



EUROPEAN REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUND
EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND
COHESION FUND
MALTA 2007-2013

Communication Plan for Malta's Operational Programmes 2007 – 2013

Revised July 2011

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List of Acronyms

ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ESF	European Social Fund
ETI	European Transparency Initiative
EU	European Union
IB	Intermediate Body
MA	Managing Authority
NSRF	National Strategic Reference Framework
OP	Operational Programme
OPM	Office of the Prime Minister
PPCD	Planning and Priorities Coordination Division
SME	Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
TEN-T	Trans-European Network for Transport

1. Context Analysis

Introduction

The Cohesion Policy Regulations 2007-2013 recommend the provision of a strategic, coordinated long-term approach to communication and publicity, addressing the need to enhance transparency and awareness and ensuring wide dissemination of information. This Communication Plan is being drawn up, as required by EC Regulation 1828/2006, by the Managing Authority (MA) for Malta's Operational Programmes I and II.

Article 2.1 of EC Regulation 1828/2006 states that one Communication Plan may be drawn up by the Member State "to cover several or all operational programmes co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the European Social Fund (ESF) or the Cohesion Fund". In this light, the MA has decided to issue one plan to cover communication relating to both of Malta's Operational Programmes, to ensure consistency, synergies and synchronisation. **In order to give the Plan a more national perspective, measures carried out by other entities involved in the dissemination of information about EU policies and funding opportunities are also referred to in this plan.**

The structure of this Communication Plan is based on the outline set in Article 2.2 of Regulation 1828/2006. It begins with an analysis of the context and background to the Plan, followed by a description of the Communication Strategy Framework to be adopted, including the objectives, target recipients, content, style and approach. The Communication Plan then provides a brief description of the responsibilities of the MA, particularly its Communication Unit, and the Information and Publicity Measures to be taken during the implementation of the Plan.

The original version of this plan made reference to its dynamic nature which could necessitate changes over the years. Through close monitoring, evaluation and assessment of communication activities which took place in the period 2007-2010, the MA has recognised the need to fine-tune its strategy for the period 2011 up to the Programmes' closure, **unless the need arises to undertake further changes.**

The rationale behind the revised approach was presented to the Monitoring Committees in 2010. Briefly, the pace of the Programmes' implementation up to 2009 was cited as one of the main triggers for the revision, given that it was slower than initially foreseen or expected. Hence, the MA considered it appropriate to re-dimension the intensity of publicity activities in order to align them with **the Programmes' progress and demonstrable results.** Furthermore, Beneficiaries and Intermediate Bodies were embarking on their own efforts in publicity, as required in the respective Grant Agreements and Covenants. **Thus, considering Malta's size and the target audience population such approach gave rise to duplication of efforts and resources. In addition such actions are also complemented by information and publicity measures carried out by other entities which, though being more inclined towards promoting policies, still contribute towards the increase in awareness of Cohesion Policy's contribution in Malta.**

Some projects (mostly implemented under Operational Programme II) carry heavy publicity actions or are in themselves awareness-raising campaigns, thus reducing the scope for the extent of additional publicity originally planned at Programme level. This became more evident once implementation started to ramp up in 2010. Furthermore, the MA observed that publicity tended to rub off across projects by association, in the case of Intermediate Bodies and Beneficiaries that have more than one project.

Green initiatives implemented during 2010 (spurred also by national administrative orders) have also rendered some measures to be replaced by equally effective, eco-friendly substitutes. Hence, the MA is opting for more web-based promotion rather than print, with the exception of calls for project proposals and promotion of events. This however, does not preclude the production of leaflets, books or other printed media which would complement publicity actions and serve as reference and keepsake material.

This revised version of the Plan takes into consideration the rationale and proposals presented to the MC in 2010 as well as the findings and recommendations made by the evaluators during their assessment of the Communication Plan as part of the Mid-Term Evaluation for Operational Programmes I and II (Cohesion Policy 2007-2013). It also includes a revised indicative budget for the measures, as well as an indicative yearly plan for the rest of the Programmes' period to complement the already existing Gantt chart. It concludes with a brief outline of the ongoing development of the Plan in future.

1.1 General Background: EU Communication Policy and other initiatives

The Cohesion Policy 2007-2013 information and communication requirements must be seen in the context of the European Union's renewed commitment to increase democracy, transparency and effectiveness. During the years leading up to the start of the current programming period, the Commission launched a set of complementary initiatives which all aim to 'close the gap'¹ between the EU and its citizens.²

The Commission's Plan D for Democracy, Dialogue and Debate, which was launched following the June 2005 European Council, aims to stimulate a more accurate communication of EU activities to give citizens a better understanding and ownership of EU policies.³ Plan D also dovetails with the Commission's Action Plan to Improve Communicating Europe, which outlines the specific measures the Commission will take to improve the way its activities are presented to the world.⁴ These two initiatives set out a long-term plan to "reinvigorate European democracy and help the emergence of a European public sphere, where citizens are given the information and the tools to actively participate in the decision-making process and gain ownership of the European project."⁵

¹ http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/index_en.htm. According to 'EU Communication and the Citizens – General Public Survey, Analytical Report' – Fieldwork September 2006: Europeans feel that the information available to them about the EU is insufficient. Almost two-thirds of respondents share the view that the EU-related information provided by the national media is too little. (62%). Only about a quarter of European citizens think that the information they receive is at just about the right volume, and only a small proportion of the population say they receive excessive information about the EU (5%).

² White Paper on a European Communication Policy, COM (2006) 35 final – Introduction.

³ Communication COM (2005) 494 final, Article 2.

⁴ Action Plan to improve communicating Europe by the Commission, SEC (2005) 985-20.07.2005, Introduction and Overview.

⁵ Communication COM (2005) 494 final, ArticleSection 2.

The Commission's reinforced approach towards communication necessitates a 'partnership approach'.⁶ The White Paper on a European Communication Policy, presented by the Commission in February 2006, calls for the involvement of all the key players, including national, regional and local authorities in the Member States, European political parties and civil society in general: "It is the responsibility of government, at national, regional and local level, to consult and inform citizens about public policy – including European policies and their impact on people's daily lives – and to put in place the forums to give this debate life".⁷

Furthermore, through the adoption of the Green Paper on a European Transparency Initiative (ETI), the Commission recommends increased openness on the use of the EU budget, thereby reinforcing accountability and ensuring greater visibility of results: "What Europe does and why it matters".⁸ The ETI proposes the introduction of legal obligations for Member States to publish information about the beneficiaries of funds under shared management as well as on lobbying and on the Commission's consultation practices.⁹

The EU's commitment towards increased communication and transparency is reinforced by the Cohesion Policy 2007-2013 regulations, namely Council Regulation (EC) 1083/2006 and Commission Regulation (EC) 1828/2006, which both apply to the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund.¹⁰ These can be referred to as the 'Council Regulation' and 'Implementing Regulation' respectively. The new Cohesion Policy regulations do not only maintain but also strengthen the publicity and information requirements set during the previous programming period.

1.2 Cohesion Policy 2007-2013: Malta's strategic framework

Malta's National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRF), which was approved in December 2006, sets the basic strategic framework for the allocation of funds made available through Cohesion Policy 2007-2013. The NSRF is complemented by two Operational Programmes.

Operational Programme (OP) I¹¹, entitled 'Investing in Competitiveness for a Better Quality of Life' is co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund and the Cohesion Fund. This document sets seven Priority Axes, which focus on: Enhancing Knowledge and Innovation; Promoting Sustainable Tourism; Developing the TEN-T; Mitigation and Adaptation to Climate Change; Safeguarding the Environment; Urban Regeneration and Improving the Quality of Life; and Technical Assistance.

Operational Programme (OP) II¹², entitled 'Empowering People for More Jobs and a Better Quality of Life' is co-financed by the European Social Fund and sets five Priority Axes, which focus on: Improving Education and Skills; Investing in Employability and Adaptability of the Workforce; Promoting an Equal and Inclusive Labour Market; Strengthening of Institutional and Administrative Capacity; and Technical Assistance.

⁶ COM (2006) 35 final, Article 5.

⁷ COM (2006) 35 final, Part 1, Article Section 2.

⁸ Green Paper, European Transparency Initiative, COM (2006) 194 final, Section IV, paragraph 1..

⁹ COM (2006) 194 final, Section IV; Section III .

¹⁰ Council Regulation (EC) No. 1083/2006 laying down down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund and repealing Regulation (EC) No. 1260/1999; Commission Regulation (EC) No. 1828/2006 setting down rules for the implementation of Council Regulation (EC) No. 1083/2006 laying down down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund and of Regulation (EC) No. 1080/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the European Regional Development Fund.

