. Changes in existing behaviour can include what the target audience sees, thinks or feels, and whether they should do a specific action as a result.

Questions to consider:

- Who are your target audience? (age, profession, sex, country, region, education etc.)
- What do they want? What are their expectations/ concerns and needs in relation to the topic and the specific communication objective(s)?
- Where do they find or look for their information?
 - What channels do they use?
 - What are their preferences in terms of content and format to receive information?
- What are the specific challenges to reach and/or convince them of your message?

Template: Communication objectives

One approach for defining your objectives can be to re-iterate overarching objectives that may already exist for your communication activities, and the break those down into specific communication objectives for the year that your strategy covers. This approach allows you to align with long-term planning but keep activities feasible and give yourself room to adjust/course-correct where needed.

Overarching communication objectives	Specific communication objectives for [YEAR-YEAR]
This can be overarching, broad and more general and define an overall direction or priority.	Distill the overarching objective into something more tangible that applies specifically to the year your strategy is addressing.
Improve overall awareness of the EMFAF amongst current and potential beneficiaries.	Establish regular monthly updates of the main funding portal to ensure content is up to date and there is regular activity. Participate in at least five local events to directly engage with local communities and improve awareness of the EMFAF.

Practical tips/Questions to consider:

- Consider your communication objectives as the concrete outputs of what you defined as your strategic objectives, that apply to the timeframe of your communication strategy and can be turned into activities in your dissemination plan. For example:
 - Strategic objective: Raise awareness of the central website for citizens to remain informed about the spending and availability of EU Funds on national level.
 - Communication objective: From [Month, Year] to [Month, Year] increase monthly traffic to the website by 2%.

6. Messages

Messages are for internal use and are not directly communicated to the target audience. They serve as a benchmark or reference point for all communication products and activities, to ensure alignment across audiences, activities and sub core tasks. Developing messages is also useful for internal briefings, or collaborations where you may need to quality check content and ensure it remains aligned.

There are different ways to structure your messages section depending on how specific you need to be and the existing knowledge of your reader. Some templates are included below which can be adapted to your needs.

Key messages: define the core information that the target audiences need to understand to start a change process (changing knowledge or behaviour, initiating action, etc.).

Overarching key messages: represent the overarching core messages and must be sufficiently generic and clear to be understood and relevant for all audience segments and are relevant throughout the duration of activities.

Target audience based key messages: take input from the overarching key messages, along with key background information.

Template: Message structuring

Overarching key messages(s)	Messages as bullet points	
Target audience	Information needs	Key messages
Target audience segment	Describe what they need to know, be made aware of, be informed about etc.	Key messages as bullet points

Practical tips/Questions to consider:

- **Develop an “overarching message”:** Summarise the key point(s) you want target audiences to understand and remember after the communication activity and be sufficiently generic and clear to be understood by all audience segments.
- **Develop messages by target audience segment:** Tailor the overarching message to different audience segments, summarise their ‘What’s in it for me’ in relation to objectives and activities.

7. Dissemination strategy

The dissemination strategy should describe how the communication on different channels is interrelated and how activities in different media reinforce one another. It should also include the tools that will be developed, created or used, and how they will work across the different channels.

Dissemination strategy: defines which channels will be used to transport the campaign messages to the intended target audiences.

Paid media: refers to activities that require monetary investment, like advertising, that are performed within this contract to raise awareness and attention on platforms.

