



A blueprint for effective programme communications for future EU Health Policy joint actions

SHARP Joint Action Work Package 2

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Abstract

A blueprint serves as a model or provides guidance for a detailed plan or programme of action.

In addition to achieving communications and dissemination goals, the SHARP Joint Action aimed to generate long-term, sustainable benefits by increasing communications and dissemination capability and capacity across the work packages.

SHARP Joint Action Work Package 2 (Communications and Dissemination) has used its experience of communications and dissemination (C&D) – the strengths; weaknesses; opportunities and threats - when supporting the joint action to create this guidance document. It serves as a reference point for the planning and implementation of communications and dissemination for future joint actions.

It does not set out how to do communications, but provides practised communicators with fresh ideas, tools, and inspiration; plus, the pitfalls to watch out for.

It also suggests recommendations that funding organisations could consider when specifying the communications requirements of proposals for future joint actions.

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Section one: The objective of communications and dissemination in EU funded projects

Communication and dissemination of deliverables is a key element of EU funded projects. Communication activities feature as part of the proposal often with a specific work package responsible; and communication activities are typically considered in the evaluation.

Grant beneficiaries must promote the project and its results by providing targeted information to multiple audiences, including the media and the public, in a strategic and effective manner which clearly links the messaging to the strategic priorities of the EU.¹

Commonly, work package (WP) 2 of a joint action will own the communications and dissemination objectives. However, communications and dissemination objectives can be included in other work packages.

Dissemination and communication are two different concepts

Increased pressure on government spending has led to raised urgency for bodies receiving public support to demonstrate their impact - the 'return' that they deliver on public 'investment'. Dissemination is essential for impact or take-up, and take-up is crucial for the success of the project and for the sustainability of outputs in the long term.

The impact of a project is strongly dependent on communication and dissemination. Good communication and dissemination increases the impact of the deliverables by facilitating wider adoption by stakeholders.

Although highly interrelated, communication and dissemination serve two distinct purposes.²

The table on the following page illustrates the differences from the SHARP Joint Action perspective.

The detail may change depending on the delivery environment (external factors) and audiences of joint actions, projects or programmes.

| Differences | Communication | Dissemination |
|--------------------------|--|--|
| <p>Purpose</p> | <p>Communication activities can be thought of as increasing the public visibility of the project and its results.</p> <p>Creating understanding of key strategic messages</p> <p>Contributing to the smooth running of the programme by ensuring the beneficiaries (the internal audience) know what other work packages are doing.</p> <p>Supporting other work package tasks such as event recruitment; survey completions, etc.</p> <p>Informing and engaging external stakeholders, to show why the research is important and how it can benefit – the outcome.</p> <p>Convey the overarching strategic value of the project through a range of coordinated activities (campaigns) across audiences and channels.</p> | <p>Dissemination is the public disclosure of the results of the project. with the aim of telling a specific audience about specific outcomes or elements.</p> <p>Covers project results only.</p> <p>Ensuring the projects results are available to policy makers and practitioners enabling the take-up and use of results in policymaking or practice improvements.</p> <p>The campaign approach can be adopted but planned for this specific audience, their preferred formats/channels, on-going visibility, strategic messaging and call to action.</p> |
| <p>Objectives</p> | <p>Promotion of the project creates awareness and enhances the visibility of your project consortium and the joint action.</p> <p>Awareness-raising of a project facilitates dissemination through early engagement, increasing the chances the work will achieve its outcome and make an impact.</p> <p>Communication is often two-way, and involves channels such as workshops, roundtables, and events to create immediate, short/medium term impact.</p> | <p>Public disclosure of results to facilitate specialist reuse of the results and create long term impact.</p> <p>Each beneficiary has the obligation to disseminate results by disclosing them to the public by appropriate means.</p> |

| Differences | Communication | Dissemination |
|--------------------------------|--|--|
| Audience | Multiple audiences both within and beyond the Joint Action's own community. | More specific audiences than communication. Target groups such as supranational stakeholders, policymakers, research community, and practitioners. |
| Phase | Starts at the outset of the project and covers the whole project (including results). | Happens once results are available . |
| Journey | Short and simple | Long, complex, and ambiguous |
| Time cycle | Days to weeks | Months to years |
| Language | Non-specialised, accessible language | Specialist language and prioritising accuracy |
| Channels considerations | In addition to the joint action's owned channels, accessing the existing communications channels of the individual partners/ advisor stakeholders can effectively extend the reach of communications activities. | Information sources used by policymakers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer-review journals • Specialist conferences • Online repository of results, etc. |

Disseminating evidence reviews, tools and insight won't transform practice alone. The most effectively communicated knowledge cannot guarantee the direction of a policy decision. Other external factors within the PESTEL environmental influences framework³ such as politics, economics, etc.; plus, opportunity and personality can influence the decision-making process relating to impact of complex interventions.

For example, Covid-19 drove improvement in capacities within preparedness plans. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, 92 (47%) WHO Member States reported having respiratory pathogen (influenza) pandemic preparedness plans. Many WHO Member States adapted these plans to support their COVID-19 response. Throughout the pandemic, additional member states developed or updated their plans with 176 (91%) reporting that they had a COVID-19 pandemic response plan in 2021.⁴

Monitoring the external environment and how it impacts on communications is explored more fully in [Section four: Understanding the external environment in which your project operates](#).

What does communication and dissemination involve?

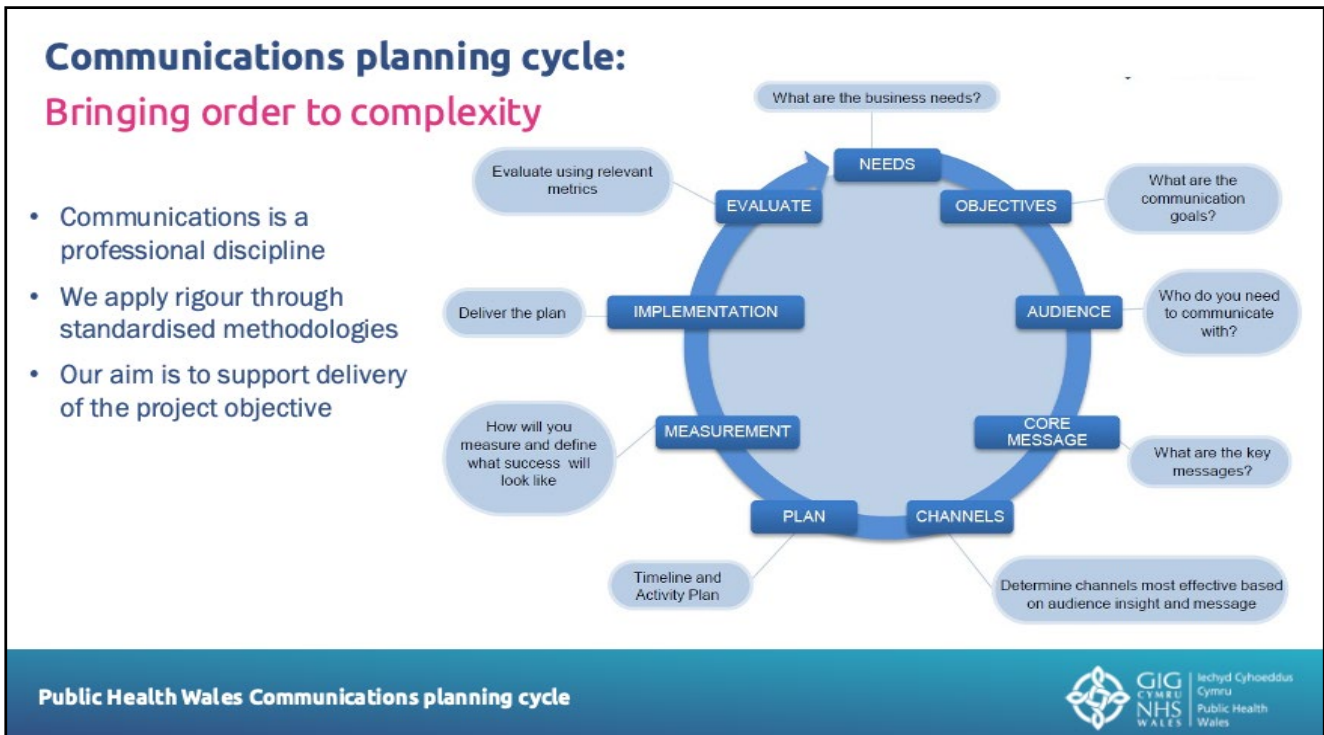


Figure 1: A diagram illustrating the Communications Planning Cycle

Skills for communications specialists

Today, those delivering a communications planning cycle require a broad range of skills and understanding of relevant communications theory/practice relating to professional (business) communications. Plus, competence in the latest tools/platforms used in business-to-business and business to consumer marketing.

The skills applied to SHARP Joint Action included:

- Systems thinking - processes and tools for delivering and monitoring a C&D function
- Internal stakeholder management
- Strategic communication/external stakeholder engagement/relationship building with key stakeholders
- Public affairs - situational research and analysis to understand the operating environment
- Research impact on policy practice
- Digital strategy
- Effective communications for **engagement** – ensuring channels, systems and processes that facilitate the *push* and *pull* of information. The concept of *push* and *pull communications* addresses the likelihood that individuals might not value/engage with the information you send at the time you send it. However, they could need to find the information later.

A good example of this can be illustrated by the policy-maker audience segment highly important for impact. They may not be looking at a particular policy area when, for example, a research report is sent and will not engage. However, when the time comes, they need to find that information to inform decision-making. So, it's important that deliverables are pushed out using relevant key words and hash tags; through channels that enable content to be found and pulled at the time it's required.

- Agile project management theory – an approach to managing change that could involve:
 - ◆ Consideration of the current external environment when planning campaigns
 - ◆ Evaluation of campaigns for insight on on-going improvement in the way the communications are delivered – channels; audiences; messages.

