

EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION PLAN OF THE CERIM PROJECT



This project is implemented through the CENTRAL EUROPE Programme co-financed by the ERDF.

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2. INTRODUCTION

Systematic and professional communication of the CERIM project is crucial for a successful implementation. The communication activities must be performed both internally among the project partners and externally to non-partner stakeholders, the media and to the wider public. This communication plan handles the external communication and will assist project partners in the carrying out of the right types of communication activities, at the right time and towards the right target audience. The overall objective of the communication activities is to secure that the project's key messages reaches all relevant stakeholders and target group organisations and foster their commitment to the project.

Due to the complexity of the project (large and outspread consortium, heterogeneous group of stakeholders, uncontrollable success parameters, etc) the design and implementation of communication activities become complex as well. To be able to solve this, the communication plan requires input from the individual project partners since they alone know who needs to be communicated to in their respective region. Thus, the communication plan will have one central layer defining which activities and audiences that are common for all project-partners (this document) and one layer which defines project-partner-individual activities and their specific target audiences. The idea is that the project partner should modify this central communication plan (with a focus on the tables) so that the communication plan suits their communication needs specifically.

In this document the following will be dealt with:

- Identifying and defining target audiences.
- Defining objectives and expected outcomes of communication activities.
- Defining communication tools and elaborating about their usage.
- Defining key messages to be used in all medial communication.
- Specifying how performed communication activities will be evaluated.
- Exemplifying work plans with common activities and providing the backbone a for partner-specific work plan on a more detailed level.¹

¹ Communication Guidebook for Central Europe Programme (2009) Pinnacle Public Relations

3. INSTRUCTIONS

This communication plan is the central layer which should be modified by each project partners to fit their specific communication needs. This chapter contains instructions about how this is supposed to be achieved and how the communication plan then will be used.

1. Read this document thoroughly.
2. Identify and list in table 1 at least 25 relevant key individuals per project-partner from all target audiences, but with a focus on policy makers, managers of public research organisations and TTIs, and leading scientists.
3. Make contact with these key individuals during the initial phase of the project to make sure that they are aware of the objectives of the CERIM-project. Always invite key individuals to participate in project events.
4. Use the work plans (chapter 9 and 10) to plan the partner specific communication activities.
5. Perform all the in advance decided upon communication-related outputs (see table 2) and make sure the key messages are used when communicating to the media.
6. At the end of the project ask the key individuals for their opinion of the project's results and evaluate all the communication-related outputs according to chapter 8.

4. TARGET AUDIENCE

The following are examples of target audiences which the communication activities of the CERIM-project should be aimed at.

4.1. Research Institutions and Researchers

Research institutions and researchers are the source of innovations which are to be valorised and transferred. Management of research institutions is exposed to political pressure to improve technology transfer success since they can benefit from the potential economic benefits stemming from technology transfer. Benefits could be either direct (income from licenses, revenue from sold shares) or indirect e.g. increased attractiveness towards student and researchers.

An estimated 10.000-15.000 researchers conduct market relevant research in Central Europe - the project involves ca. 1.000. Reaching them will be a challenge but nevertheless essential in order to enhancing the innovation potential. To facilitate the strive to communicate to this huge amount of researchers , the main activities should be aimed at either the management of public research institution due to their large network of peers, or at leading scientists who are expected to be able to contribute to better innovations. Frequently, these two audiences concur. Nevertheless, mediocre scientists may still be a source of innovation, primarily due to their large number.

4.2. Policy makers

It is crucial to identify and involve local, regional and national policy makers in the project since the implementation of actions in later stages (also after the formal conclusion of the project) will heavily depend on their acceptance of outcomes and recommendations as well as on their commitment to invest resources in tech transfer. It is today high on the political agenda to enhance technology transfer capabilities of the innovation systems, which is a reason why communication activities aimed at this audience, are expected to succeed.

4.3. Technology Transfer Institutions (TTIs)

'TTIs' are all private, semi-public or public organisations which help the staff at public research organizations to identify, manage and commercialise the organization's intellectual assets in order to create new companies or support existing companies. To develop an improved infrastructure for technology transfer, these players must be involved in the project. This involvement is to a large extent already achieved by initiating the CERIM-project, since most of the project partners can be classified as TTIs. Nevertheless, involving additional TTIs will improve the impact of the project throughout the entire Central Europe. The TTIs further mentioned in this document refer to non-project partner organisation.