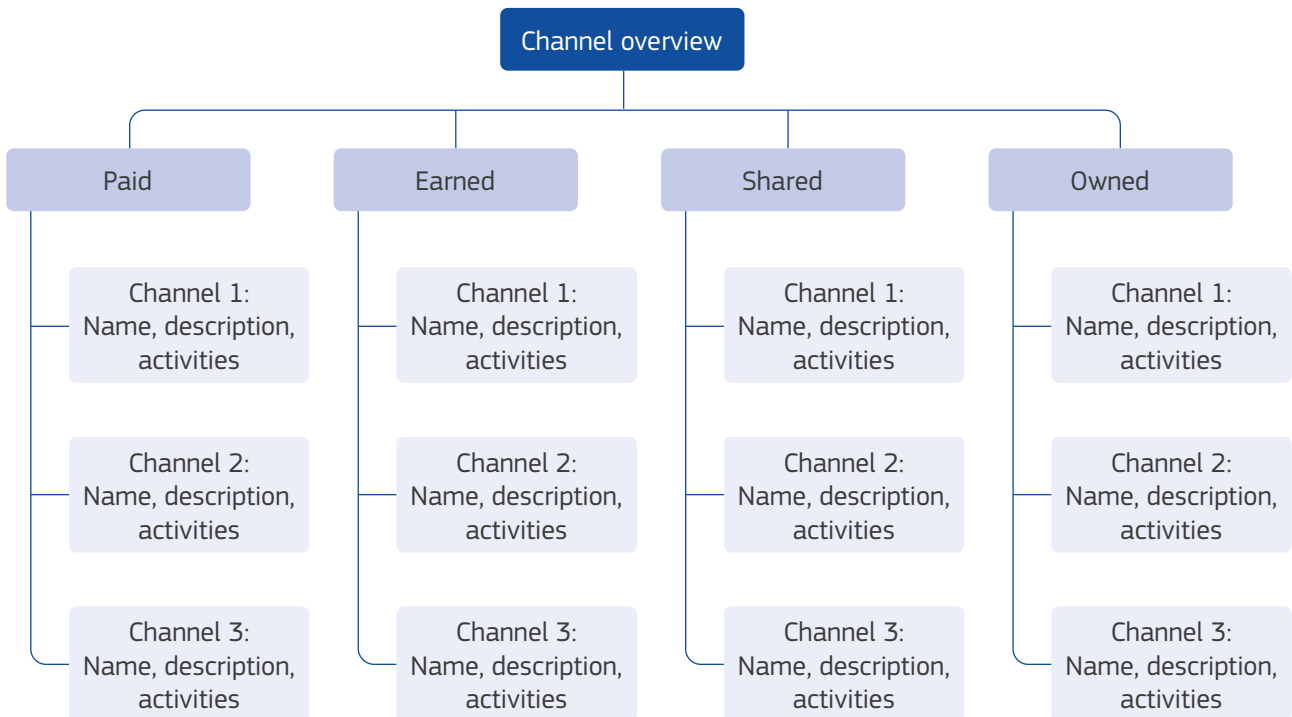
Earned media: refers to the conversation and content created around activities by somebody else and published somewhere other than your owned channels. It is what people say, understand and/or share about you or your content.

Shared media: refers to social media-based sharing and overlaps somewhat with earned media.

Owned media: refers to channel(s) of your property that are under your unique control and where you display all your content.

There are different structures for dissemination strategies, and you should select or develop one that aligns best with your activities, and how you wish to present your strategy, either for approval or implementation. When applying the PESO (paid, earned, shared, owned) model (for which the definitions are included below), note that you do not have to have channels that fall into every category. Your communication strategy may only use or need two or three of these types of channels.

Sample structure



Template: Channel Overview

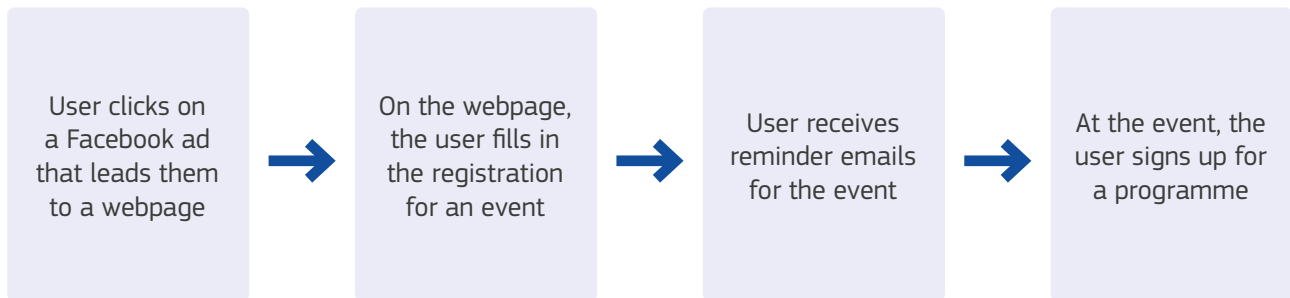
Paid	Earned	Shared	Owned
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paid social media 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholder outreach and engagement • Media Relations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media coverage • User-Generated-Content (e.g. on social media) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Webpage • Newsletter • Own social media