¹¹ Operational Programme I was approved by the European Commission on 26th June 2007.

¹² Operational Programme II was approved by the European Commission on 22nd June 2007.

Both OPs are managed at Member State level in Malta by a single Managing Authority. Information on Publicity relating to each Operational Programme is included in Sections 5.3.6 of both OP I and OPII.

To give a coherent approach to publicity actions relating to Cohesion Policy 2007-2013 and to ensure greater synergy between information measures on the Funds, the Managing Authority has decided to draw up one Communication Plan to cover both OPs, as per Article 2.1 of EC Regulation 1828/2006.¹³ This Plan is intended to cover general measures relating to both OPs and also specific measures and distinct components which apply to each individually. **Actions carried out by the Managing Authority in the ambit of this Communication Plan are moreover complemented by actions carried out by the Intermediate Bodies delegated to implement Aid Schemes envisaged in the OPs, Beneficiaries at Project level as well as other stakeholders involved in the dissemination of information about the EU (such as MEUSAC¹⁴).**

1.3 Cohesion Policy 2007-2013: The Communication Plan Legal Framework

All information and communication activities relating to Cohesion Policy 2007-2013 – OPI and OPII - are to be implemented in compliance with the provisions of:

- Council Regulation (EC) 1083/2006¹⁵ laying down the general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund;
- The Commission Regulation (EC) 1828/2006¹⁶ setting out rules for the implementation of Council Regulation (EC) 1083/2006.

These regulations provide a coherent framework for a rigorous approach to information and communication. Article 69 of the Council Regulation sets the main objectives and target audience of communication in relation to Cohesion Policy. The responsibilities of the Member States and the Managing Authority with regard to publicity and information are then outlined in further detail in the Implementing Regulation, both in the Preamble and in Articles 2 to 10.

The Communication Plan: Article 2 of the Implementing Regulation ensures that communication activities are carried out in a structured format and therefore are to be included in a Communication Plan drawn up by the Member State. In Malta's case, this responsibility is taken by the Managing Authority. The Plan aims to identify the information and publicity measures which **could** be undertaken throughout the programming period.¹⁷

Minimum Information Measures: The information measures for potential beneficiaries are listed in Article 5 of the Implementing Regulation, which specifies that the Managing Authority shall ensure wide dissemination of the Operational Programmes, including financial details, and that potential beneficiaries are provided with detailed information.¹⁸ Article 5.3 states that the Managing Authority must also involve other organisations and

¹³ Operational Programme I, p. 170; Operational Programme II, p. 100.

¹⁴ Malta-EU Steering & Action Committee (see page 29).

¹⁵ Hereafter referred to as the Council Regulation.

¹⁶ Hereafter referred to as the Implementing Regulation.

¹⁷ Commission Regulation (EC) No. 1828/2006, Preamble: paragraph 2.

¹⁸ Article 5 specifies that at least the following information must be transmitted:

- a) the conditions of eligibility to be met in order to qualify for financing under an operational programme;
- b) a description of the procedures for examining applications for funding and of the time periods involved;

agencies in information and publicity measures, in accordance with national laws and practices.¹⁹ Furthermore, Article 7 sets the minimum information and publicity measures to be taken by the Managing Authority. The revision of this Communication Plan in no way jeopardises the implementation of these measures.

The key information measures carried out and information transmitted during the Implementation of this Communication Plan are outlined in Chapter 2 of this Plan and follow the recommendations set by EC 1828/2007. The responsibilities of the beneficiaries will be outlined in Communication Guidelines for project leaders, as mentioned in Chapter 3.

Monitoring, Reporting and Evaluation: The Monitoring Committee of each Operational Programme is to be informed of the Communication Plan and progress in its implementation, the information and publicity measures carried out and the means of communication used.²⁰ Furthermore, the annual reports and final report on the implementation of each Operational Programme shall include examples of information and publicity measures and the content of any major amendments to the Communication Plan. Evaluation exercises such as the Mid-Term Evaluation will also be used to gauge the effectiveness as well as assess the implementation of the Communication Plan at programme level. Publicity measures carried out at Project level by the Beneficiaries and agreed to on the respective Grant Agreements are checked during On the Spot Checks by the MA's officers. Additionally, the MA monitors these publicity actions through constant contact with the Beneficiaries by way of guidance and collection of Project Progress Reports (PPRs), whereby the Beneficiaries quantify and analyse the measures carried out for the reporting period. Measures carried out at programme level are then assessed quantitatively and qualitatively through PPRs.²¹

The Annual Implementation Report for the year 2010 contains a chapter assessing the results of the information and publicity measures in terms of visibility and awareness of the Operational Programmes and of the role played by the Community. The means used for implementing, monitoring and evaluating the Communication Plan shall be proportional to the information and publicity measures identified in the Plan. Findings from the Mid-Term Evaluation exercise, as well as internal assessments carried out through feedback forms collected during the various events held will be used in order to compile these reports. Furthermore, additional evaluation exercises, closer to the final stages of programme implementation may be considered in order to further analyse the true effectiveness of the measures implemented from an objective, independent perspective. The Monitoring and Evaluation activities which will be carried out in relation to information and publicity activities are outlined in Chapter 4 of this Communication Plan.

Networking and Exchange of Experience: Article 10 of the Implementing Regulation specifies that each Managing Authority shall designate the contact persons responsible for information and publicity. It also encourages the exchange of experience and setting up of Community networks to ensure exchanges of good practice. Malta has a designated contact point (and alternative) within the Managing Authority. The Networking and Exchange of Experience activities which will be carried out in relation to publicity and information are outlined in Chapter 3 of this document.

c) criteria for selecting the operations to be financed;

d) the contacts at national, regional or local level who can provide information on the operational programmes.

¹⁹ Article 5.3 specifies that the MA should involve at least one of the following bodies that can widely disseminate information listed in Article 5.2: a) National, regional and local authorities and development agencies; b) trade and professional associations; c) economic and social partners; d) non-governmental organizations; e) organizations representing business; f) information centres on Europe as well as Commission representations in the Member States; g) educational institutions.

²⁰ EC 1828/2006, Article 4.

²¹ This approach is valid as of 2010 onwards.

1.4 Communicating Cohesion Policy: Malta's Experience 2004-2006

One of the aspects which informs the development of Malta's Communication Plan 2007-2013 is the experience obtained during the previous programming period, particularly with regard to Malta's Communication Strategy and Action Plan for the Structural Funds Programme 2004-2006.²²

The Communication Strategy and Action Plan for 2004-2006 was based on Council Regulation 1260/1999 and Commission Regulation EC 1159/2000. It is briefly summarised below:

Aims and Objectives: The main publicity and information aims set by this Plan were to inform potential and final beneficiaries about the opportunities offered by the Funds, to ensure transparency and to inform the general public about the role played by the EU in cooperation with the Member States in the assistance concerned and its results.

The key objectives of the information and publicity measures 2004-2006 were the following:

- promoting understanding and appreciation of the role and purpose of Structural Funds and the European Union's contribution thereto;
- informing the general public, key target groups and the media about specific Programmes and schemes being undertaken with Structural Funds' support in a timely and cost-effective manner;
- supporting implementation by ensuring that measures being undertaken with Structural Funds' support are widely understood and as many individuals or organisations eligible for particular schemes have the opportunity to apply;
- Ensuring that all project managers and implementers are aware of the requirements and procedures, including those for information and publicity;
- Maximising transparency and accountability in the allocation of funds and the tendering process.²³

Target Groups: Three main target groups were identified, namely the 'internal public', that is, Government Ministries, Institutions and other implementing bodies as well as partners such as EU information centres; the 'professional public', that is: the media, Malta's 68 local councils, social partners, trade and professional groups, NGOs, opinion-formers and potential contractual suppliers; and the 'general public' - the population as a whole and specific target groups within the population.²⁴

Communication Tools: A selection of tools were outlined in Section 4 of the Communication Strategy and Action Plan, together with the actions required, target groups covered and the cost-effectiveness of each. The tools actually used include the use of audio-visual and print media; publications; posters, web and email; signage and information events.²⁵

Implementation: The Communication Strategy and Action Plan 2004-2006 was implemented through the organisation of a number of information measures and events by the MA at different stages in the 2004-2006 programming cycle and also through a coordinated 12-month information and publicity campaign, which was

²² Chapter 6 of the Programme Complement to the Single Programming Document 2004-2006. The Publicity Measures were also described in Chapter 10.6 of the Single Programming Document 2004-2006 and further outlined in the Structural Funds Manual of Procedures, 2004-2006.

²³ Programme Complement 2004-2006, pp. 86-87.

²⁴ Programme Complement 2004-2006, p. 87.