4.4. Industry

‘Industry’ refers primarily to companies (mainly SME) which can be expected to benefit from/participate in technology transfer activities performed within the scope of the project, as for example newly created spin-offs or as licensee of an innovation developed at a public research institution. Targeting the industry is essential in achieving the project objective of enhancing the innovation potential of Central Europe. Spin-off companies originated from public research institutions connected to the project partner are most likely easier to reach than those not related to the project partners, therefore effort will be put on reaching the former.

4.5. Venture capital

‘VC’ is a common way to finance commercialisation of public founded research. To enhance the likelihood that market relevant research projects in Central Europe will gain VC funding, VC actors must be targeted and made aware of the innovation potential of Central Europe by for example communicating good practice example of successful start-ups in the regions and be invited to an investor conference.

4.6. Central Europe programme

The Central Europe programme is in some aspects the client of the CERIM-project, although other target audiences are actually benefiting from it. As client, the Central Europe programme must be continuously informed about activities and outcomes. Keeping the Central Europe programme informed keeps the effort of reporting down, reduces time to acceptance of reports and cost statements, etc. Continuous contacts with the Central Europe programme will also help in the development of follow-on projects. However, communicating with the Central Europe programme is a task for the lead partner only.

4.7. Media

‘Media’ is in this context regarded as a tool of communication rather than an audience itself and will therefore be dealt with later.

4.8. How to find contact details?

To many of the target audiences mentioned above personal relationships are in place between important individuals and the project partners. These should of course be exploited. To other audiences contact persons must be searched for, which is a task of the project partners. Please use table 1 below to fill in the specific organisations with contact details for each target audience.

5. OBJECTIVES OF THE COMMUNICATION

The overall objective of the CERIM-project's communication activities is to secure that the project's key messages reaches all relevant stakeholders and target group organisations and foster their commitment to the project.

The more specific objectives with the communication activities are the following:

- 1. Secure that the project's key messages reaches at least 25 relevant key individuals per project-partners from all target audiences, which means in total 250 contacts.**
- 2. Contribute to the fulfillment of the CERIM-project's objectives which requires input, participation or commitment from external parties.**

To this do among others the following include:

- Get access to world-class innovations to be valorised from Central European researchers by communicating the possibilities of technology transfer and how the project partners can assist in the process.
 - Attract venture capital to be invested in early stage innovation projects and/or initiating licensing agreement between researchers and SMEs, by communicating success stories and good practice of Central European innovations and TTIs.
 - Enhance and/or simplify the policy framework dealing with technology transfer in Central Europe by communicating the developed policy recommendations to decision and policy makers in respective regions.
- 3. Perform the communication-related outputs which were decided upon in advance.**
 - 4 project conferences and participation in 5 other international conferences.
 - Development of a project website with major updates every third month.
 - Design and dissemination of a project booklet at the end of the project.
 - 3 press releases per partner in daily/weekly newspaper or in professional press.
 - 1 press conference in each region, 1 at the launch conference and 1 at the investor conference.
 - TV-coverage at 4 occasions.
 - Each partner will publish at least 1 article in a newspaper during the project.
 - The partnership will jointly publicise at least 1 article in an international paper.

The following table shows the relationship between different target audience and the expected results of communication to them. Within each target audience, specific organisations and contact persons shall be specified by the project partners.