Applying this breadth of thinking is further explored in [Section six: Implementation of Tactical Communication](#).

Section two: Communications and dissemination strategy

Grant agreements often specify the creation of a strategic communication plan which should define clear objectives (adapted to various relevant target audiences) and set out in a description and timing for each activity.

Each communication and dissemination work package will have their own organisation’s approach and there could be confusion between what is a strategy and what is a plan. Examples of what needs to be considered in a communication strategy can be found amongst the materials in [Appendix five: Sources and further reading](#).

As SHARP Joint Action was delivered during the pandemic which saw a significant increase in digital communications, there was a need to refine the original 2019 strategy. A refined overarching strategy was developed using the principles of the RACE framework⁵ of strategic goals for **Reach**, **Act**, **Convert** and **Engage** for digital marketing. These strategic goals underpinned tactical campaign goals and implementation plans.

Future joint actions may find this SHARP Joint Action example useful in developing their own communications and dissemination strategy.

Example communications and dissemination strategy

| Goals | What | Process |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| Relevant and Sustainable Reach | <p>Enhance the SEO of the website to GROW the audience, ensuring the deliverables can be found by employing key word techniques.</p> <p>Promote work package lead organisation ownership.</p> <p>Ensure the deliverables can be found by those who can act on the information.</p> | <p>Create a web page for each work package to provide context/narrative/ facilitate publishing of deliverables.</p> <p>Create an overview of the joint action on the website of each WP lead organisation - back linked to joint action’s website.</p> <p>Publishing papers in scientific journals. These are sustainable and trusted sources used in the policy development process to gather evidence from research to inform decision making.</p> |

| Goals | What | Process |
|---|---|--|
| Awareness | INFORM through a multi-channel strategy and segmented messaging . | <p>Leverage the reputation, networks, and existing public health dissemination structures (where available) of the WP teams.</p> <p>Support partners with no/less-sophisticated dissemination structures with the tools and resources for effective communication of their deliverables.</p> <p>Utilise the networks of advisors; executive agencies; affiliated entities within your Joint Action to cascade communications to the external audiences.</p> |
| Engagement | <p>INVOLVE/ CONSULT/ COLLABORATE</p> <p>Generate and share insight that is relevant and timely for your audiences.</p> <p>ENGAGE</p> <p>Ensure your communications are timely</p> | <p>Enhance functionality of your joint action website to facilitate the 2-way communication necessary for effective engagement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • consider a <i>comment</i> function for each page to enhance external engagement and provide analytics • Introduce calls to action • Subscribe to updates on all pages • Post useful content in formats that your audience can share <p>Seek and act on feedback, creating feedback loops that add value to your audience.</p> <p>Ensure calls to action are included in all communications content.</p> <p>Ensure timeliness, for example by emailing attendees of workshops/events whilst the topic is fresh in their minds, effectively increases engagement - encourages social follows or web subscribes.</p> |
| Conversion of Deliverables to Impact | In collaboration with the work package responsible for sustainability, explore external stakeholder organisations that can facilitate awareness/ engagement with policymakers . | Communicate with the policy-maker segment using best practice in policy briefing formats. Identify dissemination opportunities such as meetings and conferences. |

Recommendation: Ideally, a joint action’s dissemination plan will link with a broader dissemination strategy for the EU Health Programme.

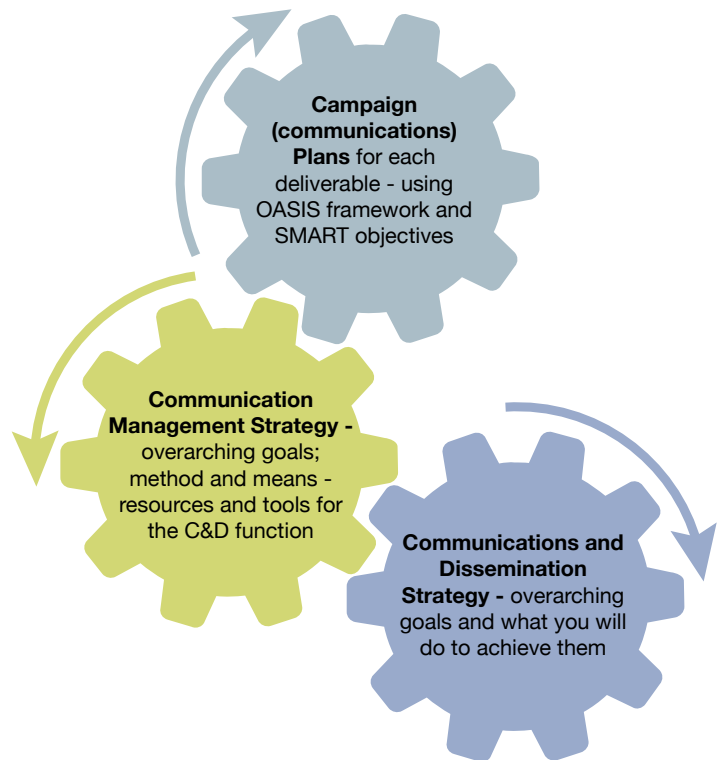
A communications management strategy

Although the C&D function has a broad description and timing for each activity at the outset of a joint action, a communication management strategy has greater utility in the proposal and early stage of a project rather than the communications strategy stated as a requirement.

A user centred, communication management strategy contains the overarching strategic communications goals; a description of the resource - people, tools - and the means and frequency of communication - systems, processes - to parties both internal and external to the project. Plus, the key over-arching messages that align with EU policy.

These strategies subsequently facilitate [a campaign approach](#) to the C&D delivery of detailed communications plans meeting the specific objectives of each technical work package; the types of tasks and deliverables; plus, relevant and timely key messages for different target audiences.

Figure 2: A strategical way to achieve the overall aims of the communications and dissemination function



Recommendation: Consider a communication management strategy as a requirement at the proposal stage of a project.

Section three: Organising and managing the communications and dissemination function

The communications and dissemination of joint actions can be complex, requiring good organisational and management skills. For example, in SHARP Joint Action there were 10 work packages delivering over 80 planned activities – tasks and deliverables – plus, ad hoc unplanned third-party opportunities such as events organised by outside organisations.

When developing the Communication Management Strategy, C&D work package leads need to consider how operational effectiveness of the communications function will be maintained. One widely available option lies in Microsoft O365 suite of tools. O365 Planner, for example, provides a simple, visual way to organise the work by creating tasks for each campaign. Visibility of all activity in one place helps avoid bottlenecks and identifies synergies. It also makes evaluation and reporting easier.

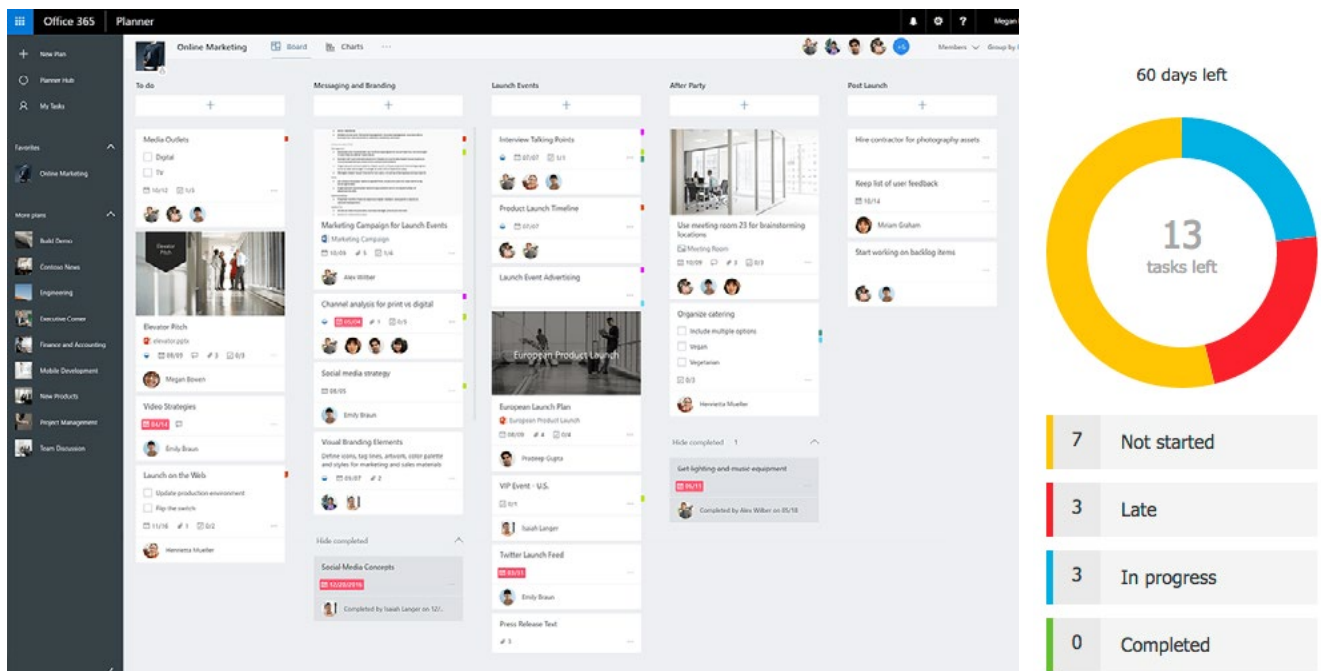


Figure 3: A project management approach to Communications and Dissemination using O365 Planner

Whatever tool is used for organising the work, collaboration and visibility with partners is essential. Whatever platform is chosen, it is advisable to consider the technical and cyber security requirements of working across multiple organisations.

Recommendation: Explore the collaboration functionality within the secure Health Policy Platform networks.⁶

Recommendation: Explore the free to use PM² - The European Commission's Official Project Management Methodology⁷

Section four: Understand the external environment in which your project operates

Communicators need to be proactive in ensuring that the knowledge we gain from joint actions is communicated effectively and include relevant *'calls to action'* to ensure it can be applied to member state contexts.