²⁵ Programme Complement, 2004-2006, pp. 90-92.

launched in May 2006. The measures undertaken by the MA were complemented by publicity measures at project level undertaken by the beneficiaries' organisations.

Ongoing and ad hoc Information Measures: The measures taken directly by the MA included the issuing of frequent press releases through the Department of Information, the publication of adverts and articles in the media as well as press conferences, seminars and workshops; The MA also participated in various television and radio programmes as well as information events, including three fairs,²⁶ public dialogues on the Structural Funds, a Schuman Day event and a four-day ESF 50th Anniversary Celebration. Specific promotional and informative items were produced for the different events. In addition, an Email Helpdesk [info.ppcd@gov.mt] was set up and manned by the MA's communication officers, who also liaised with EU and national information agencies and other bodies, provided support to the media and organised press conferences where necessary. These ad hoc measures included activities for all Funds and also Fund specific measures.

Information and Publicity Campaign: Apart from the ad hoc measures mentioned above, the MA decided to have a concerted information and publicity campaign to coincide with the implementation of the projects and the initial results on the ground. This campaign was implemented through a public relations agency which was contracted to plan, design and implement the campaign, based on the Communication Strategy and Action Plan 2004-2006 and in line with Regulation (EC) 1159/2000. Following an open tender procedure, the contract was signed in February 2006 and implementation of the *EU4U Campaign* began in May of the same year. This focused on achieving the objectives outlined in the Communications Strategy and Action Plan.²⁷

Timing was considered critical during the design of the campaign, in view of the information overload experienced by the target audience during 2003 and 2004, in the run-up to Malta's Referendum on EU Membership. The main thrust of the campaign was mainly aimed to target the segment of the Maltese population which held neutral and positive views of EU membership in 2005: 36% and 40% of the population respectively.²⁸ The campaign was therefore primarily informative in nature and conveyed factual information on Regional Policy and about what was being achieved in Malta through the priorities, measures and projects supported by the Structural Funds. Throughout the duration of this campaign, care was taken to ensure that the message was not interpreted as a propaganda or branding exercise.²⁹

The campaign activities included press, television and radio advertising, a television documentary, a Roadshow organised in four localities over 24 days and relevant public relations support; publication of leaflets and an illustrated booklet; setting up of a website; pre- and post-campaign research.

In all, the campaign resulted in the following, among others: seven informative spots aired 83 times on four national television channels, a 30 minute documentary aired on national television, seven TV spots aired 83 times on four television channels; radio advertorials transmitted 255 times on two radio stations; a four-page insert and 16-page full-colour booklet, each distributed with leading newspapers; six full-page adverts in six national newspapers as well as a further six adverts and 13 press releases on the Roadshow activities and an EU4U website (www.eu4u.gov.mt), which was handed over to the MA in June 2007. The Roadshows registered

²⁶ These were: a stand at the Malta Pavilion, International Fair of Malta, July 2003, June-July 2004; a stand at the Qualitex, Quality of Life Fair, Malta, May 2007.

²⁷ Service Contract CT 2411/2005, 17th February 2007; Inception Report, 4th April 2006, pp. 1 and 2.

²⁸ Eurobarometer, September 2005.

²⁹ Service Contract CT 2411/2005, 17th February 2007; Completion Report, October 2007, p. 3

a headcount of approximately 11,000 visitors and an estimated 87,500 people viewed the heavily-branded exhibition tent.³⁰

The campaign included the development of a slogan, EU4U, accompanied by the statement: 'Investing in your future', which was in anticipation of the statement to be used for Cohesion Policy 2007-2013. The continued use of this statement ensures continuity between the two programming periods in Malta.

Pre and Post Evaluation Results: Research was carried out through a random sampling technique at the beginning and end of the Information and Publicity Campaign, with fieldwork conducted in May 2006 and April 2007.³¹ For the purpose of this research, the target market was defined as male and female adults aged 15 years and over, residing in Malta and Gozo and respondents were asked to fill in a structured questionnaire.³²

The research focused on support for EU membership and perceptions of the benefit of EU membership and EU Structural Funds; perceived knowledge on the Structural Funds, awareness of local projects, attitudinal information on EU Structural Funds and Advertising Recall. The research results indicate that the campaign was a success, especially since statistically significant improvements were recorded in both the target market's awareness levels and attitudes.³³ Some of the main results of this research exercise are summarised in Table 1.1 below³⁴:

Table 1.1: EU Structural Funds 2004-2006 Pre and Post-Campaign Research Results

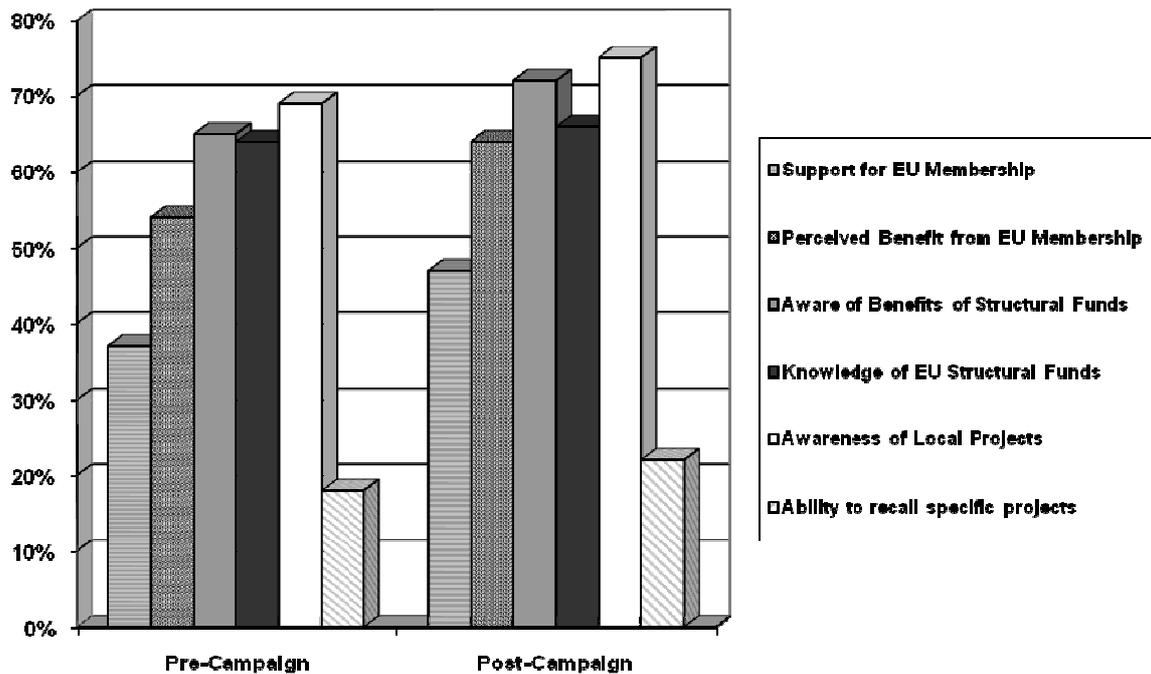
³⁰ Ibid, p. 7.

³¹ The Random Sampling Technique was based on the following two stages: 1) Systematic choice of contact households from the last telephone directory; 2) Selection of respondents following the 'last birthday' rule. 800 telephone interviews were conducted, 400 for both the Pre and Post-test exercises.

³² This definition of 'target market' was chosen in order to be consistent with the Eurobarometer surveys, thus allowing comparisons on key indicators.

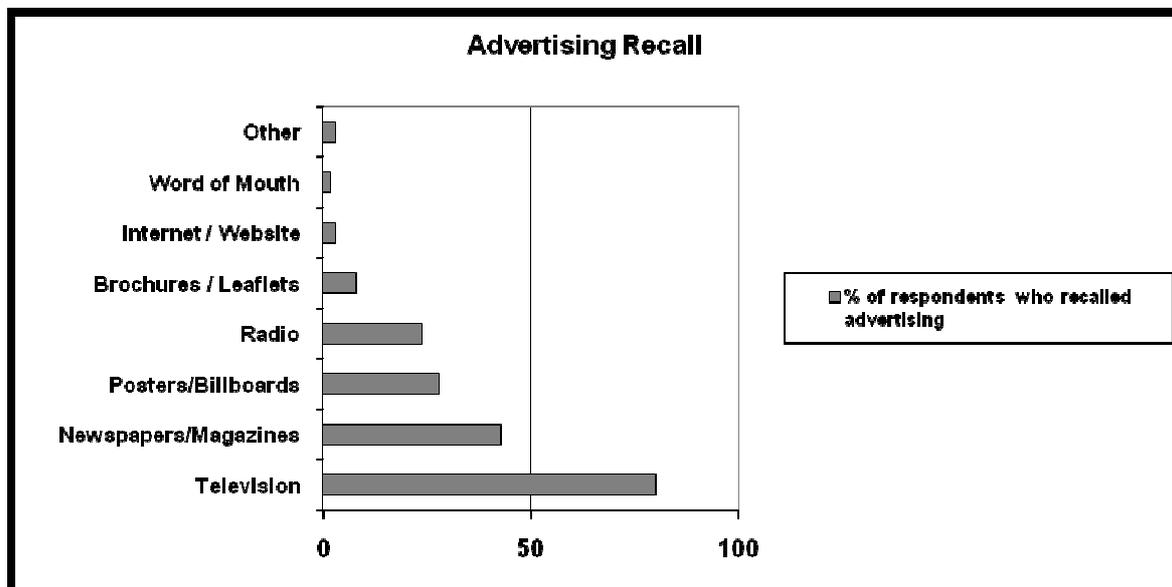
³³ Eurobarometer Surveys, No. 64 and 66 showed support for EU membership to be 43% and 47% respectively.

