

COMMUNICATING AND RAISING EU VISIBILITY:

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



**COMMUNICATING AND RAISING EU VISIBILITY:
GUIDANCE FOR EXTERNAL ACTIONS (EUROPA.EU)**

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This document answers the most frequently asked questions on the [Communicating and Raising Visibility guidelines](#) of July 2022. More questions and answers will be added as necessary.

INTRODUCTION

WHAT IS THE BIGGEST CHANGE COMPARED TO THE 2018 COMMUNICATION AND VISIBILITY REQUIREMENTS?

The new corporate approach to communication entails a shift away from partner-implemented communication activities on every project, to a more coordinated approach focusing on selected priorities. The biggest change compared to the 2018 requirements is therefore that partners should no longer include a specific budget and plan for communication as part of their project (unless agreed in advance with the EU). The requirement to ensure EU visibility (emblem and funding statement) on any material or activity which directly relates to the project remains – for example, ensuring EU emblem and funding statement on signage, billboards, publications, digital assets, supplies, etc. The costs associated with ensuring EU visibility are eligible and can be included in the project budget.

WHAT COMMUNICATION AND VISIBILITY RULES APPLY IF AN IMPLEMENTING PARTNER HAS SIGNED A FINANCIAL FRAMEWORK PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT (FFPA) WITH THE EU?

Financial Framework Partnership Agreements form the legal basis for the EU's cooperation with certain organisations. Typically, they include articles on communication and visibility. The provisions of the FFPA take precedence over the provisions of the 2022 Guidelines. However, in principle the provisions of the FFPA are broad enough that the 2022 communication and visibility guidelines can be applied. In certain cases, it is possible that some exceptions or variances were agreed in the FFPA. The relevant Framework Agreements should therefore always be consulted, and further specifications could be applied in the special conditions of the contract.

SHOULD THE COMMUNICATION AND VISIBILITY PLANS OF ONGOING PROJECTS BE REVISED IN LINE WITH THE NEW GUIDELINES?

The requirement to apply the new guidelines is not retroactive. Ongoing projects can continue to implement their C&V plans as previously agreed; there is no requirement to update previously approved C&V plans. However, EU Delegations and partners are encouraged to align the C&V activities of ongoing projects to the guidance outlined in section 3 of the 2022 guidelines, to the extent possible. Implementing partners should consult EU counterparts in the preparation and implementation of their foreseen C&V activities, to ensure mutual benefit and maximum impact. The requirement to ensure EU visibility (emblem plus funding statement) remains.

IF AN ONGOING PROJECT HAS A WEBSITE AND/OR SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS, SHOULD THESE BE CLOSED?

Websites and/or social media accounts and other channels which have already been established as part of an ongoing project funded prior to the publication of the updated guidelines, can continue to exist. There is no retroactive application to contracts previously signed. However, partners are advised to try to follow the general principles outlined in section 3 of the 2022 Guidelines to ensure communication which is as effective and impactful as possible via these channels. Partners should also ensure a proper exit strategy is in place for the moment when the project/EU-funding ends. While these accounts are active, partners must ensure they comply with the requirements on EU visibility (including relevant disclaimers).

EU VISIBILITY

WHAT DOES ENSURING EU VISIBILITY ENTAIL?

The recipients of Union funding shall acknowledge the origin of those funds and ensure the visibility of the Union funding, in particular when promoting and reporting on the actions and their results, by highlighting the support received from the Union in a visible manner on communication material related to the actions supported under the Instrument. This means ensuring the EU emblem and appropriate funding statement are correctly and prominently displayed.

WHAT EVENTS/ACTIVITIES ARE PARTNERS EXPECTED TO IMPLEMENT TO ENSURE EU VISIBILITY?

Implementing partners are not required to implement specific activities designed solely for the purposes of promoting EU visibility (press conferences, launches etc.). However, if an event/activity is organised for strategic communication purposes (agreed in advance with the EU), the partner must ensure EU visibility on any communication material produced (e.g. backdrops, signage, banners, etc). Implementing partners should not create dedicated channels such as websites and social media accounts.

WHAT INFORMATION ABOUT THE EU'S FINANCIAL SUPPORT SHOULD BE DISPLAYED ON IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS' OWN CHANNELS, SUCH AS WEBSITES? WILL A BUDGET BE PROVIDED TO ENSURE THIS?