Knowing the external environment is necessary to identify external audiences and sectors. The focus of SHARP Joint Action is *preparedness to all hazards cross border threats* – a broad and complex topic, with numerous stakeholders.

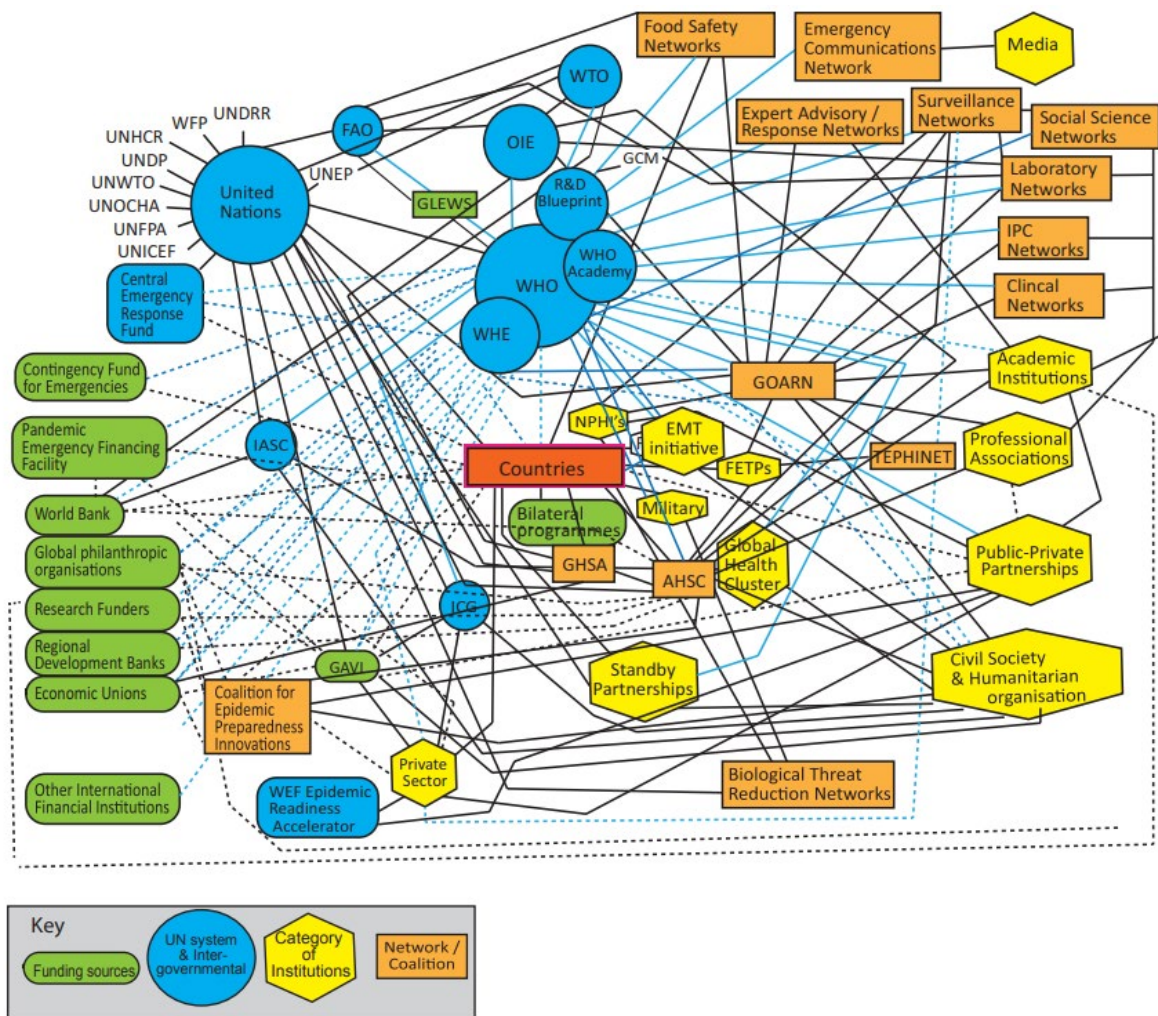


Figure 4: The global architecture of emergency preparedness and response before Covid-19. Image: [The Global Preparedness Monitoring Board \(GPMB\)](#).

Knowledge of the broader EU strategy to enable communications to link with the delivery of EU ambitions is a key requirement of joint action communications. The whole infrastructure of policy is constantly changing and keeping up with changes can be challenging.

European-level health policy and infrastructure

EU countries hold primary responsibility for organising and delivering health services and medical care. EU health policy therefore serves to complement national policies, to ensure health protection in all EU policies and to work towards a stronger Health Union.

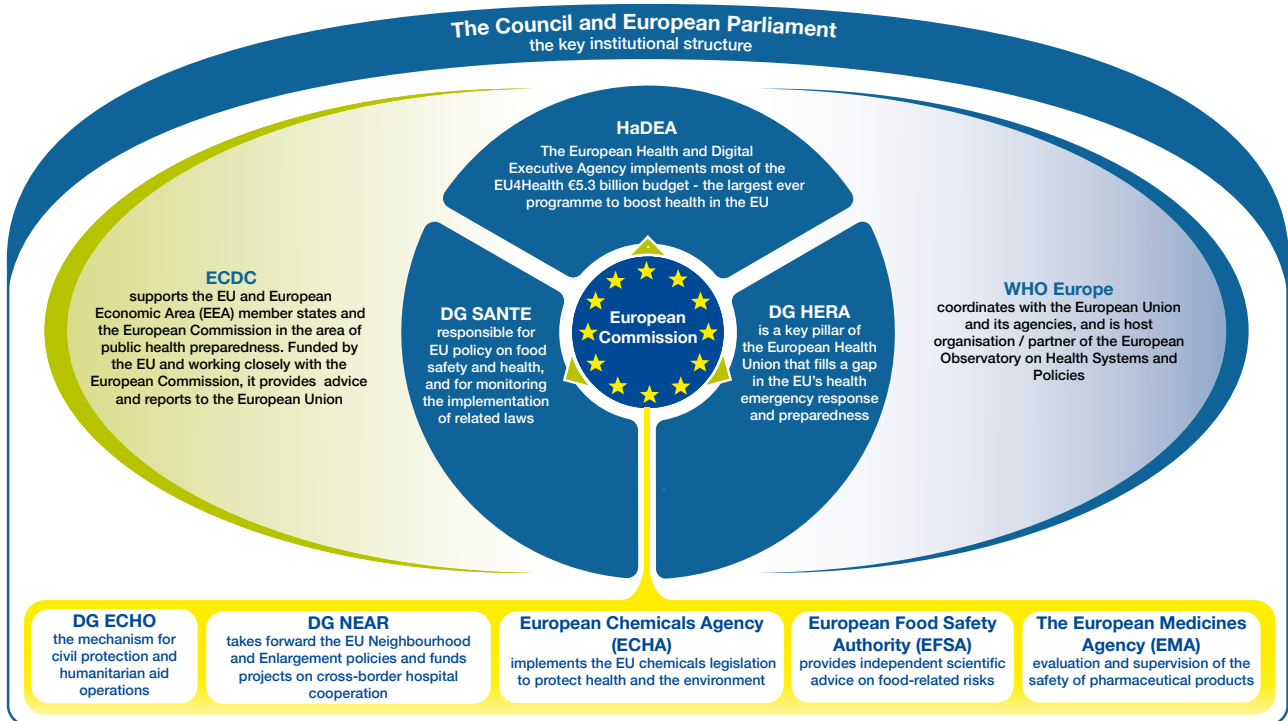


Figure 5: Diagram showing the organisations involved and their responsibilities in European level health policy 2023

During the timeline of the SHARP Joint Action, the EU health policy infrastructure changed significantly. This organogram helps convey the key players and their role. In the context of SHARP Joint Action DG Sante; WHO; HaDEA and ECDC were represented in the partnership – forming part of the internal audience.

Agile management of change and continuous improvement in strategic communications

Expect and ensure the elements of the initial communications and dissemination strategy put forward in the proposal to be refined during the joint action as dynamic internal and external environments change.

Shifting scenarios will demand increased efforts to coordinate and communicate.

Strategic communicators should maintain awareness of the external environment (through, for example, [social media listening](#)) for potential impacts/opportunities and synergies for the joint action/ communications of new developments, announcements, and initiatives.

Then consider what refinements might be necessary to stakeholder audiences, channels, and messaging for campaigns.

Tools for monitoring changes/developments in the external environment

Here are some of the tools SHARP Joint Action employed to keep abreast of changes:

- News alert subscriptions allow communicators to keep their messaging fresh and coherent with the wider environment.
 - ◆ [European Commission: subscription for email alerts from the Press corner](#)
 - ◆ What's new on DG Health & Food Safety Website, [SANTE - Newsletter Archives \(europa.eu\)](#)
 - ◆ [Latest EU Health Policy Updates](#)
 - ◆ [WHO Health Emergencies Newsletter](#)
 - ◆ Advance Articles subscriptions, e.g., [Oxford Academic](#)
 - ◆ Subscriptions to news alerts of professional associations, e.g., IANPHI Insider info@ianphi.org
- [Social media following](#). SHARP Joint Action follows 786 Twitter channels

Section five: Audience segments

The communications and dissemination plans depend on who you want to reach and what they can level of influence they have on project. These stakeholders - the different individuals, groups, and organisations that have a vested interest in the project or will be affected by its outcomes, “opinion makers” such as educators, researchers/research services, etc., who can act as catalysts for the dissemination process - need to be identified.

The dissemination strategy should be based on a stakeholder analysis. A stakeholder is anyone who has an interest in the success, or failure, of the project. A stakeholder analysis is an exercise in which stakeholders are identified, listed, and assessed in term of their interest in the project and importance for its success and further dissemination.

The three key stakeholder segments specified for SHARP Joint Action are shown here:

Global/regional policy level:

Key stakeholders that are important to the success of the project and should act as ‘champions’ or communications channels to ensure your project has a high profile and that the results are made known.