³⁴ EU Structural Funds Research Debrief, BPC International, July 2007.



Research on advertising recall also registered positive results, with 79% of respondents claiming to have seen or heard advertising relating to the information campaign. The results of the advertising recall research is outlined in Table 1.2 below:³⁵

Table 1.2: Advertising Recall



The advertising recall results suggest that television was the most effective medium during the campaign, followed by newspapers and magazines, posters/billboards and radio.

³⁵ EU Structural Funds, Research Debrief, BPC International – Structural Funds Programme for Malta 2004-2006, 4th July 2007.

In terms of awareness levels, spontaneous and aided awareness levels of projects improved considerably and with the exception of a few projects, noticeably higher awareness scores were registered across the board. From an attitudinal perspective, similarly positive results were registered, with an increase in the number of respondents who showed an awareness of the benefits of the Structural Funds projects to them personally (+6%) and to Malta in general (+3%).

The experience and results of the communications campaign has provided valuable data which has helped shape the main thrust of the Communications Plan for 2007. The research also provided a valuable indication of the audience the MA will be focusing on during the new programming period 2007-2013. This will be discussed in further detail in the next chapter of this document.

Project Level: The Final Beneficiaries for the 2004-2006 programming period carried out a number of communication measures to promote and increase awareness about the support of the Structural Funds in the development and implementation of their project(s) as required by the regulations. Publicity measures included billboards (particularly for ERDF and Cohesion Fund infrastructural projects), permanent plaques (particularly for infrastructural projects and investments in SMEs, including the agricultural and fisheries sectors), and backdrops/signs (for training projects). Tools used included promotional material, booklets, brochures, bookmarks, posters, documentaries, advertising, TV campaigns, and articles/press releases. The contribution from the funds was also publicised on the tender documents/calls for applications and on the employment contracts. The FBs also contributed to communication measures implemented by the MA.

Lessons Learnt: The experience obtained during the 2004-2006 period highlighted the need for the MA to set up a specialised Communications Unit, to coordinate all information and communication activities, and to ensure more synergy and coherence between activities at Programme and those at project level. This unit has now been set up, staffed by personnel with a background in communications, events management and journalism, as well as EU funding programmes. It will be strengthened further in preparation for the 2007-2013 programming period. Having internal expertise ensures that the MA is better equipped to implement communication activities and to liaise with the media and contractors.

The MA has also noted that greater impact was obtained through the organisation of focused events rather than a campaign spread over a longer period of time. The advantages of having one single contract and a coordinated approach are outweighed by the enthusiasm and 'buzz' provided by a focused event or activity. The results of a focused event may be easier to measure since there will be less externalities that could impact on the event. Furthermore, the MA has concluded that it is refreshing to have a greater variety of creative input by working with different contractors and service providers.

1.5 Communicating Cohesion Policy 2007-2013: the story so far

1.5.1 Events and other Information and Publicity measures between 2007 and 2010 by MA:

In line with the obligations of the Implementing Regulation, in 2007 the MA drew up a Communication Plan which took into account both information and promotional measures using a range of information and

communication products which were to be financed under the two OPs. The final draft of the plan was submitted to the Commission via the SFC on 24 October 2007, presented to the Monitoring Committee on 5 December 2007 and officially approved by the Commission on 21 January 2008.

Meanwhile, a number of information and publicity initiatives were also taken in 2007. These included the participation of MA staff on local radio and TV to provide information on the OPs to stakeholders, project proponents and the general public; the design of Malta's official logos for the 2007-2013 funds and the drafting of the Visual Identity Guidelines for the official logos; the printing of branded folders for general distribution during events; the organisation and launch of the Operational Programmes in July 2007; the printing and distribution of the OP documents to various stakeholders, NGOs and other interested parties; the organisation of information sessions in respect of project application forms; the procurement and display of flags as required by Commission Regulation (EC) 1828/2006; the setting up of the general Email Helpdesk which received and processed over 100 queries during 2007³⁶; and the distribution of publications on ERDF and ESF provided by the European Commission's Publications Office.

2008 saw an Information Festival being held on 21 and 22 November at City Gate, Valletta. The event consisted of a walk-through exhibition visually emphasising, in a coherent manner, the different priority areas of Malta's 2007-2013 Cohesion Policy programmes. Banners, lighting effects, coloured carpeting and gazebos were used to define the event space. In addition, a concert stage area for live music performances provided an element of entertainment, further increasing the attraction to the information stands at the entrance and exit of the space. Promotional material and publications related to Cohesion Policy were distributed to the general public at the information stands where MA officials were present to provide detailed and updated further information to the public on the progress of both Programmes. The event was launched by means of a press conference and was promoted through radio, print and outdoor advertising.

A number of other communication activities were held during 2008, including the production of eco-friendly promotional items for distribution to the general public during related events³⁷; Media relations and participation of MA staff on local radio and TV programmes to provide information on the OPs to the general public; Regular networking of the Communications Unit with the INFORM network of DG REGIO and the INIO network of DG EMPL for Information Officers in Managing Authorities; Launch of Calls for Project Proposals through various adverts and press releases in the local newspapers; Information sessions for potential Applicants organised in respect of the calls for project proposals issued during the year³⁸; Revamping of the MA's website (www.ppcd.gov.mt) which includes pages dedicated to Cohesion Policy 2007-2013, the OPs and their Priority Axes, links and downloadable documentation on the OPs together with more general information required for the implementation of the programmes; Publication and updating of the list of beneficiaries on the MA's website http://www.ppcd.gov.mt/projects_07_13; Processing of around 140 queries through the general Email Helpdesk (info.ppcd@gov.mt); Issue of guidelines and templates on the technical requirements for publicity on adverts and tender documents; Design, finalisation and circulation of the Visual Identity Guidelines for Cohesion Policy 2007-2013; Distribution of various publications on Cohesion Policy, including the OPs, during the various events; and the display of the EU and Maltese flags outside the MA's premises for a week starting 9 May 2008.

³⁶ In Malta, given the size and the fact that most stakeholders would know officers on a personal level, most of the queries come directly to the MA's officials' own e-mail addresses.

³⁷ These consisted of posters, pens, magnifiers, computer mice, key chains, index sticky-notes, planners, drawstring bags, and energy-saver bulbs complete with the necessary OPI and/or OPII as well as generic branding.

³⁸ The relevant adverts were published in the local newspapers in English and Maltese. Following some of these sessions, FAQs were compiled and uploaded on the MA's website to provide additional guidance to Applicants (even those unable to attend the information session) in completing the Application Forms;

For the 2009 annual event, two National Conferences were organised in December (one in Malta and one in Gozo)³⁹, covering a spectrum of themes from the two Operational Programmes and showing the holistic and complementary approach in which the two Programmes (and the three funds) are being used in Malta. The conference held in Malta and covered the themes of (i) Education, Employment and Training, and Social Inclusion; (ii) Competitiveness (Assistance to Enterprises and Tourism); and (iii) Quality of Life which was subdivided into Accessibility and Urban Regeneration and Environment and Climate Change. The Gozo conference presented the same subjects under two comprehensive themes, namely, (i) Competitiveness (Assistance to Enterprise, Employment and Tourism) and (ii) Quality of Life, however, the discussion this time was more focused on the interventions being carried out in Gozo.