Implementing partners are encouraged to provide information about ongoing EU-funded projects on their own website. When communicating about an EU-funded action as part of their general activities, implementing partners should acknowledge the fact that the action is funded by the EU. The creation of project/programme specific websites is not permitted unless otherwise agreed in advance with the EU.

CAN PROGRAMME/PROJECT-SPECIFIC LOGOS STILL BE USED AS THE MAIN VISUAL IDENTITY?

The EU emblem is the single most important visual brand used to acknowledge the origin and ensure the visibility of EU funding. Apart from the emblem, no other visual identity or logo may be created or used to highlight EU support, unless previously agreed with the EU. Any programme/project which falls under Global Gateway should apply the Global Gateway branding and logo.

WHAT IS MEANT BY ‘STATIONERY’ IN THE GUIDELINES? SHOULDN’T NOTEBOOKS, DOCUMENT TEMPLATES, AND THIS KIND OF MATERIALS, INCLUDE THE EU FLAG ALONGSIDE THE FUNDING STATEMENT?

It should be noted that the new approach aims to move away from the production of pens/notebooks/gadgets etc as a default for individual projects. These should not be produced in every case. If materials and supplies are produced under the project, EU visibility (emblem and funding statement) should be ensured.

WHO WILL BE IN CHARGE OF TAKING DISPLAY PANELS DOWN 6 MONTHS AFTER THE END OF THE PROJECT?

It is the responsibility of implementing partners to comply with the requirements.

WHERE CAN IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS SHARE CONTENT ABOUT A PROJECT IF THE CREATION OF WEBSITES AND SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS IS NOT PERMITTED?

The new guidelines are intended to reduce the proliferation of project-specific communication channels (websites, social media accounts, newsletters, etc). Instead of creating stand-alone channels which may have negligible impact, partners should exploit existing, well-established, channels instead – for example partners’ own channels, EU HQ (Head Quarter) and Delegation accounts, etc.

SOME PROJECTS REQUIRE A KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT TOOL. CAN DEDICATED WEBSITES BE CREATED FOR THIS PURPOSE?

If a platform is required for knowledge management and sharing purposes, implementing partners should utilise the corporate solutions provided by the European Commission before creating an external website. The Commission is available to discuss the knowledge management needs of implementing partners and advise on the corporate solutions available. These tools are in addition to the programme website presence offered on the Europa domain, via DG INTPA.

With the new communication guidelines, project websites will only be permitted in exceptional cases and when it forms part of the previously agreed strategic communication plan.

WHAT DOES AN EXIT STRATEGY LOOK LIKE FOR A PROJECT HAS A DEDICATED WEBSITE AND SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS AND WHERE EU FINANCING IS ENDING?

The exit strategy to be put in place depends on whether the project will continue after the EU-funded phase. For any questions concerning websites, contact INTPA-WEB@ec.europa.eu.

WHERE SHOULD PARTNERS INCLUDE VISIBILITY RELATED COSTS IF THERE IS NO DEDICATED BUDGET LINE FOR THIS?

Any costs associated with ensuring EU visibility are considered eligible and can be budgeted for. However, rather than being included in a stand-alone visibility budget line, these costs should be factored into the budget under the relevant activity to which they relate. For example, the costs of printing stickers to put on supplies should be factored into the activity related to the distribution of these supplies.

THE EU-FUNDED ACTION WILL CONTRIBUTE TO THE CONSTRUCTION OF A SCHOOL BUILDING. WHAT ABOUT THE NECESSARY SIGNBOARDS AND COMMEMORATIVE PLAQUES? CAN WE INCLUDE THE COSTS IN THE PROJECT BUDGET? WHAT ABOUT A PRESS CONFERENCE TO PROMOTE THE PROJECT?

Yes, costs for specific visibility requirements relevant for the action can be included in the project budget. Commemorative plaques, signboards and other similar visibility items must always display the EU emblem and funding statement. Partners are not required to organise events/activities such as press conferences for the purposes of promoting EU visibility. However, if a partner decides to organise a press conference about an EU-funded action using their own resources, EU visibility should be ensured through the inclusion of the EU emblem and funding statement on any material which refers to the EU-funded action.

HOW CAN IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS TAKE PHOTOS/VIDEOS OF PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION WITHOUT A BUDGET FOR COMMUNICATION ASSETS?