- World Health Organization
- World Health Organization European Regional Office
- EU Commission
 - ◆ DG SANTE
 - ◆ DG ECHO
- European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC)
- The Scientific Committee for Health, Environment and Emerging Risks (SCHEER)

National policy and coordination level:

Key at the dissemination stage as a route to impact/sustainability of the deliverables. These operate in fragmented and multi-level political systems

- Health and health security policy makers
- National focal points (NFPs) for the International Health Regulations (2005)
- Health security committee representatives
- ECDC preparedness and response NFPs
- National public health agencies
- Food safety authorities
- Chemical safety authorities

Operational level:

Potential to influence those who have responsibility for devising and enacting operational plans

- Health provider organisations
- Local and regional public health officers
- Public health laboratories
- Local and regional outbreak investigation teams

[Appendix three](#) shows how desk research of organisations under each segment expanded to an audience of over 70+ organisations.

The internal audience - engagement of partners within the joint action

The members of a project consortium need to stay well informed on the progress of the project. Communication is key to keep all partners actively involved in the programme, part of the work package one coordination function. Communications are typically used to:

- Inform
- Consult
- Involve
- Collaborate
- Empower

Adequate internal dissemination can also ensure that the project has a high profile as there is usually a general obligation of the beneficiaries to promote the action. However, capturing metrics from member organisations on the reach and engagement of information cascaded to the networks of member organisations can be challenging.

External audiences

The impact of a joint action usually lies in changes to policy or practise. It is likely that certain elements of the joint action, such as guidelines, methods, evaluation criteria, scenarios, questionnaires, etc. can be used by a wider audience.

These elements can be shared with the wider community through a variety of channels - articles, conference presentations, case studies, etc.

Ideally, a direct communication via email is desirable and this is where existing partner organisation networks are useful for cascading content. However there can be lack of visible metrics in this approach. A tactic that meets the General Data Protection Regulation (EU GDPR), i.e., not *cold* emailing without permissions; contact lists not shared by partners, etc., is to include a share/follow [call to action](#) in all content. SHARP was able to extend its core emailing database of internal contacts by 133% through *subscribe to receive updates* links on [the website](#) and within emails.

Audience segments (groups) operate in challenging environments⁸ which means they are difficult to engage. In each instance, aligning the [key messages](#) for the joint action with the priorities of goals of the stakeholder organisation increases the likelihood of engagement.

A good example from SHARP Joint Action of an important external stakeholder is the EC Health Security Committee (HSC) whose influence and their role in policy making was strengthened by the SCBTH legislation in 2022.

[HSC Priority issues](#) provide short, effective statements that we were able to adopt in campaign messaging.

- Detection and communication – preparedness requires timely detection and rapid distribution of information to relevant stakeholders.
- Threat and risk assessment – HSC collects data on threats and risks from relevant EU agencies, and shares these with national authorities.
- Preparedness – HSC seeks to expand national capacity for preparedness by offering technical assistance and guidelines.
- Scientific advice – responding to a public health crisis requires rapid mobilisation of experts, and expert opinions are shared via alert and communication systems.
- Crisis management and testing of plans – with the help of national authorities the HSC has developed protocols and guidelines for best preparedness practices and has tested emergency plans through several exercises.
- Cooperation – HSC supports preparedness across sectors and internationally, supporting and promoting the WHO international health regulations and creating links between alert systems across Europe and more globally.

Other EU projects

Sharing project results with coordinators and key actors of projects dealing with similar topics, both within the programme and in other programmes such as Horizon, will further visibility and uptake of results, and provide opportunities to receive feedback, share experiences and discuss joint problems and issues.

The EU Health Programme community

Of the numerous groups within the EU Health Programme community, the following were identified as priority audiences for SHARP Joint Action:

National focal points (NFPs) for the IHR

National centres that ensure effective coordination, communication, and partnerships to prevent, detect, assess, and respond to any public health events. Member states ensure sustainable functioning of the IHR NFPs for IHR communications, coordination, and partnership.

EU4Health programme

NFP4H focal points are national experts for the Health Programme in EU countries and participating countries are a key audience for SHARP deliverables as their role is to assist in:

- Health Programme implementation at national level
- Health Programme dissemination of results
- Information on the impact generated by the Health Programme in their respective countries

In turn, Health Programme focal points provide a dissemination route to their national health ministries, and in turn, policymakers.

National policymakers

Stakeholder engagement with the health security policy-maker segment has several challenging characteristics and elements.

| Goal | Engagement (e.g., time spent) |
|-------------------|---|
| Target | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These operate in fragmented and multi-level political systems • Intersectoral/ multilayer/ community/ Inter-ministerial Level • Ministerial hierarchy is not universal across state administrations |
| Method | Educating |
| Journey | Long, complex, and ambiguous |
| Time cycle | Months to years |
| Evaluation | Surveys to establish action/intention to adopt outputs into policy or practice |

There is usually a separate work package dedicated to integration in national policies and sustainability with whom the communications and dissemination function needs to collaborate and support.

The support includes push communications to organisations with a specific, informing/ influencing policy function. For SHARP Joint Action, such organisations included:

- [European Health Forum Gastein](#)
- [European Parliament Committee for Environment, Public Health, and Food Safety \(ENVI\)](#). European Parliament's main actor on health matters and is responsible for over 10% of Parliament's total legislative activity. The Health Working Group

within ENVI is playing an active role in promoting exchanges between MEPs and professional experts on the most topical health issues, through the organisation of thematic workshops. Policy Departments' Monthly Highlights EU health policy | News | European Parliament (europa.eu)

- WHO-hosted, [European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies](#)
- The [Health Systems and Policy Monitor \(HSPM\) Network](#). An international group of high-profile institutions with a prestigious reputation and academic standing in health systems and policy analysis.
- [European Policy Centre \(EPC\)](#) Brussels-based not-for-profit think tank
- [EUREGHA - Bringing regions together for better health](#) European Regional and Local Health Authorities - EUHPP thematic network on healthcare in cross-border regions
- [SAPEA](#) - science advice for policy by European academies
- [FEAM The Federation of European Academies of Medicine](#) aims to advise policymakers on human and animal medicine, biomedical research, education, and health
- [INGSA The International Network for Government Science Advice](#) promotes the use of scientific evidence in informing policy at all levels of government

New data sources, platforms and analytics are changing the way policymakers engage with evidence.

A key sustainable and measurable route to policy influencing is via publication in [scientific journals](#) which are often indexed to databases and libraries. These are trusted sources used in the policy development process to gather evidence from research to inform decision making.

Policy makers are a key audience for impact but will be influenced by the impact on citizens and what they think. Key messages on the value of the joint action's work to the citizen should be included in communications to policymakers who have a vested interest in reassuring their electorate of the on-going investment in health security.

Reaching public audiences

This can be challenging if your joint action addresses strategic level priorities which are often beyond the average citizen.

If direct citizen engagement remains a need of your programme, you will need to resource accordingly for an EU wide audience.

The Eurobarometer surveys might provide data to establish the current public perceptions on a particular topic as a baseline on which to build your campaigns.⁹

Recommendation: Create an audience database

Communications planning is more efficient if the target audiences are captured in a suitable, interactive database, e.g., in Microsoft Access or Excel. Introducing filters by relevance to a work package(s) eases the creation of a segmented audience list for each campaign.

Recommendation: The tactical communications activity should monitor engagement levels amongst the internal audience.

Adopt an internal communications channel with visibility of engagement levels. The simplest indicator is whether emails are opened.

For example, there are different ways to get email analytics in Outlook. In the O365 Admin Center and the Security & Compliance Center, you can find usage reports for email activity. If you have Advanced Power BI, you can add a report to analyse email activity.

Monitoring such data sources provides an indication of engagement which can inform decisions on remediating action.

Section six: Implementation of tactical communication

SHARP Joint Action refined its original strategy in line with the principles of the RACE framework¹⁰ (Reach, Act, Convert and Engage) and underpinned by a ‘campaign approach’ to tactical communication of individual elements.

This section expands on how such a strategy can underpin a campaign approach to communications planning and delivery.

A campaign approach

This involves creating and implementing a campaign plan for each deliverable using a campaign planning framework to bring clarity and order to communications planning. For example, the OASIS framework¹¹.

- Objectives
- Audience/Insight
- Strategy/key messages/content
- Implementation - campaign implementation process
- Scoring (Evaluation)



Figure 6: Guide to campaign planning: OASIS.
Source: The UK Government Communication Service

Types of deliverables

Technical tasks and deliverables are various products and could include, for example:

| Product types | Communications campaign objectives |
|---|---|
| Reports  | Creating awareness and growing the reach of these publications to relevant audiences |
| Surveys  | Encouraging engagement to complete Publication of results |
| Events  | Communication of /recruitment to planned events Promoting outcomes/materials from events |
| Journal publications  | Creating awareness and growing the reach of these publications to relevant audiences |

Strong collaboration with the subject experts – the authors of the task/deliverable – is an essential element of communications planning. Each task/deliverable will require a campaign plan relevant to its specific objectives but broadly following a planned sequence of activities.

A campaign implementation process

A campaign comprises a planned sequence of activities and interactions applied to the communication or dissemination of individual tasks and deliverables.

The following table describes the Campaign Implementation Process adopted by SHARP Joint Action.

| | |
|-----------------------|---|
| Planning | Use the campaign delivery framework to create a plan |
| Approval | Pre-publication planning and approvals process, typically devised by WP1 coordination |
| Publish | Publish the deliverable on relevant work package page of the website |
| Post | Post on the website news blog, back linked to work package deliverable, highlighting segmented, key messages/call to action; optimised using relevant key words to ensure the content is easily found. Including subscribe functionality to grow external audiences |
| Internal Alert | Email news link to the internal audience database |
| Owned Social | Post on social media channels linking back to the news story |
| External Alert | Email a tailored news alert (link to news post) to external audience segments agreed in collaboration with WP lead. Post on the Agora Network |
| Earned Social | Tag social post to organisation platforms of external audiences |
| Evaluate | Analytics to improve future campaigns, reviewing Hits: Time spent: Links followed |

Key messages

A key communication principle for European Health Programme projects is to demonstrate the ways in which the joint action is contributing to a European ‘Health Union’ and account for public spending by providing tangible proof that collaboration adds value by:

- Showing how European collaboration has achieved more than would have otherwise been possible, notably in achieving scientific excellence, contributing to competitiveness, and solving societal challenges.
- Showing how the outcomes are relevant to our everyday lives.
- Making better use of the results, by making sure they are taken up by decision-makers to influence policymaking to ensure follow-up.