Template: Specific sections

Channel	Description	Activities
(e.g.) Paid social media	Describe the channel, why selected, purpose, role in the overall strategy	Describe the activities that will take place via this channel

Practical tips/Questions to consider

In some cases, it can be useful to map out a user journey. For example:



8. Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring activities consist in collecting data to assess the performance of the communication activities and using this data to gather insights and improve results over time. In this section think about the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that you want to monitor and measure and what information they can give you. Monitoring is not collecting data for the sake of it, but rather to collect data that allows us to make data driven decisions when planning future strategies and activities based on past performance.

When building KPIs there are different approaches and support materials available. One resource that can help define KPIs is the European Commission Communication Network Indicators. Which can be found [here](#).

In addition to defining KPIs, you can also choose to list the metrics that you would like to monitor, to track your activities and their success rates. A template and approach are included for reference below.

Template: Metrics table

Tool/ Channel	Proposed metrics to monitor
Name the tool / channel you will monitor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specify the metrics that you will measure related to your activities with this tool / on this channel
Webpage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of visits Page view duration
Newsletter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open rate Overall number of subscribers Number of unsubscribes Number of new subscribers Link clicks

9. Evaluation and optimisation

In this section describe how you will evaluate your activities and approach on an ongoing basis, and actions you will take to optimise your strategy where necessary.

Practical tips/Questions to consider:

- Create a list of KPIs and / or metrics that you wish to monitor. A straightforward approach is to build your list based on the channels and tools you have identified in your dissemination strategy.
- Dedicate 1-2 paragraphs of the monitoring section to explaining evaluation and optimisation of your activities. You can use the following questions to guide you:
- How are you going to use the data you collect to take decisions on continuation, suspension or adjustment of activities?

10. Risk analysis

Section Guide: When developing this section try to anticipate what could go not according to plan, estimate the potential impact of a risk and mitigation measures for the most probable and/or most harmful risks. If you decided to include a SWOT analysis in your context section, you could also reference this when developing the risk analysis.

Definitions:

- **Risk event:** The situation that could take place if things do not go as planned, something unexpected happens
- **Probability level:** How likely the risk event is to happen
- **Potential impact:** Should the risk event happen, what is the impact that it will have on the communication activities / campaign / overall initiative
- **Preventive actions:** What actions can be implemented to avoid the risk event occurring, or to have a plan in place if the risk event occurs to avoid being caught unaware
- **Corrective actions:** Should the risk event occur, what actions can be implemented to correct or modify any activities that have been impacted, considering the new context

Practical tips/Questions to consider:

For each risk event that you identify, assign it a probability level (low, medium, high) and impact (low, medium, high)

Detail the potential impact for your reader, so they understand the context should this risk event occur. Thinking about the potential impact also aids in drafting the preventive and corrective actions, as they should be a response to what you have identified as the potential ‘worst case scenario’.

Risk event		Potential impact		Preventive actions	Corrective actions
Probability	Impact				

Content sample

Here below we have included a content sample from the FAMENET Communication Strategy from 2022. This is a concrete example of how this section can be developed, using this template and guidance.

