

Communication Seminar for running projects 22-23 October 2009 Valencia, Spain

Lead Partners and communication officers from the first call approved operations were invited to participate in a communication seminar, in Valencia, Spain, on 22nd and 23rd October. The seminar consisted of a short plenary session followed by practical workshops. Organising events, creating effective messages, and working with media, were some of the topics covered within the working groups. The training was provided by Pinnacle, an international media and training company specialising in PR and communication. The aim of the input was to introduce a range of ideas, tactics and tools that participants can include in their communications activities. In total, 33 participants, representing 21 projects took part.



The event started with welcoming words from Roberto Arnau, as new Head of Interregional Cooperation Department in the Generalitat Valenciana, followed by a short introduction from Nuala Morgan, INTERREG IVC's Communication officer, to present some of the programme tools. Before the workshops started, Pinnacle carried out an initial ice-breaking session, and gave some overview on the importance of having a communication plan.

The afternoon of the first day was dedicated to two workshops:



Stakeholder mapping and messages: participants were given advice on how to identify their target audiences, to construct effective messages and to adapt them according to each group. An interesting discussion arose around making communication objectives specific and measurable, which some projects have difficulties with. Grazia Rossi (nano4m) and Dora Almassy (RSC) gave

presentations on identifying stakeholders and defining messages respectively.

Media relations: this workshop mainly covered the different possibilities for projects to attract the attention of the media. Pinnacle gave a quick overview of what makes stories newsworthy and

basics of pitching. Project representatives were divided into sub-groups to share their experience. Each person presented its project messages in two minutes and one of them had to make an imaginary call to pitch their story to a journalist. This practical exercise was followed by a discussion on the different media and media relations tools. Some useful examples were given about how to organise press trips and press conferences. The trainer especially emphasised submitting “letters to the editor”, which could be very relevant to IVC projects. Finally, Kate Henderson from the GRaBS project, explained how their communication activities are coordinated, what kind of tools they use and how these have paid off in terms of media coverage.

The evening finished with a networking cocktail, during which participants had the possibility to further share their good practice and to exchange on their activities and results achieved so far.

The next day began with another two workshops:

Organising events: this workshop tried to focus on the reason behind event organisation, asking projects to identify the audience, the objective and the type of event needed. All projects have committed themselves to organising a certain number of events, and the message here was that they still need to reflect on the above 3 pillars to decide on the best format. Eleftherios Loizou (RegioClima) made a presentation on a multi-venue partner event they organised with live video link-ups between partners. Grazia Filippi (MMove) gave some examples of how the municipality of Regio Emilia tries to involve citizens in the project theme (mobility management).

Writing for different supports: this session focused on style and content of written communication materials such as brochures, articles or information published on project websites. As key ingredients of good writing, clarity, brevity, simplicity and accuracy was highlighted. The importance



of having snappy headlines and an eye-catching first paragraph, which provides clear details on the 6W's of a story (namely who, what, when, where, why and how) was emphasised. Furthermore, the attention of the participants was also called on several practical tips, like the importance of ordering ideas in a logical manner, avoiding using jargon, giving specific examples or using positive words and an active voice. During the workshop several exercises

were given to participants to work on all these elements in order to see the difference between good and bad writing skills.

In the final summary session, Kelly Zielniewski (IP South) gave a short presentation to remind participants about the programme's requirements in terms of publicity and information and Nuala Morgan then highlighted the wealth of good examples that were presented. She also reinforced the message that it is one of the project's communication goals to pass the message directly to the citizen. Finally, a proposal was made to continue exchange and discussion through an online platform (e.g. LinkedIn). A communications handbook is also being updated with some relevant examples and case studies from the projects.

On the whole, the training was well received and informative. In particular, participants enjoyed the four workshops that were considered as useful and very good. The inclusion of best practice presentations by selected projects within each session was also well appreciated.





The INTERREG IVC Communication team (from left to right):

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Please do not hesitate to contact us for any communication information or advice!
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