Content principles

- Messages should be clear, simple, and easy to understand. The language should be appropriate for the target audience, and non-technical language should be used where possible.
- Messages should be tailored to the receiver(s). It is of paramount importance to carefully consider what they should know about the project. It is possible to send the same message to different audiences, but the relevance of the message to the receiver should be checked each time.
- Messages of different projects related to the same subject can be coordinated to enhance impact.
- Information should be correct and realistic.

Communicating the essence of deliverables

A deliverable’s content (such as an analysis or journal paper) can be complex and not easy to quickly understand.

As a way to make it more engaging, author’s should be encouraged to answer 3 questions:

- One thing you want everyone to understand (e.g., the impact of the problem)
- One difference you think the knowledge/ insight (within the deliverable) will make
- One thing you want people to do with the knowledge/ insight (the call to action)

The answers will inform the content of the communication in easy-to-understand points. This is particularly useful for policymakers who are time poor and may not have a detailed understanding of your topic area.

These key points can then be supported by more detail, e.g.,

- WHAT was being studied?
- WHY was the research/analysis conducted?
- WHO did the research/conducted the enquiry/provided analysis or advice?
- HOW did they do the research or what did they base their advice and analysis on?
- WHEN/WHERE was the research/analysis conducted?
- Was the research REVIEWED in advance for quality considerations?
- What were the OUTCOMES of the research/analysis?

Project research reports tend to be authored by experts in a style not immediately assimilated by readers without deep understanding of the topic area. Authors should be encouraged to structure their report content in a manner that leads the reader in – with an executive summary or summary of key findings at the top of the article helpful for readers, before providing the detailed information that supports the findings.

Alternatively, to use the content of the report as the basis for a policy briefing document.



The infographic is titled "SHARP Policy briefing content" and is set against a background of a map of Europe. It features a grid of seven boxes, each with an icon and a tip. A blue box at the top right contains the text "Content writing best practice tips". A blue box on the left side contains the text "Or, context". A large, colorful graphic on the right side is titled "Visuals matter;". The SHARP logo and the text "Co-funded by the Health Programme of the European Union" are in the top right corner. The website "sharpja.eu" is in the bottom left corner.

SHARP
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Content writing best practice tips

- Have a key message in intro;
- Less is more;
- Get rid of jargon;
- Adapt to the local culture;
- Eliminate wordiness;
- Keep it relevant;
- Visuals matter;

Or, context

sharpja.eu

You can find further best practice and inspiration for communicating to policy makers in [Appendix one: Further reading](#).

Calls to action

A *call to action* is a piece of content intended to induce a viewer, reader, or listener to perform a specific act, typically taking the form of an instruction or directive (e.g., subscribe, or click here as mentioned earlier).

There are two main purposes of a call to action: to tell someone what they should do and give them the motivation to do so.

Calls to action for different types of evidence

It is important to understand the difference between the different types of evidence provided by a deliverable so you can state a clear ‘call to action’ when communicating it.

Authors may find inspiration in the BCURE Value of Evidence Use Framework¹²:

| | Transparent Use | Embedded Use | Instrumental Use |
|-------------|---|---|---|
| Description | Increased understanding and transparent use of (bodies of) evidence by policymakers. | No direct action is taken because of the evidence, but use of evidence becomes embedded in processes, systems and working culture. | Knowledge from robust evidence is used directly to inform policy or programme. |

Key messages segmented (made relevant) to different audiences

Similarly, stakeholder audiences are not homogeneous, and authors/communicators should identify who the evidence can provide most value to, for example:

- Inter government, policy teams and country offices
- One local government ministry
- National level policy

Timing

Although the communications and dissemination work package is established at the outset of the joint action, communication of activities and dissemination of deliverables will not begin immediately. Those early phase months should be focused on set up and familiarisation.

In addition to the considerations raised in [Section three: organising and managing the communications and dissemination function](#), in the early phase it is useful to agree to terms of engagement between the communications and dissemination function and other work packages. A good communicator has the potential of making a valuable contribution to the smooth running of the programme – providing early insight on the audiences for events or products, suggesting collaborations and dissemination opportunities, etc. However, expectations on the level of input that the communications work package can deliver must be realistic.

In policymaking systems, timing relates more to the confluence of events and choices - attention rises to a problem, a solution is available, and key actors have the motive and opportunity to select it.

When planning the dissemination, it is important to decide when different dissemination activities will be most relevant. The ideal timing will depend on the phase of the project and on the current agenda of the target audience.

For instance, at the start of the project, it is best to focus on awareness raising communications and building engagement; at the end, on highlighting the achievements and deliverables, encouraging take up in policy or practice.

In terms of the audience segments, the time commitments of the target audience and stakeholders should be considered. For instance, country specific national holidays should be acknowledged, and when working with government bodies, it will be difficult to reach your audience during recesses.

On a tactical note, monitoring the performance of each communication can establish if certain days/times of the day are better for landing a communication.

Channels

While there are a wide variety of dissemination methods, it is important to select the right ones to get your message to the target audience segments via their preferred channels.

- Make it Easy (limited clicks)
- Make it Attractive (succinct and personalised)
- Make it Social
- Make it Timely

Survey of SHARP JA partners to gather qualitative indicators - views and attitudes - on the work of Work Package 2 Communication and dissemination

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | TOTAL | WEIGHTED AVERAGE |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|-------|------------------|
| Website | 6.06% 2 | 12.12% 4 | 18.18% 6 | 39.39% 13 | 24.24% 8 | 33 | 3.64 |
| Social media channels | 19.23% 5 | 11.54% 3 | 19.23% 5 | 30.77% 8 | 19.23% 5 | 26 | 3.19 |
| Email newsletters | 10.34% 3 | 6.90% 2 | 13.79% 4 | 31.03% 9 | 37.93% 11 | 29 | 3.79 |
| Third party events | 12.50% 3 | 20.83% 5 | 16.67% 4 | 29.17% 7 | 20.83% 5 | 24 | 3.25 |
| Scientific publication | 10.34% 3 | 17.24% 5 | 10.34% 3 | 41.38% 12 | 20.69% 6 | 29 | 3.45 |
| SHARP leaflet (hard copy or online) | 7.41% 2 | 14.81% 4 | 14.81% 4 | 44.44% 12 | 18.52% 5 | 27 | 3.52 |
| Press releases/New posts | 12.00% 3 | 16.00% 4 | 24.00% 6 | 32.00% 8 | 16.00% 4 | 25 | 3.24 |

Figure 7: Snapshot of SHARP JOINT ACTION partner preferences for channels

The project partners as channels

The organisations engaged in the joint action provide a core channel for the communication and dissemination of outputs.

There is an argument to strengthen the obligation of the beneficiaries to promote the action.

Key stakeholders are important to the success of the project and should be encouraged to act as ‘champions’/trusted messengers to ensure the project has a high profile and that the results are made known.

| Channel Strategy | Why – trusted messengers help ‘cut through the noise’ |
|---|--|
| Leveraging the reputation, networks, and existing, public health dissemination structures (where available) of the WP teams | Work package (WP) Lead/Co-lead organisations were selected for their established expertise and reputation. This means they are a trusted messenger and more likely to achieve engagement for the lesser-known and temporary joint action brand. |
| Utilise the networks of advisors; executive agencies; affiliated entities within SHARP Joint Action to cascade communications to the external audiences | Similarly, advisors; executive agencies; affiliated entities* are recognised authorities, embedded in a variety of ecosystems , with the gravitas to be noticed. Large organisations with established relationships and networks. Again, trusted messengers for better engagement. |

Figure 8: The role of project partners in the SHARP Joint Action communications channel strategy

Encourage wider dissemination by including a ‘forward this to your network’ *call to action* in your content along with a button that points to your subscribe form to collect new contacts.

Plus, explore the possibilities of an e-bulletin template supplied to advisor partners and bulk emailed via the partner’s existing, permission-based system. Although gaining metrics from this tactic may be challenging.

Finally, larger advisor stakeholders may own channels that can be employed in your campaigns. See [Appendix four: Potential channels owned by SHARP Joint Action advisor stakeholders](#).

The joint action website

The joint action website provides the crux for meeting strategic communications aims and an important data source for evaluation indicators.

| Communications Objective | Website Actions |
|--|--|
| Reach and Awareness | SEO content employing key word techniques to GROW the audience, ensuring the deliverables can be found |
| Engagement (Involve/ Consult/ Collaborate) and Conversion of Deliverables to Impact | <p>Regularly updating content on each work package (WP) page on sharpja.eu to provide context/narrative. Making it more effective for other partners to see what's going on and for wider dissemination. In this way a compelling narrative, built over time, will convey the activity and impact for each work package.</p> <p>Each WP page to facilitate publishing of deliverables and a specific campaign. The narrative is referenced to create a news post, email update and social media posts</p> <p><u>Calls to action:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>subscribe to updates on all pages</i> • <i>share via social on news pages - Twitter; LinkedIn; Facebook</i> |

Highly important is observing the [EU Accessibility Directive](#). The legislation requires that all downloadable documents and forms published on public sector websites be made accessible.

Wider than that, all content and materials should consider accessibility requirements at their design and development stage.

EU Health Policy Platform

The EU Health Policy Platform is a collaborative platform to strengthen and facilitate communication between health stakeholders and the Commission. Among its objectives are to provide a framework for dialogue and encourage targeted discussions, ensure transparency in health policy dialogue, and contribute to building knowledge and expertise on public health issues.