Target audience	Expected results of communication to this audience	Specific organisations with contact details (to be filled in by project partners)
Policy makers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness of and a positive attitude towards the project. • Commitment to and participation in project events and pilot actions. • Increased willingness to investment in market-relevant research and in technology transfer. 	
Research institutions and researchers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness of and a positive attitude towards the project. • Raising the innovation commitment of researcher. • Get access to researchers who can/want to provide their innovations to be transferred /valorised within the scope of the project. For this to occur, researcher must participate in project events. Thus communicating information regarding project events is an essential communication activity. 	
Tech Transfer Institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness of and a positive attitude towards the project. • Sharing of experience regarding regional technology transfer • Participation in project event, which will enhance the impact and reliability of the project. • Provide project-relevant resources like IPR-expertise, specific market knowledge and so on, which project partners cannot offer their researchers/innovators alone. 	
Industry (SME)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness of and a positive attitude towards the project. • Participation in project events. • Initiate collaborative research projects with project-related researchers. • Entering licensing agreement with project-related researchers. 	
Venture capital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness of and a positive attitude towards the project. • Participation in project events. • Investments in project related research-projects. 	
Central Europe Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness of and a positive attitude towards the project. • Approval of follow-on projects proposed by the project partners. 	

Table 1: Objectives with communication to different audiences.

6. TOOLS AND TACTICS

There are a large number of possible tools which can be selected for communication. The tools can be divided into medial and non-medial ways of communication. Here the most important tools are listed:

Medial

- Press conference
- Press release
- Articles in newspapers, professional press and on websites.
- TV /radio coverage

Non-medial

- Website
- Newsletter
- Seminar / Workshop
- Conference
- E-mails and phone calls.
- Information brochure / project booklet
- Personal visits, i.e. visits to key organisations and key individuals.

6.1. Medial communication

The medial communication tools require acceptance by and interaction with journalists to function. Therefore the effort of using the medial tools is initially most likely higher compared to using the non-medial tools. However, if relationships with journalists can be established, the medial tools might turn out to be very resource efficient due to their large impact on the Central European society.

The medial ways of communication can be divided into the different tools for us to choose from, but in addition to this the different media channels can be classified due to their characteristics. Here a separation between news channels and professional channels can be done, the latter containing for the CERIM-project relevant business magazines and scientific journals. Further on they can be divided due to their geographical focus in local, regional, national and international channels. When planning communication activities one must bear in mind that not all audiences use the same media channels.

Local, regional and national newspapers, and regional and national TV and radio broadcasts are most likely good ways to reach policy makers since they often are more or less dependent on the opinion of the people in the respective regions. Therefore they are expected to follow these media channels carefully. The way to get noticed by local or regional journalists is to offer a story that either is about local or regional people or contains important information necessary for people in the region. Success stories about research results, newly created start-ups or licensing agreement spun from the regional research organisations are examples of such stories which might be interesting enough for local and regional media. Another alternative is to invite local or regional journalists to press conferences at project events, which in their own are happenings in the region.

The other target audiences of the CERIM-project, researcher, TTIs, VC and the industry might not be that easy to reach through the local and regional news media channels. Instead more specialised types of professional media channels are required since these people as professionals are used to trust only the top-of-the-line information stemming from national or international professional press. Journalists working for these papers are likely harder to build relationships with and the way to get noticed by them is probably either to come with an exceptional success story or world class research-

results. Therefore less effort should be put in reaching out to the national or international media channels since other non-medial ways of communications can be used to reach their target audiences instead. Nevertheless, one jointly developed article in an international paper is mandatory.

When using medial ways of communication it is essential to make sure that the following is mentioned:

- Project name (CERIM)
- The three key messages mentioned below.
- That the project is implemented through the CENTRAL EUROPE Programme co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund.

6.2. Non-medial communication

The best way to reach researcher, TTIs, VC and the industry is most likely by using more personal and targeted communication. If personal relationships exist to members of any of the important target audiences, communication activities like e-mails, phone calls and visits are of course preferred. Personal ways of communication can also be aimed at target audiences to which no personal relationships exist but whose participation is necessary for a successful implementation of the project. Here it might be wise to attend conferences where these target audiences go for the purpose of networking or to invite them to participate in project events. Other ways of non-medial communication tools are the written ones like newsletter, information brochure and the project website. Further information is presented in following chapter.

6.3. Tactics

When communicating the CERIM-project, the target audience will vary which has been mentioned earlier. Depending on target audience, either different types of tools should be used or the tools must be used in different ways. The following table gives an example of the relationship between target audiences, different communication tools, and the tactics of how these tools are intended to be used. Included is also the communication-related output which the CERIM-project shall deliver.