The conferences also included speeches by the Minister for Gozo and by the Parliamentary Secretary for Public Dialogue and Information. Both made reference to the two Operational Programmes which define the areas of intervention and highlighted specific projects and schemes which were of particular interest to those attending. Emphasis was also made on the visibility aspect of the conferences which were serving as a platform to provide information on what was already being done and what opportunities remained to be exploited. Project Leaders, representatives from the Line Ministries and other stakeholders were invited to participate on discussion panels which tackled the themes described above. In order to give the Gozo conference a more local perspective, the discussion panels were composed of speakers from projects being implemented in Gozo. During both conferences, the discussion was facilitated by two experienced journalists who put questions to the speakers and moderated the discussion when members of the audience intervened. The events were widely covered by the local media and generated a number of queries as well as follow-up appearances by members of the MA during TV and radio shows to further inform the public on the benefits being received through the Cohesion Policy 2007-2013.

Apart from the annual event described above, in 2009 the MA engaged in a number of other information and publicity activities which continued to include media relations and the participation of MA senior officials in local radio and TV programmes to further inform the general public on the OPs; participation of the Communications Contact Person in the INFORM and INIO networks; launch of more calls for project proposals through newspaper adverts, press releases and posting on the MA's website; the organisation of information sessions in respect of the calls for project proposals; distribution of various publications on Cohesion Policy, including the OPs during the events held; hoisting of the EU and Maltese flags outside the MA's premises to commemorate Europe Day and throughout the entire week; handling some 80 queries received through the Email Helpdesk and continuous updating of information on the MA's website such as lists of approved projects.

The MA tries to create a different Annual Event every year and 2010 was no exception. While borrowing from previous years' ideas of an information festival, the MA organised an event at which information booths staffed by Project Leaders were set up to present the themes of (i) Employment Opportunities, (ii) Education and Health, (iii) Science and Technology and (iv) the Built and Natural Environment. These booths were complemented by another one staffed by the Managing Authority providing general information on the Funds. The 2010 event, called 'mE&U fest', moved out of the usual locations and took place at the National Salini Park (Kennedy Grove) and at the newly refurbished playground in Munxar, Gozo. Families were the target audience and to this end, a special corner was set up where animators entertained children and helped them draw paintings about the themes being presented at the event while performers provided light entertainment as a backdrop. The mE&U fest was promoted through newspaper and radio adverts, press releases and through an

³⁹ In line with the recommendation made by the Monitoring Committee.

informative leaflet distributed to all Maltese and Gozitan households in the days prior to the event. Apart from information on the Funds according to the themes selected for the event, the leaflet also contained a children's drawing competition which was utilised as a 'pull-marketing' technique to attract attendance to the event. Each of the four children who painted the winning entries were later given a book token and gift bag with promotional items as a prize.

During the year, more new and alternative forms of communication were introduced, with the Managing Authority creating its own page on a popular social networking site. Its informal set-up is being used to upload photos of past events as well as to serve as a multiplier of the visibility of calls, notices and other items also uploaded on the official MA website. New calls for project proposals, pre-announcements, notifications of events etc are being simultaneously uploaded on both sites. Such online notifications are complemented by press releases issued through the Department of Information as well as adverts in all local newspapers. The use of e-banners and e-fliers in the promotion of events also continues.

As in previous years, in 2010 the MA also participated in a number of TV and radio shows; it procured a set of new promotional merchandise and participated at EU level meetings and conferences on the subject of information and publicity.

At the writing of this revised Communication Plan, the Annual Event for 2011 is yet to take place; however, in its continuous effort to reach out to the wider general public through innovative and interesting ways, the MA is planning to organise a set of tours around key projects which are being implemented under the OPs. These tours will be complemented by a media campaign as well as a short documentary, highlighting the more intangible projects. The MA is also planning to host a Local Informal Information and Publicity (LIIP) Network Meeting towards the end of the year, bringing together Cohesion Policy 2007-2013 Beneficiaries, Line Ministries and Ministers' Communication Coordinators, MEUSAC and the EU Commission Representation in Malta with a view to discuss the way forward on providing information on Cohesion Policy 2007-2013, foster the exchange of best practices and further reinforce cooperation between the MA, Beneficiaries, and other stakeholders involved in communicating Cohesion Policy objectives and achievements. In the meantime, adverts and press releases in the local media for the launch of calls for project proposals were once again published and respective information sessions held. Furthermore, the MA continued to distribute promotional items and initiated the procurement of new items while a feature article in a local business publication about Cohesion Policy 2007-2013 was also drawn up. The MA's website and Social Network page are updated on a regular basis. EU week in May, once again saw the flying of the EU flag outside the MA's premises.

1.5.2 Publicity Measures by Intermediate Bodies and Beneficiaries

The efforts made by the MA to provide detailed and comprehensible information over the first part of the Programming period were complemented by the campaigns and publicity measures undertaken by the various Intermediate Bodies which are delegated by the MA to manage aid schemes. Intermediate Bodies are implementing a number of information and publicity activities which complement those identified in this Communication Plan to be carried out by the Managing Authority.

Actions currently carried out by the IBs include various newspaper adverts; audio-visual adverts on TV and radio stations; the production and distribution of informative material (e.g. leaflets, booklets, presentations

and posters); creation of dedicated website pages and sites with all the information required for applicants and beneficiaries together with lists of beneficiaries participating in the scheme; as well as the distribution of commemorative giveaways to the general public and to participants at events organised by the IBs.

In 2010, the IBs, between themselves, organised over 45 information sessions with over 800 participants attending. Over and above, various seminars, conferences and a significant number of one to one business meetings with applicants and potential beneficiaries were organised. From the large number of beneficiaries participating in the schemes collectively, it is evident that the publicity measures carried out by the IBs are achieving the scope in attracting participants as well as being information multipliers to the general public given that all beneficiaries are obliged to display publicity signage on their premises and the outreach of adverts etc are nationwide.

During 2010, ETC carried out campaigns to promote its Employment Aid Programme (EAP). This consisted of 57 features in local publications, 443 radio spots on five national radio stations as well as two interviews on another 2 national stations and 33 TV spots on national TV. Bearing in mind the media demographics in Malta, these measures carried a very wide outreach which can be evidenced from the positive take up of these schemes. The Training Aid Framework (TAF) is promoted through public information sessions and certificates are given to all trainees. The Employment and Training Corporation has also included two dedicated web pages on their website to provide further information both the EAP and the TAF as well as provide the necessary documents and guidelines for download and use as necessary.

On the other hand, the Tourism and Sustainable Development Unit, the IB managing the tourism scheme under OPI have created a page on one of the major social networking sites, thus having global outreach. Apart from information on open calls, this page also carries two videos showing a sample of projects which were chosen to give a general representation of the type of projects co-financed by the Scheme. As the Scheme funds any enterprise willing to implement a tourism related project, the selected beneficiaries represent an array of businesses, from those working directly in the tourism sector, to those who don't, and are diversifying their product⁴⁰.

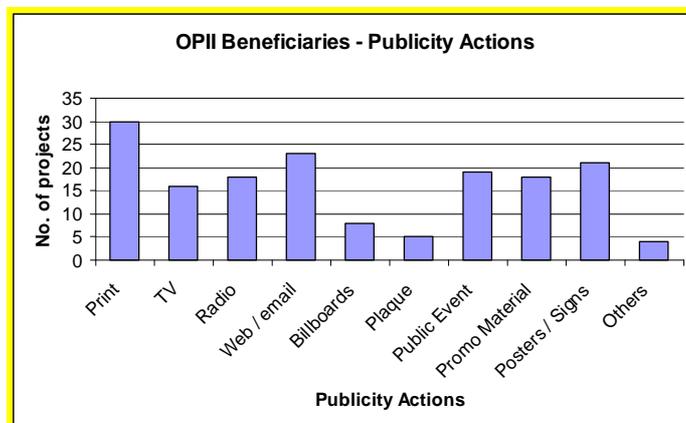
Malta Enterprise, given as it manages a number of different schemes, which are, however, all tied in their target to assist enterprises, created a dedicated website which comprises information on the six schemes they manage. The website, <http://www.20millionforindustry.com>, gives a good overview of each scheme strand as well as providing the necessary guidelines, application forms and lists of the selected beneficiaries. This website was furthermore complemented by wide advertising on newspapers, web adverts as well as TV.

DSWS has issued calls with regard to ERDF 136 which where in turn supported by information sessions in order to better inform applicants. Apart from the information sessions, the DSWS has also published adverts in the local newspapers as well as the Government Gazette with publicity guidelines applied and also any relevant press releases for every call that was issued. As an IB, DSWS has a website which is incorporated within the MFSS main website where all relevant information is uploaded. Interested parties can also phone the contact person for further information.