The Platform enables health stakeholder organisations to share knowledge on EU-health issues, engage in a laboratory of ideas and enter in an interactive dialogue with the Commission services.

Within the Platform, the Agora Network is the place for the exchange and discussion of general and cross-cutting health issues. The Agora is accessible for all registered Platform users. Posts are shared in a twice weekly email round up to >8,000 registered users.



Figure 9: An example of a SHARP Joint Action post on the Agora Network

Other health policy platform networks

These may offer potential channels to meet joint action sustainability / continuity objectives.

The Thematic Networks are the place for collaboration on defined themes with the purpose of developing a joint statement by a group of stakeholder organisations. Thematic Networks can be restricted or open to all registered Platform users, depending on the need of the group.

The EU Stakeholders and Expert Groups are spaces reserved for ad-hoc groups of experts and member states representatives currently working in collaboration with the Commission. The access to those groups is restricted to identified members.

A project can create its own network, or join other relevant networks, e.g., Sustainability of joint action results group.



Figure 10: This group is for joint action coordinators and leaders of the work package on sustainability and implementation of the joint action results into national policies. It allows for exchange of key documents and experiences when implementing this work package.

Electronic newsletters and flyers

Digital direct mail is a measurable channel for raising awareness about the project but requires close management. Including the following considerations:

- Careful attention should be given to how to build stakeholder lists
- There is a need to meet the requirements of General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) Regulation (EU) 2016/679¹³. This requires consent to receive further information. Supportive stakeholder organisations can't supply contact lists due to GDPR. You can't cold email without permissions explicit via a subscribe function. So, generating an external stakeholder list will need subscriptions via, for example, the website for wider, measurable dissemination.
- Researching and then using generic email addresses (sometimes called 'role addresses'), of organisations reduces the possibility of engagement.
- Monitor campaigns for undelivered emails as IT system blocking may be a hurdle, e.g., if Public Health Wales (PHW) simply forwards the SHARP JA e-bulletin, the PHW IT system identifies a 'spoof'. Spoofing of wales.nhs.uk email addresses is not allowed and is a common method used by spammers to spread malware and attempt phishing attacks. The email will not be released/or is blocked by recipient systems.

- Always include a call to action in direct emails that will generate permission granted contacts, e.g.
 - ◆ read more (linked to further information on the website)
 - ◆ subscribe button
 - ◆ share with your network

Social media

For some joint actions, tasks/deliverables content is strategic and of niche interest to a relatively small, professional audience. It is unlikely to attract the volumes of social followers or likes that a consumer-focussed project would.

The social media channels should be selected for relevance to audience segments, plus, resourced for timely management of the channels.

SHARP Joint Action created Twitter; LinkedIn; Facebook; YouTube and SlideShare owned social media channels recognising the following uses and potential issues.

| Link | Uses / considerations |
|---|---|
| https://www.facebook.com/SHARPJointAction/about | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Although Facebook is not recognised as a professional platform in all member states, certain countries view and use it for professional communication; often using their national language. For example, in Greece, Facebook is the main social media channel used by the public health agency. ● Provides content in a way that is easily shared with partners national networks. ● It was notable in SHARP Joint Action’s experience that the best engagement came from posts shared by Work Package lead organisations. ● However, efficient capturing of engagement metrics when WPs have communicated with through their own channels will need consideration |
| https://twitter.com/SHARP_EU | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● There are a broad range of use-cases for Twitter, including how it can be used to create profile for research, bring together communities of interest and spark debate. ● One tactic to consider is tagged posts to external audience organisations to grow reach. ● Risks include the potential to attract negative posts. Potential mitigation is to use Twitter as broadcast channel & don’t reply on this handle. |

| Link | Uses / considerations |
|---|---|
| SHARP - Joint Action: Company Page LinkedIn | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An established professional networking site • Provides content in a way that is easily re-posted to national networks • Allows following of relevant associations and societies • You can share long-form content as articles. |
| SHARP Joint Action - YouTube Video sharing platform | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not everyone thinks of YouTube as social media, but it is the fastest growing of the platforms. • Used to sustainably disseminate recordings of events |
| SlideShare open access slide sharing platform | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Used to extend the sustainable reach of presentation content to external audiences • Provides useful metrics on #downloads not available via Google analytics |

Social media management and listening

Following the social channels of major stakeholders (media listening) allows easy monitoring of new initiatives to keep abreast of [the operating environment](#). Sophisticated listening tools exist which allow for social media surveillance and intelligence gathering. There are many open-source guides available on the internet explaining how to maximise this technology.

It can also help identify new stakeholders entering the environment allowing additions to the [external audience database](#).

Plus, inform work on continuously improving your website search engine optimization (SEO) by monitoring new key word trends.

A range of platforms efficiently allow social campaign planning and presentation-ready social media reports, filterable by platform and date. This provides ease of monitoring how your posts are performing in terms of referral traffic and conversions analytics.

Scientific journals for dissemination

As mentioned under [National Policymakers](#) scientific journals are trusted sources used in the policy development process to gather evidence from research to inform decision making. Policy programmes need access to research because research informed health policies and policy documents contribute to better health systems and health outcomes.

Content can be not only research papers – reports of data from original research – but also:

- Review Papers – comprehensive, authoritative, reviews within the journal’s scope
- Short Reports – brief reports of data from original research.
- Study Protocols – articles describing a research protocol of a study.
- Letters to the Editor – a response to authors of an original publication, or a small article that may be relevant to readers.
- Editorials

These titles also provide the advantage of being strongly followed on Twitter and by journalists which is useful for extending the reach of a paper. Publications can provide metrics to demonstrate the impact of a research paper, but not always in a uniform away.

Three publishers with relevance for SHARP Joint Action

- ECDC [Eurosurveillance 17.7K Followers](#)
- [European Publishing](#) - Population Medicine and Pneumon
- [Frontiers in Microbiology](#) 21.4K Followers

The technical work package leads should know the relevant journals for their topic.

Publication fees up to 2000 euro are often applied by scientific journals.

Paid-for scientific journal tracking tools such as Altmetric monitor the influence of research outputs and demonstrate the societal reach and influence for evaluation reports. Altmetric includes a function that identifies when a paper has been downloaded or cited in policy – a useful metric for recording impact.¹⁴

Conference, webinar and event presentations

These are ways to promote the project and its outcomes to a wider audience. Either by creating a joint action event or presenting at third party events.

In either case, attendance can be costly in terms of both time and money. The opportunity should be maximised with campaign plans to address communications objectives from awareness, audience growth, recruitment, to post event dissemination.

Public consultations and calls for evidence

Responding to relevant public consultations is a useful way to raise profile and convey insights on your joint action theme. Responding forms part of stakeholder engagement as it demonstrates the joint action's commitment and contribution to EU strategy. It is a sustainable manner of raising awareness of the joint action as contributions received are captured in widely available reports for some initiatives. For example, SHARP Joint Action contributed to the Public Consultation on the EU third health programme 2014-2020 in April 2022.

The EC "[Have your say](#)" portal is a useful source of information on European Commission consultations. You can subscribe to email alerts on new consultations.

If your joint action has a legislative consideration, it could get value from "[The Fit for Future platform](#)" which takes suggestions on prescribed topics when making its recommendations to the European Commission. The topics in the 2023 work programme can be viewed [here](#).

Evaluation

Like all other elements of a project, dissemination activities have specific aims and key performance indicators. To find out if the dissemination strategy was well chosen and well implemented, it is important to build an evaluation component into all major dissemination activities to monitor the quality and to see if they have achieved their aims.

For example, the success of

- a website can be evaluated by checking the usage logs
- recruitment to training sessions can be evaluated by the number of registrations
- journal publications can be evaluated by the number of citations
- a social media post can be evaluated by reach - the potential unique viewers (usually your follower count plus accounts that shared the post's follower counts).

Evaluate activity and ensure demonstrable outcomes

By measuring and evaluating communication outcomes practitioners ensure there is an appropriate and robust approach to evaluating strategies and plans. They will measure what matters to assess the effectiveness of communication activity in the short, medium, and long-term. This involves user-level metrics:

- monitoring communication activities throughout the implementation phase by collecting, analysing, and evaluating output and outcome measures.
- where appropriate aligning communication and to identify the contribution communication has made to the overall mix of deliverables. This relies on early collaboration between the technical work packages and the communication and dissemination function.

- sharing lessons learnt to inform and continuously improve future communication plans. The tools and channels typically use by marketers offer a range of analytics that facilitates evaluation of communications platforms and campaign channels/ messages/audiences.
- circulating evaluation highlight reports to the partners.

