

Guidelines for Writing a Communication Plan

For the DUT research & innovation project results to be used, these must be communicated effectively. The project leader and other designated persons are responsible for ensuring that those who may benefit from your research results and/or innovative solutions understand what you are doing and why it is important, and that project results are put to good use.

To successfully communicate the outcomes from your research and/or innovation to the outside world, you need to plan your work. A communication plan simplifies the process of reaching your target groups, helps you allocate resources effectively, and ensures that your results are used to their full potential. The project communication plan is a dynamic working document, to be revisited and changed throughout the project duration.

Make sure to adapt the content to fit your project by adapting the [Communication Plan Template](#). Read instructions below on how to use it.

For all projects funded in DUT call 2024 and beyond, a Communication plan is a mandatory deliverable.

Project Mission

Communicating about the project needs to be done with intention, deliberately choosing words, tone, and timing to achieve a specific goal.

Start defining the project's narrative by writing a **mission statement**. A mission statement is a few short sentences that briefly, in a non-technical way, explain what the project aims to achieve and how. Use simple language, as if you were explaining the project to a friend. Use the questions below for reflection and guidance:

- What problem or challenge does your project aim to solve?
- What is the specific change you want to see happening? and how does your project plan to achieve this change?
- What is the project's main approach and contribution to the change you want to see?

Key Results

Define what tangible results you will prioritise in your communication activities. Consider the following questions to determine 1-3 tangible results you will focus your project communication efforts on:

- Which of your innovative solutions (product / service / process / policy / social innovations) could be mainstreamed / replicated / scaled-out by cities, businesses or other stakeholders?
- Which of these innovative solutions could change citizens' behaviour/mind-sets, and how?
- Which of these innovative solutions could make an impact on different governance levels / system level if taken up by policymakers and used for political decisions, new/adapted regulations, etc.?

Make a list of **1-3 key results** your project will deliver. Examples of tangible results could be: Business models; Digital platform; Training sessions; Policy briefs; Mobile app; Guidance documents; Prototypes and products; Evidence and Data etc.

Target Groups

The target group(s) describe who benefits from your research and who you want to reach with your communication efforts. They can be the end users of your research. You should write down what your communication efforts should contribute to, such as the target groups' change in attitudes towards the problem, or their needs. Also, what messages you need to use to see the expected change or action taken by target group.

Who are your target group(s)?

Define 1-3 target groups by reflecting on these questions:

- Who should use your results? Think specific. e.g. specific function or role in a municipality, specific type of business etc.
- What problem or challenge does your key result solve for this specific user? When/in what processes should they use it?

Here are some examples of common **target groups** in a broad sense, but remember that they need to be further defined for your specific project: Industry/business partners, Innovators, Investors, EU institutions, National authorities, Regional authorities, Local authorities, Civil society, Citizens, Research communities, Specific end-user communities, International organisations (e.g., UN bodies, OECD), Other

Your target group can be very specific, such as a mobility operator or waste management companies in your city. Consider writing the specific target group together with the categories above.

Example: "*Mobility operator (Category: Business)*". This format will facilitate **reporting** your communication activities in the Annual report.

What are the desired actions from the target groups?

For your own reflection and clarity, describe each target group, their needs and attitudes regarding the issue at hand. Use the following questions as guidance:

- What is their situation? How are they currently being communicated with?
- What can they do, what can't they do?

Describe specifically what the communication efforts should lead to in each target group.

- What change do you expect to see after successful dissemination and exploitation of the project's results to the target group(s)? E.g.: Attitudes of stakeholders; public opinion; public agendas, capacity of other actors; change in discourse among certain actors; Improvements in policy/procedure; behaviour change.

This description will **not be required in the reporting** but may help developing your key messages.

Key Messages

It is important to generate interest early and tell the target groups how they can benefit from your project and your results. Only once you have captured the target group's interest can you tell them more about the project and go into greater depth.

- Think about what your target group knows today so that your message and communication are at the right level. Consider testing any assumptions you might have.
- Consider formulating specific messages for each target group.
- The messages should be concise and spark interest. Ideally, it should be action-oriented, indicating what the target group can do "participate" "include" "consider" etc.