⁴⁰ The page and videos can be viewed on: <http://www.facebook.com/eutourism>

Information and Publicity Measures IBs 2010					
IB	ETC		Malta Enterprise	TSDU	DSWS
	EAP	TAF			
TV	33 spots	demand driven scheme			
Radio	443 spots				
Print	32 features		adverts and press releases	19 adverts plus 1 online advert	2 adverts
Web	webpage & social network page	webpage	dedicated website 20 million for industry	webpage and website	webpage
Info Sessions	14 plus various one-to-one meetings with potential beneficiaries	8 plus various one-to-one meetings with potential beneficiaries	12 plus 7 business meetings and other one-to-one meetings on request	2 plus ad hoc seminars with tourism associations and one-to-one business meetings;	2
Participants	> 400 (info sessions only)	> 200 (info sessions only)	> 150 (info sessions only)	> 120 (info sessions only)	20
Other	1,000 leaflets distributed; list of beneficiaries published online; certificates of participation at beneficiary premises	certificate to all participants and trainees; list of beneficiaries published online	list of beneficiaries on website, brochures distributed during meetings, publicity logos used in all communications; plaques/stickers etc featuring at Beneficiary premises	information booklet published and distributed during meetings etc; best practice press DVD created and another is being planned; plaques/stickers etc featuring at Beneficiary premises	Mini manual issued for beneficiaries, email advert sent to target potential beneficiaries

Beneficiaries across OP II have been carrying out the following measures⁴¹:

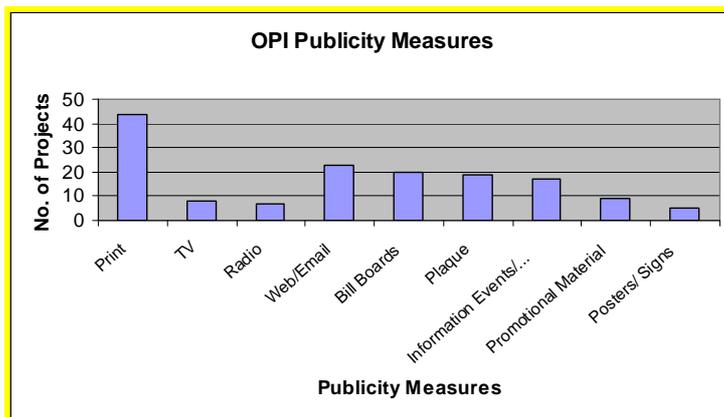


⁴¹ Year of data capture: 2010

The statistics for a total of forty-two (42) OP II projects were as follows: there were thirty (30) projects which resorted to print and these had a distribution of 13,697 in the form of newspapers adverts and articles; sixteen (16) projects used television with a total of three-hundred-sixty-seven (367) airings; eighteen (18) projects adopted the radio as a publicity measure totalling 3,832 airings; twenty-three (23) projects had a website or webpage; eight (8) out of forty-two (42) projects had billboards and these totalled thirty-one (31) signs; five (5) projects had plaques which appeared in forty-nine (49) places; nineteen (19) projects had public information events having a total of 6,092 participants; there were eighteen (18) projects using promotional material and twenty-one (21) projects had posters/signs in nine-hundred-twenty (920) occasions; finally four (4) out of forty-two (42) projects resorted to other publicity measures. Over and above some of the projects are campaigns within themselves.

In the light of the publicity measures undertaken, 26% of the projects reported an increase in awareness of the project aims and objectives together with an overall increase in participants within the project. Among these were increased applications for courses, increased student intake, as well as increased awareness of specific areas such as the equality mark and waste management. Media surveys on TV programme viewership were used to gauge the outreach which participation in programmes generated. Similarly, website hits, registrations for special certifications such as the equality mark, and course application forms were all used to calculate increase in awareness. The overall increase in awareness and resulting participants was much higher than expected and would not have been possible without the publicity measures undertaken.

Beneficiaries across OP I have been carrying out the following measures⁴²:



The data shown above is not exhaustive given that there are projects that are still in the initial stages and will be carrying out more promotional measures in the near future. In addition, it is worth noting that not all projects have the same budgetary allocation towards publicity actions; therefore it is difficult to benchmark and compare such activities. Furthermore, since projects are at different stages of implementation, it is to be expected that in some cases, an increase in the implementation of publicity measures will be seen at a later stage of implementation.

From the analysis gathered it clear that a fair share of targeted visibility is being achieved across all levels especially in the case of non-infrastructure projects given that such projects are not directly visible. Because of this factor, budgets allocated for publicity measures vary greatly since infrastructure projects may appear to publicise themselves physically, hence publicity actions for such projects tend to be lower and less intensive. On the other hand, as can be noted, publicity actions for non-physical projects are more intensive because they need to attract participants and promote various types of awareness in line with Operational Programme

⁴² Year of data capture: 2010

Objectives. Thus both beneficiaries and intermediary bodies are providing to be successful information multipliers in their own right.

1.5.3 Lessons learnt during the first years of the current period

At this juncture in the Plan's cycle, the MA detected certain trends which in its view made a review apt. The pace of project implementation in the first three years of the programming period had been slower than originally foreseen and hence it was considered that holding larger scale activities should be postponed until demonstrable results were on hand to show to the public.

Furthermore, Intermediate Bodies and Beneficiaries have an obligation to carry out promotional measures at aid scheme and project level respectively and so, often, the public is being assailed by concurrent campaigns, all promoting essentially the same financial instrument, albeit from different angles. In a country having a surface area of only 316 km² and a population of approximately 400,000 inhabitants there are nine television stations, thirteen nationwide radio stations⁴³, as well as a total of 14 newspapers (4 dailies / 8 weeklies / 2 fortnightlies). When all these channels are utilised simultaneously by different stakeholders in the system – the MA, the Intermediate Bodies, the Beneficiaries, Ministers and other partner organisations – to transmit a similar message, the risk is that it could lead to overkill and be counter productive. Concurrent campaigns by projects heighten the risk of overexposure and repetition which can cause monotony and turn interest into disaffection among the target audience which is essentially the same for all stakeholders. The risk of overkill is more acute for OPII given the number of information and publicity campaigns being implemented as part of operations under the Programme targeting different issues related to employment, education and training. Furthermore, the MA feels that the demarcation lines between Programme-level and Project-level publicity are at times blurred from its point of view due to its requirement to use projects as best practice examples through its activities. Beneficiaries questioned during the Mid-Term Evaluation did not perceive this potential overlap or conflicting priorities, in all likelihood due to their only witnessing the generic and more strategic publicity carried out to promote the funding opportunities available such as adverts regarding calls for project proposals, and information sessions. The MA contends that in order to promote benefits and results being achieved in a particular area of intervention, examples at project level would need to be used and at times it is difficult not to go down to the level of project detail to explain the achievements made. This is due to the fact that general public cannot be addressed in terms of strategies and technical jargon but needs to see or read about tangible results and examples they can relate to. This lesson was also learnt through the cooperation the MA had with the Communication Coordinators of the Prime Minister and the Parliamentary Secretary responsible for EU Funds during the writing of the mE&U Fest leaflet in 2010.

An important lesson learnt from both the 2004-2006 programme as well as the early phase of the current period is that the content of press releases issued through the Government's central information hub, the Department of Information (Office of the Prime Minister), to which the MA has direct access given its Ministerial location, also in the Office of the Prime Minister, is picked up by most, if not all, the media channels available, generating free widespread reportage even if no direct procurement of advert/advertorial space

⁴³ Source: <http://www.ba-malta.org/stations>. Five TV stations are free to air while 4 are by subscription. The thirteen nationwide radio stations are also complemented by around 30 Long Term Community Radio Station

(against payment) is made. Milestones achieved in aid scheme or project implementation are also celebrated through the involvement of the Minister responsible of the area of intervention. Press conferences, visits and events presided over by Ministers are covered through the centralised Government information department and transmitted to all media for reporting. Close coordination and cooperation with the respective Secretariats, both by the MA as well as by the Beneficiaries has resulted in additional coverage of the interventions co-financed by Cohesion Policy. This was also evident in the Communication Plan review carried out as part of the Mid-Term Evaluation on the Operational Programmes. While it transpired that there appeared to be significant underperformance for a number of output indicators, which was mainly due to the fact that certain activities by the MA were shifted to the latter years of the Programme, indicators related to the media showed positive variances or even over performance.

In fact, another effective means to promote the Programmes and the progress being registered is through the participation of staff from the Managing Authority on television and radio programmes which target both specific-interest as well as more generic audiences. Such participation does not normally entail any cost and is to be further encouraged in order to create more awareness among the general public, even at 'works in progress' stages and not merely when results are achieved. This is also strongly recommended in order to further increase the knowledge and awareness of Cohesion Policy and respective Funds as well as of the Managing Authority and other key stakeholders. The Mid-Term Evaluation review included a survey among the general public and the results thereof imply that more work needs to be done in order to familiarise the lay man with the main pillars of Cohesion Policy and the investment being made through ERDF, Cohesion Fund and ESF. The key findings in this section of the Mid-Term Evaluation were:

- Majority of respondents are aware of the terms *European Social Fund* and *European Regional Development Fund* but not of *Cohesion Policy* and *Cohesion Fund*;
- Most respondents associated the terms above with funding or financial aid but not with development;
- Majority of respondents could not correctly name the institution representing the EU Commission in Malta and even higher majority did not know who was responsible for the planning, management and implementation of the funds;
- Encouragingly, the majority reported that they had seen, read or heard adverts and could refer to projects (even if not by their exact name).