Overarching FAMENET communication					
Risk event			Potential impact	Preventive actions	Corrective actions
The ever-evolving COVID-19 situation and ramifications could cause changes in the environment in which the communication and activities are taking place.	Probability	Impact	The health crisis is changing and evolving, and contexts can change daily. The potential impact is that certain communication may no longer be as relevant, or any physical events may have to be cancelled or postponed.	This will be mitigated by communicating on the expected themes and activities and being responsive to any changes and ensuring updates are disseminated quickly and efficiently.	If the context changes and impacts events, this can be mitigated by taking any actions virtual or postponing any physical actions.
Misuse of hashtags: Social media users not interested in or related to the activities will use the established hashtags for their own unrelated posts.	Probability	Impact	Should the hashtags be used by other users not connected to activities, other users searching under those hashtags may also see some content which is not related to the activities. This could cause slight disruption to the general stream of content under the hashtags.	Include regular checking and moderation as part of community management activities. Inappropriate content can be flagged.	Social media cannot be policed, unless the content is deemed inappropriate, offensive, explicit etc. Moderation can include flagging but will mostly consist of keeping DG MARE informed and monitoring any misuse.

Source: FAMENET Communication Strategy 2022

11. Communication activity overview

In your communication strategy it is recommended to have an overview of all the communication activities proposed in a timeline format. This makes it visual and easy to follow for your reader and provides a re-cap for everything that you have explained throughout your strategy.

Two different approaches with sample content have been included below for reference. Both provide an overarching timeline of activities but follow a different approach.

Template: Activity overview by quarter

Quarter	Activity
Quarter 1: January – March [YEAR]	Bullet point lists of activities
Quarter 2: April – June [YEAR]	Bullet point lists of activities
Quarter 3: July – September [YEAR]	Bullet point lists of activities
Quarter 4: October – December [YEAR]	Bullet point lists of activities

Template: Activity overview by month and/or phases

Phase	Month	Activity
Phase 1: TITLE	MONTH X	Bullet point lists of activities
	MONTH X	Bullet point lists of activities
	MONTH X	Bullet point lists of activities
	MONTH X	Bullet point lists of activities
Phase 2: TITLE	MONTH X	Bullet point lists of activities
	MONTH X	Bullet point lists of activities
Phase 3: TITLE	MONTH X	Bullet point lists of activities
	MONTH X	Bullet point lists of activities

Template: Activity overview by month and/or phases (Visual option)

	MONTH	MONTH	MONTH	MONTH	MONTH	MONTH	MONTH	MONTH	MONTH	MONTH	MONTH	MONTH	MONTH	MONTH	MONTH	MONTH	
Owned																	
Activity (e.g. webpage)																	
Event coverage																	
Social Media (paid and organic)																	
Shared																	
Stakeholder outreach																	
Event coverage																	
Social Media																	
Earned																	
Local media partnerships																	
Event coverage																	
Stakeholder outreach																	
Paid																	
Social Media																	
Radio spots																	

ANNEX II: METHODOLOGY

This working paper was developed between August and October 2024, following the approved concept note on 15 July 2024. The preparation process involved several key steps:



A comprehensive desk review was conducted, involving:

- **Screening of available resources:** This included reviewing existing knowledge databases relevant to EMFAF and communication practices.
- **Analysis of lessons learned:** Insights were drawn from the operations of FAMENET between 2022 and 2024, with a focus on capacity building and knowledge exchange activities. Lessons were also incorporated from engagements with DG MARE E2 during this period.

The field research included the following activities:

- **Review of selected MAs:** Websites from four to five MAs were analysed to gather insights into their communication approaches.
- **Focus group:** A focus group will be conducted with six to nine communication coordinators working with the EMFAF, providing qualitative insights into current practices and challenges.
- **Engagement with the Inform EU Network:** The team exchanged ideas and information with members of the Inform EU network to gather best practices and strategies.
- **Review of existing communication campaigns:** Active EMFAF communication campaigns were reviewed to identify successful strategies and areas for improvement.

The working paper went through the following drafting and review phases:

- **Initial draft preparation:** A preliminary draft was created based on the research findings.
- **Internal feedback rounds:** Two rounds of feedback were solicited from various units within DG MARE (E2, D3, D2, C2), in line with the second step outlined in the FAMENET Manual of Procedures (MoP).
- **Consultation with stakeholders:** Where necessary, the draft was shared with key stakeholders for additional feedback, as per Step 3 of the MoP.
- **Final version:** Following internal and external feedback, the final working paper was produced and submitted for ARES approval.



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