Campaign evaluation via digital tools to drive continuous improvement

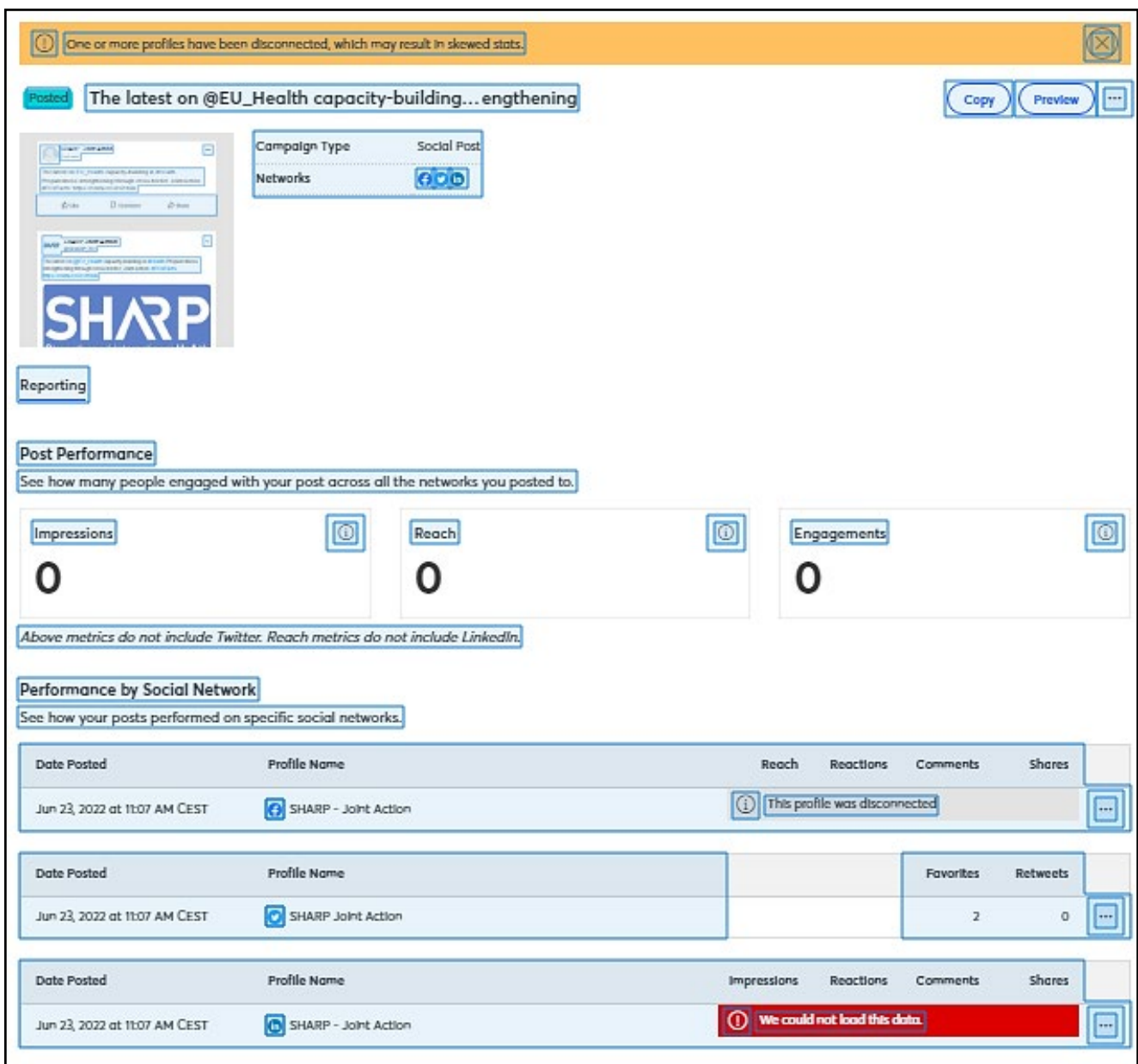
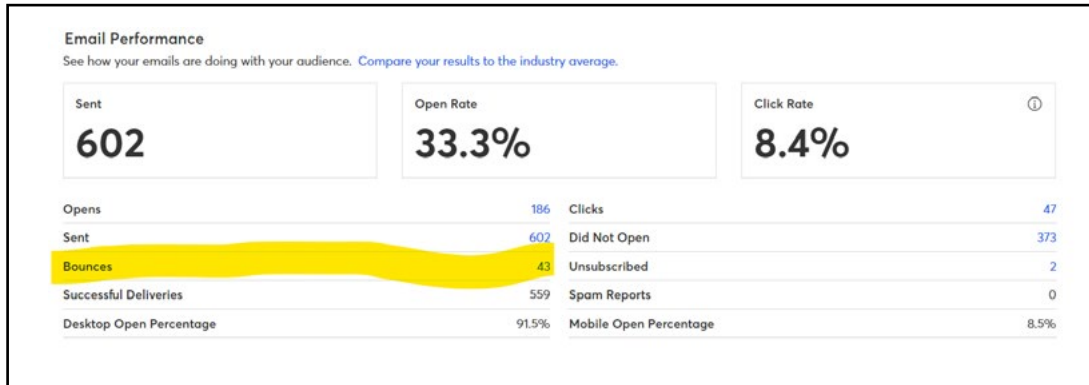


Figure 11: A screenshot of campaign analytics generated by the Constant Contact digital marketing tool.

A practical example of how campaign evaluation using the analytics feature in the Constant Contact digital marketing platform contributes to wider activity. A post campaign review revealed a problem with social media accounts which we were able to fix.

This tool also captured where emails were undelivered and prompted a check on whether the individual had moved on. This allowed better management of the SHARP Joint Action contact list.



Measuring outcomes - the impact of dissemination activity

In the absence of a comprehensive system of indicators for the assessment of the use of evidence in public administration and governance¹⁵, joint actions face difficulties in capturing the results of its dissemination activity. As recommended under the heading, [scientific journals for dissemination](#), one paid-for tool is Altmetric which provides a simple (but not comprehensive) way of understanding who is engaging with research online and what they're saying. It reports if a paper is cited in one of the policy documents that Altmetric tracks.

Outside of the journal publications, the joint action evaluators could consider a survey of policy makers as the data source for the effectiveness of dissemination. This could capture dissemination indicators for Outcomes, such as these:

| Metric | Online/ offline | Definition | Measurement |
|--|--------------------|--|---|
| Adopting evidence in policy or practice (#, %) | Offline | The number and proportion of target audience that has changed behaviour | Absolute number and proportion of target audience |
| Stated/intended behaviour change | Offline | The proportion of target audience that claim they will act in accordance with dissemination aim | Absolute number and proportion of target audience |
| Advocacy e.g., agreement with principles presented in the evidence | Offline | The number and proportion of target audience that agree with the dissemination message (have positive sentiment) | 5-point scale recommended (strongly agree/slightly agree/ don't know etc) |

Recommendation: Include a campaign delivery framework

The communication management strategy can demonstrate a structure on how communications and dissemination plans will be managed, delivered, and evaluated for each work package deliverable.

Within this a campaign delivery framework facilitates specific communications plans following a campaign implementation process. This is explored further under [a campaign approach](#).

Recommendation: Work package lead organisations should consider how to involve their organisation's own communications resources

There is usually a general obligation of the beneficiaries to promote the action. Funding managers could consider that technical work package lead organisations explicitly commit their organisation's communications resources as part of the package. This would facilitate structured and well managed communications plans for each WP, working with the communications teams from lead partner organisations. This approach could

- mitigate a lack of impetus for busy technical teams with low levels of communications expertise to engage with the communications work package
- ensure strong national context and visibility in the lead organisation's country, employing existing national networks
- see external opportunities and synergies are not missed/ or not maximised because of late engagement between technical WPs and WP2
- visibility of metrics relating to member organisations cascading information to their national networks

It is important that sufficient joint action resources should be dedicated to the important communication and dissemination activities that achieve impact.

Recommendation: Early consideration to ensure visibility of the deliverables after the end of the Joint Action

The joint action website is a key source of information providing an overview of activity. Dissemination communications signpost to the website and its links to deliverables/activities.

Engagement with national policymakers can be short to long term and it is important that maintaining the website beyond the term of the joint action is budgeted to keep the domain active and hosting of the website managed.

Recommendation: Think how the functionality of your website can enhance external engagement and build followers. Ensure the right analytics are enabled at the planning stage of your website

Recommendation: Making documents accessible should be the responsibility of each WP and joint action partners should consider including in their budget the resources of an accessibility officer for guidance on meeting EU Accessibility Directive requirements

Recommendation: Funders could consider making it mandatory to create a joint action network within the Health Policy Platform

Recommendation: Invest in a digital tools to manage campaigns efficiently

Some tools, like [Constant Contact](#), provide an automated route to sharing the email content via your owned social media channels.

Plus, provide campaign analytics - open; read; clicks; shares - for monitoring engagement; decision-making on continuously improving content and formats.

Recommendation: Joint actions should invest in social media management tools

Recommendation: Early consideration should be given to budget allowances for investment in scientific journals as the key dissemination channel for impact

Recommendation: Investing in a paid-for scientific journal tracking tool such as [Altmetric](#)

Recommendation: Accessing data on PDF downloads data in Google analytics requires the file downloads setting is enabled. Another source of download data can be created by uniformly using the same URL shortening tools (e.g., Tiny URL or Tracking bit.ly) which provides number of downloads in their analytics

Recommendation: Consider communications campaign performance metrics and impact metrics. Suggestions for campaign performance metrics feature in Appendix six

Section seven: Conclusion

Communications and dissemination are core activities, essential to the successful delivery of Joint Action outcomes. Without sharing the knowledge that is generated, involving a range of actors, and creating compelling reasons to act, we cannot influence improvements to health policy or practice.

This guide is not intended to provide a prescriptive plan for future Joint Action communications work, but rather a set of tools that professional communicators can apply in the specific content of pan-European projects.

The references and methodologies will evolve over time, but we hope that this document provides a practical and useful way to transfer the knowledge and experience gained by Work Package 2 leads on the SHARP Joint Action. In this way, we can contribute to success for others who follow.

Appendix one: Sources and further reading

Endnotes

- 1 [Communicating about your EU-funded project \(europa.eu\)](#)
- 2 [Measuring Evidence Uptake | Nesta](#)
- 3 [The PESTEL Framework Explained: 6 Important Factors \(pestleanalysis.com\)](#)
- 4 [A brief overview of the Preparedness and Resilience for Emerging Threats initiative \(PRET\) \(who.int\)](#)
- 5 [RACE marketing model definition - What is? - Digital marketing Glossary \(davechaffey.com\)](#)
- 6 [EU Health Policy Platform - EU Health Policy Platform \(europa.eu\)](#)
- 7 [What is PM² - PM² Alliance \(pm2alliance.eu\)](#)
- 8 Packer, C., Halabi, S.F., Hollmeyer, H. et al. A survey of International Health Regulations National Focal Points experiences in carrying out their functions. Global Health 17, 25 (2021). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12992-021-00675-7>.
- 9 <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/at-your-service/en/be-heard/eurobarometer/spring-2021-survey>
- 10 [Marketing campaign strategy: The RACE Framework your 5 step plan \(smartinsights.com\)](#)
- 11 [Guide to campaign planning: OASIS - GCS \(civilservice.gov.uk\)](#)
- 12 [How is evidence actually used in policymaking? A new framework from a global DFID programme | From Poverty to Power \(oxfam.org.uk\)](#)
- 13 [Data protection in the EU \(europa.eu\)](#)
- 14 [Measuring Evidence Uptake December 2019](#)
- 15 Source: Joint Research Centre (JRC), the European Commission's science and knowledge service Understanding-our-political-nature.pdf, 2019.