Bearing the high level interpretation of the above findings together with the recommendations made by the evaluators in order to raise more awareness and knowledge, the MA can steer future actions towards the better understanding of the key concepts of Cohesion Policy as well as cooperate with other key stakeholders in the provision of information to the public. Through such cooperation with other entities which have a more 'public focused' approach such as the EU Commission Representation and MEUSAC, the MA can learn from their experience and raise its profile while implementing more 'public friendly' activities.

The arrival and proliferation of new media has made disseminating information electronically highly cost-efficient and carries broad outreach. The regular updating of the PPCD website and the use of e-banners to promote events has reduced the need to publish and distribute printed matter such as fliers thus reducing costs while at the same time adhering to Green Initiatives introduced by the Office of the Prime Minister. Furthermore, disseminating information electronically tends to have a multiplier or ripple effect since the same document or e-flyer/banner keeps circulating and being shared as it is forwarded to other interested parties. The only pitfall of such an approach is that it might create a difficulty in gathering statistics to keep track of the number of times an e-document/flier/banner has been forwarded through email once it has left the MA's outbox. On the other hand, presence on social networking sites such as Facebook and YouTube would allow the Managing Authority to keep track of the page's popularity and traffic, and monitor which news items would

generate most interest. Once again, postings on such websites would allow viewers to share the information uploaded by the MA and hence create a multiplier effect, generating more interest and awareness.

Printed matter is, nevertheless, not being overlooked. The MA's intention is to produce publications of keepsake value containing information of reference quality later in the Programmes' lifetime to promote the benefits accruing to Malta under the 2007-2013 financial perspectives. The most suited for such publications would be the infrastructural projects, particularly those being implemented under OPI. Such publications could show the various stages in the implementation of the required works, giving readers a "behind the scenes" insight since these locations would most times be closed to the public. Moreover, since such projects do not lend themselves to awareness or publicity campaigns (as part of implementation⁴⁴) such as the case with a large number of OPII projects, such publications would complement the compulsory billboard and plaque on the project site, which would not necessarily have the same impact on the general public.

Following the analysis held in 2010, it is clear that OPII beneficiaries are making more use of various media, especially audio-visual, in order to promote their respective projects and attract interest. In terms of OPI, use of audio-visual media tends to be lower (with the possible exception of Aid Schemes), mainly due to the fact that projects tend to publicise themselves because of their physical nature. Additionally, budgets available for publicity are lower due to the higher costs of the projects themselves. Hence, such projects tend to resort mainly to billboards, plaques, press launches and inauguration events as publicity actions, which although give the individual projects a good degree of publicity through these actions alone, the lasting impact of such investment on the daily lives of citizens very often does not get the promotion it deserves.

In light of this the MA is proposing to increase the ad hoc communication actions with respect to OPI interventions in order to start highlighting such impacts by using different media other than merely the ones used by the beneficiaries. This would be done with a view to complement the Beneficiaries' actions further and create more public interest in the projects.

On the other hand, the MA is considering a reduction in the communication actions at Programme level for OPII since, given the amount of publicity carried out by the IBs and Beneficiaries (as already indicated and explained further throughout this document) the MA feels that the targeted amount of visibility is already being achieved. Thus the requirement for the additional stimulus at MA level to the extent as originally foreseen in the Plan is not so strongly felt. The MA would also like to avoid an overkill of information in light of the fact that beneficiaries are implementing their actions concurrently and hence could detract interest from the targeted audience of the projects and also lead to public disaffection of the subject.

Besides lessons learnt in the approach taken in promoting Cohesion Policy, the first years of implementation as well as the Mid-Term Evaluation shed light on the need to improve on the monitoring of information and publicity measures. Recommendations made by the evaluators included, among others:

- *Consistency in categorisation of cost items by measure or output indicator* – this would ensure that items of a similar nature are grouped together, allowing for not only historical records and monitoring but also to serve as baseline for future similar costs and determine trends over the years;
- *Consistency between the breakdown of measures outlining the output and result indicators and the information and publicity measure for the indicative budget split* - this would require the alignment

⁴⁴ For example, ESF projects involve a lot of indirect publicity through calls for trainers, participants etc.

of publicity measures with the relevant indicators and the relevant budget and would allow gauging of the relative spend over a number of years;

- *Reconsider and revise the appropriateness of output and result indicators* – this would require the adjustment of existent indicators or even removal of such if they are no longer deemed relevant or appropriate. The exercise would also ensure that indicators are more in line with standard evaluation concepts such as SMART (Specific – Measurable – Achievable – Relevant – Time Bound).

These as well as other recommendations made by the evaluators are being taken into consideration and adopted where agreed to in this revision of the Communication Plan.

In 2010, the MA advised the MC that a revision to this Communication Plan would take place and presented the initial thrust and justifications fuelling such revision. The MA explained that it would take into account the experiences learnt in the previous years, the actions being undertaken by IBs and Beneficiaries (at times out of their own budget, particularly the two largest IBs, Malta Enterprise [ERDF] and ETC [ESF]) and MEUSAC, as well as data from fresh market research. This research has indicated the necessity to tweak some forecasts in order to make them more realistic and in line with the information and publicity actions which could be implemented and carried out in a way that would be proportionate with and synchronised to the Programmes' pace of implementation. Furthermore, given as the Mid-Term Evaluation was still ongoing at the time, flexibility in order to address the recommendations made by the evaluators would also be required.

2. Communication Strategy Framework

Article 69 of the Council Regulation specifies that the Member State and Managing Authority for each Operational Programme is responsible for providing information and publicising operations and co-financed programmes. This Chapter lays down the varied responsibilities and actions taken by the Managing Authority and Intermediate Bodies with regard to publicity and information and sets the main aims and objectives of the Communication Plan. The Beneficiaries, Line Ministries and other stakeholders (such the Department of Information and MEUSAC) are also actively involved in information, communication and publicity events; however, these will be dealt with later on in the document. This section will focus primarily on the activities of the MA and IBs undertaking publicity on its behalf. Finally, it outlines the local media scenario, target groups to be addressed and the key messages to be communicated.

2.1.1 Responsibilities of the Managing Authority

The MA is responsible for the drawing up and implementation of the Communication Plan in accordance with the Implementing Regulation. The obligation also arises from EC1083/2006, chapter III Art. 69 (1):

The Member State and the managing authority for the operational programme shall provide information on and publicise operations and co-financed programmes. The information shall be addressed to European Union citizens and beneficiaries with the aim of highlighting the role of the Community and ensure that assistance from the Funds is transparent.

It is also responsible for ensuring its integration within all future communication strategies and guidelines at both Programme and project level to ensure that all activities are well-synchronised, consistent and coordinated, and to avoid duplication or information over-load where possible. Article 2 of the Implementing Regulation sets out the following minimum components of a successful plan:

- a) the aims and target groups;
- b) the strategy and content of the information and publicity measures to be taken by the Member State or the Managing Authority, aimed at potential beneficiaries, beneficiaries and the public, having regard to the added value of Community assistance at national, region and local level;
- c) the indicative budget for implementation of the Plan;
- d) the administrative departments or bodies responsible for implementation of the information and publicity measures;
- e) an indication of how the information and publicity measures are to be evaluated in terms of visibility and awareness of Operational Programmes and of the role played by the Community.

In order to continue with the implementation of the Plan, the MA has set up an internal Communications Team for both OPs and Contact Persons to oversee the day-to-day management and execution of the actions being suggested in this Plan. This Team forms part of a larger structure in which the MA carries out controls on the communications activities of projects among other aspects of the Programmes. Complementary to this, some information and publicity functions are delegated to Intermediate Bodies (IBs). These functions are specified in the implementation system and defined in the covenants between the MA and the designated IBs.

In order to ensure the correct implementation of projects by the Beneficiaries, the MA has issued a Manual of Procedures (MOP) which includes a chapter dedicated entirely to the information and publicity requirements and responsibilities of the Project Leaders. This document, available to download from the MA's website, is complemented by a Visual Identity Guidelines (VIG) which provides a more technical guidance in the correct reproduction of logos, emblems and co-financing statements on the various types of media used. Furthermore, Project Leaders consult the Communications Team on a regular basis, in their application of the guidelines set out in the MOP and VIGs, to ensure correct adherence as well as to seek the best, most innovative approach to reaching out to the widest audience in a most effective and cost-efficient manner. Some Intermediate Bodies have also issued similar guidelines, tailor-made for scheme interventions, in order to assist their respective Beneficiaries to carry out correct publicity; however, the MA's documents remain the main reference source for this purpose.