Tool	Tactics	Output
E-mail/phone call	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If personal relationships exist to members of important target audiences, communication activities like e-mails and phone calls are of course preferred. • These tools can naturally be used to communicate to audiences where no personal relationships exist but whose participation is necessary for a successful impact of the project. • To the latter group belong mainly policy makers, researchers and research institute managers, SMEs and VC. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If and when eligible

Tool	Tactics	Output
Personal visits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If personal relationships exist to members of important target audiences, personal visits are of course preferred. • These tools can naturally be used to communicate with audiences where no personal relationships exist but whose participation is necessary for a successful impact of the project. To this group belong mainly policy makers, researchers and research institute managers, SMEs and VC. • Personal visits can be made for the purpose of project marketing to non-involved stakeholders outside the regions, including TTIs, SMEs and VC. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If and when eligible
Seminar/ workshop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Depending on the purpose of the seminar/workshop different target audiences are invited. • Mixes of participants from all target audiences are of course preferred to encourage networking. • During the learning and policy workshops participants will mainly be project partners. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 learning workshops • 1 policy workshops • 2 study trips to good-practice TTIs.
Conference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Depending on the purpose of the conference different target audiences are invited. • Mixes of participants from all target audiences are of course preferred to encourage networking. • During the investor conference the target audiences are VC and industry. • During the innovation policy conference the target audience is policy makers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 launch conf • 1 closing conf • 1 investor conf • 1 innovation policy conf • Participation in 5 other international conf.
Website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project website is a good way to spread the word of the project, but research within the area says that most people use websites to get an overview of a topic. • More informative texts are seldom read on a website instead printed media should be used for this purpose. • Nevertheless project results and success stories will be displayed. • The internal part of the website contains useful information for project members. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major updates every third month. • Minor updates every second week.
Info brochures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A booklet about the project's achievement will be developed, describing the activities and results of the project. • Target audiences of the booklet are project partners, policy makers ,managers of TTIs, managers of public research institutions, involved researchers, VC and industry actors which have expressed interest in the project as well as relevant media and Central Europe personnel. • Flyers with short information about the project for the purpose of project marketing will be developed and handed out at conferences, study trips and personal visits to members of all target audiences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 project booklet at the end of the project. • Project flyers at the beginning of the project.
Press releases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information regarding the CERIM project and performed events will be sent out to local, regional and national daily/weekly newspapers. These press releases should either tell a story related to the local society or present information about a performed /upcoming event which is relevant for people in the region. • National and international professional magazines and journals will receive press releases focused on world-class research results or success stories. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 press releases per partner in daily/weekly newspaper or in professional press • After every major public project event.

Tool	Tactics	Output
Press conference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Press conferences should be held in conjunction to project events. • Audience are local, regional and national news media and professional press if they are interested. • Other interested representatives of both stakeholders and the wider public are welcome as well. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 in each region per partner • 1 at the launch conf • 1 at the investor conf • In conjunction to major public project events.
Newsletters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newsletter will be sent by e-mail to the Central Europe newsflash and to relevant target audiences on a regular basis. • It should contain information about what has been done within the project with an emphasis on "good practice" or success stories. • Additionally it should contain a calendar with important activities to come within the following 2-4 months. • Audience are project partners, managers of TTIs, managers of public research institutions, policy makers, regional VC and industry actors which have expressed interest in the project. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If and when eligible
TV/radio coverage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TV/radio coverage should be held in conjunction to major public project events. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TV-coverage at 4 occasions
Articles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Success stories and good practice examples could be interesting for a wider audience and therefore be published in newsletters, magazines or on news-containing websites. • Good practice examples and interesting project results having a certain scientific level could be published as articles in professional press or on professional websites. • Audience are managers of TTIs, managers of public research institutions, involved researchers, VC and industry actors which have expressed interest in the project as well as relevant media and Central Europe personnel. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each partner will publish at least 1 article in a newspaper during the project • The partnership will jointly publicise at least 1 article in an international paper.

Table 2: Communication tools, tactics of their use and output. Then not stated otherwise the outputs are for the whole of the consortium.

Which tool to use depends on suitability for the specific partners and their regions. However the expected outputs presented in table 2 must be reached. In chapter 8 a long term work plan with information about which communication activities each partner is responsible for and when they should be performed.