You can use a table to **draft short messages** linked to the project mission and its results. Consider the change or action you want to inspire in your audience and write a message with that goal in mind. The key messages can change over time, depending on the goal you have at each stage of the project, but it is good to have them written down to be consistent.

Table 1. Suggested format to develop your Key Messages

Target group / User	Expected change or action	Key Message

Reaching the target group(s)

Regular communication with target groups throughout the project period can maintain interest and prepare the target groups for the upcoming results. The project team can choose different strategies to reach the target groups. Examples of strategic choices are:

- Who in the project should be responsible for project communication? And the activities?
- At what different times should you communicate – at the start of the project, when there are results to announce, when someone can comment on how the industry or society at large will benefit from the results, when the project is completed, and so on?
- Is it enough to simply provide information about the project? Perhaps a dialogue with different target groups is needed to achieve the project's goals?
- Should you communicate with a target group/organisation/person directly, or with the help of another organisation or spokesperson?
- Does the project need to engage a professional communicator to handle certain communication activities?

Spokespersons

Consider which individuals and organisations should be linked to the project in order to strengthen its connection to the industry or society in general. Spokespersons may, for example, be found among co-financiers, partners, industry organisations or in a possible reference group.

- Are there individuals/organisations that are particularly important to the project and to the dissemination of its results?
- Does the project need to find one or more spokespersons who can help spread awareness and results?
- Which person or actor is best suited to reach the project's various target groups?
- Make sure that the spokespersons are aware that their task is to spread information about the project; this is often not something that happens automatically.

Channels

Describe how you plan to reach each target group, e.g. which channels will be used.

- Where can you best reach the target groups? Where do they look for information?
- How do they want their information packaged?

Are there existing channels that can be used, for example within organisations/people associated with the project, or does the project need to create new ones?

Examples of channels:

- Newspapers / News websites
- Websites from partners, umbrella organisations, and other.
- [EU Cities portal](#)
- Newsletters
- Conferences, seminars and other types of meetings
- Social media

Activity Plan

It is important to have an overview of the communication and dissemination activities of your DUT project. To plan activities, consider creating a shared spreadsheet, establish clear responsibilities and update the activity plan as the project progresses.

Table 2. Suggested format for planning communication and dissemination activities

Status	Plan			
Planned / Completed Date	Responsible person / WP	Type of Activity	Target Group	Timing rationale (Optional)

Type of Activities:

Communication activities

Events (conferences, meetings, workshops, internet debates, round tables, group discussions, etc), Exhibitions, Interviews, Media articles, Newsletters, Print materials (brochures, leaflets, posters, stickers, banners), Social media activities, TV/radio campaigns, Press releases, other communication activities

Dissemination activities

Clustering activities, Collaboration with EU-funded projects, Conferences, Education and training events, Meetings, Other scientific collaboration

Timing rationale (Optional)

Briefly explain the timing of the activity linked to the purpose of your communication. Example: News article series on the specific challenge the DUT project aims to solve with the purpose of bringing attention to the planned event / report publication / new EU directive / other.



Considerations for annual reporting

In the annual reports projects funded in DUT calls will be asked to report on the communication activities, therefore it is recommended to set up a system to keep track of necessary data. Guidance on what data to be reported is available here:

- The (estimated) number of dissemination and communication activities linked to your project
- The (estimated) number of persons reached, in the context of all dissemination and communication activities, per category. The different categories are the same as the **target groups**: *Industry/business partners, Innovators, Investors, EU institutions, National authorities, Regional authorities, Local authorities, Civil society, Citizens, Research communities, Specific end-user communities, International organisations (e.g., UN bodies, OECD), Other*

Other questions indirectly linked to communication that projects may be asked to report on are:

- Describe how you have worked together with the main target group(s)/stakeholder(s)
- Describe your experiences and key takeaways (please refer to interactions with the urban actors included in the Online Survey).
- What is your project's expected impact in a long-term perspective, both in terms of urban transitions and regarding the DUT Roadmap and the relevant Transition Pathway(s)? Which actions do you plan to take for reaching the expected impact? For the most updated information on annual reporting, please contact the call secretariat. Access other guidelines at [Information for projects | dut](#)





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