Further reading

Horizon 2020 Communicating EU research and innovation guidance for project participants. [Improving communication and dissemination activities beyond the scientific community \(europa.eu\)](#)

CHAFEA Factsheet 6 Elaborating dissemination plan.doc (europa.eu) - useful but does not feature social media in the list of dissemination methods [factsheet-06 \(1\).pdf \(europa.eu\)](#)

Funding & tender opportunities Reference Documents (europa.eu) [Reference Documents \(europa.eu\)](#)

European Research Council [Communicating about your EU-funded project \(europa.eu\)](#)

How to disseminate your research Obvious and Not-So-Obvious Strategies to Disseminate Research. Health Promotion Practice, 7(3), 306-311. [How to disseminate your research | NIHR](#)

[What is Stakeholder Management? - The Ultimate Guide \(darzin.com\)](#)

#EU4Facts Science for Policy - Maximise your Policy Impact Competence Framework – ‘Evidence for policy’ for researcher [Competence Framework ‘Science for Policy’ for researchers | Knowledge for policy \(europa.eu\)](#)

[Communicating Science in a Policy Context to a Broader Audience - ScienceDirect](#) <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-12-822596-7.00015-2>

[Dissemination & Exploitation - Open Access - H2020 Online Manual \(europa.eu\)](#)

Communicating Your Project - H2020 Online Manual (europa.eu) Dissemination Planning Tool: Exhibit A from Volume 4.

[Understanding our political nature: how to put knowledge and reason at the heart of political decision-making | Knowledge for policy \(europa.eu\)](#)

Cairney, P., Kwiatkowski, R., [How to communicate effectively with policymakers: combine insights from psychology and policy studies | Humanities and Social Sciences Communications \(nature.com\)](#) combined insights from psychology and policy studies. Palgrave Commun 3, 37 (2017). <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-017-0046-8>

[ICPA policy briefs essential guide.pdf \(icpolicyadvocacy.org\)](#)

Appendix two: Practical EU guidelines

[Information and tips on how to communicate and raise visibility of your project and the European Union.](#)

Content Guidelines:

[SUPPORT KIT FOR EU VISIBILITY \(europa.eu\)](#)

[Digital content production guidelines](#)

[Communicating and raising EU visibility](#)

Visual Guidelines:

[EC visual identity](#)

[Graphic guide to EU emblem](#)

[EU emblem rules](#)

[Download centre for visual elements](#)

Accessibility Guidelines

[Shaping Europe's digital future](#)

Copyright Rules:

[Audio-visual service](#)

Disclaimers for communications content

The EU is not responsible for the contents of communication materials related to EU-funded or co-funded actions prepared by implementing partners, all of which must include a standard disclaimer, translated into (the) local language(s) where appropriate.

FOR PUBLICATIONS IN PRINT OR ELECTRONIC FORMAT: 'This publication was funded/ co-funded by the European Union. Its contents are the sole responsibility of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union.'

FOR WEBSITES AND SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS: 'This is funded/co-funded by the European Union. Its contents are the sole responsibility of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union.'

FOR VIDEOS AND OTHER AUDIO-VISUAL MATERIAL: 'This was funded/ co-funded by the European Union. Its contents are the sole responsibility of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union.'

Appendix three: Potential external audiences

Link to an Excel file which details over 70+ organisations within the stakeholder segments listed below with descriptions; links to websites; Twitter (now X) handles, and suggested hash tags:

<https://sharpja.eu/wp-content/uploads/sites/10/2023/08/SHARP-Joint-Action-External-audience-database.xlsx>

- Global/regional policy level
- Other EU projects / JOINT ACTIONS
- National policy and coordination level
- Operational level
- Researchers: educators & professional bodies

Appendix four: Potential channels owned by SHARP Joint Action advisor/supra-national stakeholders

WHO

- WHO academy
- WHO Centre of Excellence in public health laboratories (Lyon Office)
- HPP Exchange (Thematic) Network on the EU Health Policy Platform
- Weekly epidemiological record
- <https://eurohealthobservatory.who.int/monitors/health-systems-monitor/overview>
- COVID-19 Health System Response Monitor (HSRM). <https://eurohealthobservatory.who.int/covid-19/policy-responses-to-covid-19>
<https://eurohealthobservatory.who.int/publications/health-policy-journals>
- Technical Working Group (TWG) – establishment of an online and offline social listening TWG for current Europe’s emergency response (COVID-19 and Ukraine’s emergency)
- EIPRA – launch of the first European Infodemic Preparedness and Response Alliance including members from health authorities, partners, social media platforms, and fact checkers.
- SIMEX – Ten-steps RCCE Capacity Building Platform Ten steps to RCCE (who.int)
- SocialNet 2023: Western Europe – a flagship training on RCCE and Socio-Behavioural Science in Health Emergencies
- Public Health Panorama
- Health Evidence Network (HEN)
- [Coalition of Partners](#)

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

- Agora Network of the Health Policy Platform
- Publications Office of the European Union
- EuroHealthNet also has an important role in facilitating information exchange between partners through country exchange visits, capacity building actions and working groups. This helps generate capacity and knowledge, so partners can build on the best that Europe has to offer in the field of public health and health promotion.
- <https://www.eurekalert.org/>
- Eurosurveillance
- [Joint Research Centre \(JRC\)](#)
- [European Commission Public Health Best Practice Portal](#)
- Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Knowledge Gateway
- [EU health policy | News | European Parliament \(europa.eu\)](#)

ECDC

- <https://www.escaide.eu>
- [On Air \(podcasts\)](#)
- Listserve electronic mailing list

Appendix five: Summary of recommendations

Ideally, a joint action's dissemination plan will link with a broader dissemination strategy for the EU Health Programme. ([See page 9](#))

Consider a communication management strategy as a requirement at the proposal stage of a project. ([See page 11](#))

Recommendation: Explore the collaboration functionality within the secure Health Policy Platform networks. ([See page 13](#))

Recommendation: Explore the free to use PM² - The European Commission's Official Project Management Methodology. ([See page 13](#))

Create an audience database. ([See page 22](#))

The tactical communications activity should monitor engagement levels amongst the internal audience. ([See page 22](#))

Include a campaign delivery framework. ([See page 43](#))

Work package lead organisations should consider how to involve their organisation's own communications resources. ([See page 43](#))

Early consideration to ensure visibility of the deliverables after the end of the Joint Action. ([See page 43](#))

Think how the functionality of your website can enhanced external engagement and build followers. Ensure the right analytics are enabled at the planning stage of your website. ([See page 44](#))

Making documents accessible should be the responsibility of each WP and joint action partners should consider including in their budget the resources of an accessibility officer for guidance on meeting EU Accessibility Directive requirements. ([See page 44](#))

Funders could consider making it mandatory to create a joint action network within the Health Policy Platform. ([See page 44](#))

Invest in a paid-for bulk email tool to manage campaigns efficiently. ([See page 44](#))

Joint actions should invest in social media management tools. ([See page 45](#))

Early consideration should be given to budget allowances for investment in scientific journals as the key dissemination channel for impact. ([See page 45](#))

Investing in a paid-for scientific journal tracking tool such as Altmetric. ([See page 45](#))

Accessing data on PDF downloads data in Google analytics requires the File downloads setting is enabled. ([See page 45](#))

Consider communications campaign performance metrics and impact metrics. ([See page 45](#))

Appendix six: Suggestions for campaign performance metrics metrics

These are some suggestions selected from the GCS Evaluation Framework 2.0 publication (civilservice.gov.uk). The [AMEC Integrated Evaluation Framework is another useful source.](#)

| Inputs | Data source | Description | Measures |
|------------------|-------------|---|---|
| Content Creation | Offline | Report, Policy brief, Infographics, etc | Volume by type |
| Press release | Online | # Press releases sent out | # Press releases sent out |
| Social Media | Online | # Of releases through owned SM channels | # of releases through owned SM channels |
| Internal | Online | # Intranet stories # Events | |

| Outputs | Measures |
|------------------------|--|
| Media | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> coverage achieved (broken down by national, regional, trade and broadcast) key message penetration - % of coverage including ministerial/spokesperson quote Sentiment – e.g., Eurobarometer or surveys |
| Digital | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> average impressions/reach across content (by channel) website visits (total and unique) |
| Stakeholder engagement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> communications delivered and audience reached (number of emails issued, stakeholders reached) events successfully delivered/attendance supportive statement secured from partners/stakeholders |
| Internal | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> #audience reached (intranet story views) #events successfully delivered/attendance |

| Outakes | Data source | Measures | |
|---|-------------|--|---|
| Active engagements/ interactions | Online | The % of impressions generating an interaction (share/like/comment) | Actions which involve active engagement (e.g., typing, not just 'one-click' endorsements) |
| Passive engagements/ interactions Impressions are how many times a post shows up in someone's timeline | Online | The % of impressions generating an interaction (share/like/ retweet) | A 'one-click' interaction |
| Click through rate (CTR) | Online | Click through rate: the proportion of impressions generating a click- through | % |
| View through rate (VTR) | Online | View through rate: the proportion of impressions meeting a minimum view through percentage | % |
| Dwell time | Online | The average length of time spend on a campaign site | Minutes and seconds |
| Bounce rate | Online | % of site visitors that navigate no further than the landing page | % |
| Internal | Online | Responses/feedback (likes and comments on blogs/news/ click throughs | |
| | Online | Surveyed feedback on event | |