Unless it is specifically foreseen as part of a project activity in relation to communication, the costs of a professional photographer/filmmaker should not be included in the budget. Implementing partners are welcome to produce their own material.

HOW WILL PEOPLE KNOW ABOUT A PROJECT IF THERE IS NO BUDGET AVAILABLE TO COMMUNICATE?

The objective of the new strategic approach is to ensure more coherent, effective and impactful communication which focuses on key EU priorities. Partners may continue to promote their individual project(s) for their own purposes (for example via their own social media channels, websites, publications, etc) should they wish to do so. In these cases, EU visibility should be ensured as per the requirements.

WHAT IS EXPECTED TO HAPPEN TO THE USUAL PROJECT SIGNATURE, LAUNCHING AND CLOSURE EVENT?

Under the new guidelines, it is not expected that events are organized for project signature, launch and closure in every case. Whether or not a signature/launch/closure event is considered relevant and impactful for a particular project should be determined in line with the Delegation's own strategic communication priorities and objectives.

HOW SHOULD PROJECTS WITHOUT COMMUNICATION EXPERTS OR A SPECIFIC BUDGET PROVIDE CONTENT AND VISUALS IF REQUESTED BY THE EU?

If content relating to an EU-funded action exists, partners are required to provide this to the EU at the EU's request. If content does not already exist, implementing partners should make their best effort to provide content, or support the production of content, for projects without dedicated communication budget if/when requested to do so - this should be discussed with the relevant EU Delegation or Commission service to agree in advance.

HOW CAN WE TAKE PHOTOS OF OUR PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION WHEN WE DO NOT HAVE THE BUDGET FOR A PROFESSIONAL PHOTOGRAPHER?

Unless it is specifically foreseen as part of a project activity in relation to communication, the costs of a professional photographer should not be included in the budget.

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION

WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY “STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION”?

This new approach is designed to move away from the fragmented, project-specific, partner-implemented communication. Instead, strategic communication funds will be consolidated at EU Delegation level to generate scale and impact, with an increased focus on campaigning and reaching new audiences. The objective is to communicate the EU's positive offer to partner countries, in particular the transformative impact of Global Gateway flagships.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN “AWARENESS RAISING” ACTIVITIES AND STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION?

Certain awareness raising activities may be required to achieve specific project objectives. For example, a health project which includes an objective of increasing vaccination rates will necessarily require activities which are designed to reach specific target audiences to inform them about e.g. reasons for vaccination, vaccination availability, locations, etc. These activities should be clearly defined and designed to achieve the specific objectives of the project itself, rather than to promote the EU's priorities and impact. These activities, which are inherent to the action, are not considered strategic communication for the purposes of the new approach. However, it is important that these activities and content are closely coordinated with the relevant EU services responsible, to ensure maximum alignment and impact.

WHO DECIDES WHETHER A STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION COMPONENT SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN AN INDIVIDUAL PROJECT?

Exceptionally, the EU may decide to finance specific communication activities for individual projects/programmes. These cases will be decided based on the EU's country/regional priorities, taking into account Global Gateway priorities. They will therefore be closely aligned to the EU's own strategic communication priorities. In these exceptional cases, implementing partners must include the proposed strategic communication activities in the Description of the Action.

SHOULD COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES BE AGREED, WHERE SHOULD THE STRATEGIC PLAN APPEAR IN THE CONTRIBUTION AGREEMENT?

The proposed strategic communication activities must be included in the Description of the Action. The budget for these activities should also be included in the overall budget for the action. The detailed Strategic Communication Plan, which outlines the detailed activities, audiences, channels, timeline, etc, does not need to be submitted before the Contribution Agreement is signed but should be submitted during the inception phase after discussing with the concerned EU Delegation(s) and, as relevant, headquarters.

IS THERE AN APPROXIMATIVE PERCENTAGE OF THE BUDGET THAT SHOULD BE DEDICATED TO COMMUNICATION ACTIONS?

There is no approximate percentage or lump sum range/maximum indicated for strategic communication. The amount should be determined based on a range of factors, including the intended objectives and impact, as well as the alignment with the EU Delegation's own strategic communication priorities. Whatever the budget for strategic communication, it is recommended that partners allocate between 30-50% for content production and 50-70% for dissemination.