7. KEY MESSAGES

The message to be communicated obviously depends upon both the target and the objective of the specific communication activity. Thus, the message has to be modified for every single communicative action. However, to maximise the impact of the communication a clear message with three key points about the project should be used for all medial communication.

The chosen key messages for the CERIM project are:

- Public research organisations and universities are valuable sources of innovation which can contribute to the welfare of the Central European economy.
- The CERIM project is developing a tool to enhance the transfer of technology and knowledge from public research organisations and universities into marketable innovations.
- The main expected benefit of the CERIM-project is the creation of new research-based innovative companies.

If these messages are used in all communication to any media channel, in the beginning of every written or spoken presentation independent of both its purpose and its audience, as well as in all small talks regarding the project, it might enhance the awareness of the project by external parties. Additionally it might increase the likelihood that external parties get an understanding of the project which is of the same standing as ours. Best impact of the key messages will be gotten if they are repeated three times in each communication activity. However, the communicating the key messages must sound “natural” and not be exaggerated. Common sense could be used.

8. EVALUATION

It is important to evaluate the results of the performed communication activities in order to learn which activities worked better than others and to provide feed-back to coming Central Europe projects. The evaluation will be based upon the specific objectives of the communication activities presented in the beginning of chapter 4 and both quantitative and qualitative measures will be used. By the end of the CERIM-project these measures will be used in order to evaluate how well the different communication activities and tools worked for their purpose and what impact they had on the project's target audiences. Below follows a discussion of how the communication objectives will be evaluated.

Communication objective	Evaluation measurer
Secure that the project's key messages reaches at least 25 relevant key individuals per project-partners from all target audiences, which means in total 250 contacts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During the initial phase of the project these key individuals will be contacted regarding the objectives of the CERIM-project to make them notice it. • The key individuals will be invited to participate in project events and activities. • At the end of the project they will be asked for their opinion of the project's results. • From this information can be gained regarding how well communication towards key individuals was performed.
Contribute to the fulfillment of the CERIM-project's objectives which requires input, participation or commitment from external parties who therefore must be communicated to.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This objective is difficult to evaluate since its success not only depends on performed communication activities but on a number of other factors. • Therefore evaluations related to the above and the below mentioned objectives will be used as input for the evaluation of this objective. Put more specific, input from e.g. the survey at the investor conference (mentioned below) will be used to evaluate whether the communication activities managed to reach and involve VC-actors.
Perform the communication-related outputs which were decided upon in advance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of press releases, press conferences, TV coverage, and articles in newspapers, magazines and on-line. • Which target audiences these above mentioned medial communication activities got and the size of them (or an estimation). • Survey or interviews at the closing conference regarding visitor's opinion and awareness of the project website. • Survey or interviews in conjunction to three of the project conferences regarding visitor's opinion and awareness of these events. • Which specific target audiences the project booklet and policy recommendations got and the size of them (or an estimation).

Table 3: Qualitative and quantitative communication evaluation measurers

10. DETAILED WORK PLAN

Tool	Target audience	Responsible person and Person-days per period							Timeline (week nr)														
		x1	x2	x3	x4	x5	x6	x7	w23	w24	w25	w26	w27	w28	w29	w30	w31	w32	w33	w34			
E-mail/ phone call	PRO, VC, SME, Policy makers																						
Personal visits	PRO, VC, SME, Policy makers																						
Seminar/ Workshop	PRO, VC, SME, Policy makers, TTIs, CE																						
Conference	PRO, VC, SME, Policy makers, TTIs, CE																						
Newsletter	CE, PRO, VC, SME, Policy makers, TTIs																						
Website	All																						
Press releases	All																						
Press conf	All																						
Info brochure	PRO, VC, SME, Policy makers																						
TV/radio	All																						
Articles	All																						
Total		0	0	0	0	0	0	0															

Table 5: Detailed work plan - **to be filled in by project partners, please specify audience, responsibility, person-days and when it will be performed** (PRO = public research institution, VC = venture capital, TTI = Technology transfer institutes, CE = Central Europe programme personnel)