Furthermore, the Communications Team liaises with and cooperates with other departments and organisations in order to ensure a consistent and comprehensive approach to the promotion of EU Funds and Cohesion Policy at large. These entities include the European Commission Representation in Malta, the Malta-EU Steering and Action Committee (MEUSAC) as well as the Department of Information and the Secretariats of the various Ministers under whose remits projects are implemented.

In the execution of the Plan, the Communications Team undertakes periodic training in the field of marketing, communications and public relations, as well as participation in communication networks and exchanges of best practice. Experts and service providers are contracted where necessary.

The Contact Details of the Communications Team are as follows:

Communications Team

Planning and Priorities Coordination Division

Office of the Prime Minister

12, St Paul Street,

Valletta – VLT 1210

Email Helpdesk: info.ppcd@gov.mt

Telephone: + 356 2200 1142/3

The team is responsible for the implementation of the Plan and for communications activities relating to both Operational Programmes. The names of the Communications Team contact persons, together with their contact details, are included on the MA website.

2.1.2 Responsibilities of the Intermediate Bodies

Intermediate Bodies (IB) are mandated by the Managing Authority to act as Contact Points for state aid schemes under Article 87 of the Treaty being co-financed by the Programmes. The basis for this mandate lies in Article 5 of Commission Regulation 1828/2006. In fulfilling this role, the IBs are responsible to adopt information measures primarily in order to ensure the wide dissemination (and take-up) of the aid schemes among potential Beneficiaries. The IBs are also entrusted with providing information of the financial contribution by the respective Programme and clear details concerning issues such as conditions of eligibility, the procedures involved in examining applications, the selection criteria as well as the obligations that come with the acceptance of a grant. The IBs, in fact, function as an extension of the MA whereby they provide

written advice for implementation to the Beneficiaries either through guidelines **as indicated earlier** or through information sessions; they also publish lists of grant Beneficiaries on their websites in accordance with Article 7 (2)(d) of Commission Regulation 1828/2006. **The same article, however, states that “Participants in an operation of ESF shall not be named.”**

The IBs also have the opportunity to involve third parties in the dissemination of information. These **include** trade and professional associations; economic and social partners; non-governmental organisations; organisations representing business; information centres in Europe as well as the Commission Representation in Malta; or educational institutions. It is up to the IBs to inform **and ensure their Beneficiaries** inform the public about the assistance obtained from the Funds. Checks are carried out by the IBs **(and monitored by the MA)** to ensure that the publicity requirements as indicated in Article 8 Commission Regulation 1828/2006 are being respected by the Beneficiaries **of state aid schemes**.

In accordance with Article 9 of Commission Regulation 1828/2006, all information and publicity measures by the IBs aimed at Beneficiaries, potential Beneficiaries and the public includes the following:

- a) the emblem of the EU and Maltese Flag;
- b) the Logo of the ERDF or ESF Operational Programme;
- c) the name of the Operational Programme;
- d) reference to the European Union and ERDF or ESF;
- e) the co-financing rates – EU and National;
- f) the statement chosen by the MA, highlighting the added value of the Community: “Investing in your future”.

The contact details of the Intermediate Bodies **who contribute to the implementation of** this Communications Plan are as follows:

<p>Employment and Training Corporation (ETC) Head Office, Hal Far – BBG3000</p> <p>Email: josephine.e.borg@gov.mt Tel: +356 2220 1201</p>	<p>Department for Social Welfare Standards (DSWS) 469, Bugeja Institute, St. Joseph High Road, Sta Venera – SVR1012</p> <p>Email: rita.calleja@gov.mt Tel: 22788353</p>	<p>Malta Enterprise Industrial Estate San Gwann SGN 3000</p> <p>Email: joe.azzopardi@maltaenterprise.com Tel: +356 2542 0000</p>	<p>Tourism Sustainable Development Unit (TSDU) Office of the Prime Minister Auberge d’Italie Merchant Street Valletta – VLT2000</p> <p>Email: daniela.a.mallia@gov.mt Tel: +356 2291 5059</p>
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Intermediate Bodies are implementing a number of information and publicity activities which complement those carried out by the Managing Authority. Actions carried out by the IBs include: newspaper and audio-visual adverts, **information sessions and conferences**, the production of informative material (e.g. leaflets, booklets, presentations and posters); **billboards, website e-banners, one-to-one meetings, joint seminars with business organisations, social network pages** as well as the distribution of commemorative giveaways to the general public and to participants at events organised by the IBs. **It is important to note that Malta Enterprise and the Employment and Training Corporation (ETC) finances information and publicity related to the schemes**

it manages out of its own budget, thus contributing in a different manner to the other IBs. Nevertheless, all publicity actions follow MA guidelines in terms of visual identity and compulsory measures etc.

2.1.3 Responsibilities of Beneficiaries

In accordance with Commission Regulation 1828/2006, grant agreements and MA guidelines, Beneficiaries are obliged to carry out a certain amount of publicity measures to promote their respective projects and specific funds are allocated in the project budget allocations. Whilst infrastructural projects tend to be self-promoting because of their very visible nature, projects such as training, vocational courses etc (mostly funded through ESF) require more intensive publicity actions at project level to promote themselves and ensure take-up. Because of this factor, publicity actions across the board are varied in intensity depending on the nature of the project. For instance, infrastructural projects tend to stick to the main compulsory measures such as billboards, plaques, inaugurations etc, without elaborating further about its eventual beneficial impacts. On the other hand, ESF projects tend to be more creative and intense in the use of publicity actions because these need to attract participants and generate awareness and interest about their eventual results.

When added to the measures implemented by the four Intermediate Bodies, Beneficiaries are implementing a good number of publicity actions to promote their respective projects (as can be seen in the next chapter) which also complement publicity activities undertaken by the MA. It is therefore considered that a fair share of targeted visibility is already being achieved nationwide and it is in this light that the MA is undertaking this revision of its Communications Plan with a view to better cooperation, less information overload but more effective information measures.

2.2 Other stakeholders undertaking Information and Communication Activities

In the course of implementing this Communication Plan, the MA will be cooperating with other organisations which provide information and publicity relating to EU Programmes such as The European Commission Representation, the European Parliament Representation, other Managing Authorities and national authorities engaged in the management of EU Funds. This is further described in Chapter 3 of this Plan.

It is also important to note that the MA seeks to ensure consistency and complementarity between the publicity and information measures outlined in this Plan and the measures carried out in relation to Territorial Cooperation Programmes, as well as similar activities carried out in relation to other funding Programmes managed and coordinated by the EU Funds and Programmes Directorate, Office of the Prime Minister. In June 2011, the Planning and Priorities Coordination Division (PPCD) was streamlined in its role to being the Managing Authority on Cohesion Policy and The EU Funds and Programmes Directorate took up the other programmes formerly managed by PPCD which were more of a bilateral nature. Other programmes were also included to the structure of the EU Funds and Programmes Directorate and through the guidance of one Permanent Secretary, entirely dedicated to EU Funds, the two Directorates work and cooperate in a complementary promotion and implementation of EU funded and bilateral programmes and projects.

European Commission Representation in Malta

The European Commission established its Delegation in Malta on the 29th November 1991. During the twelve years until membership, the Delegation was involved in a wide range of diplomatic, commercial, cooperation, information and cultural activities.

Upon Malta's application to join the European Union, the Delegation was focused on preparations for membership through pre-accession technical assistance, monitoring and on-going contacts with the administration, constituted bodies and civil society.

Following Malta's accession in the EU on the 1st May 2004 Malta took its place as a Member State of the European Union and the former Delegation's office nowadays represents the European Commission in Malta.⁴⁵

The Commission Representation in Malta periodically organizes information activities whereby the various tenets and policies of the European Commission are brought to the fore and explained to the public through various measures. On occasion, information about best practices among Cohesion Policy 2007-2013 projects are used to further illustrate the EU's interventions in Malta.

The Malta-EU Steering and Action Committee (MEUSAC)

The Malta-EU Steering and Action Committee was first established in 1999 to oversee the overall accession process of Malta to the European Union. MEUSAC served as a focal point for the involvement of the political parties, the social partners and civil society in the process leading to accession. It successfully brought together a wide spectrum of organisations representing various and diverse interests within Maltese society. Following the signing of the Treaty of Accession on the 16th April 2003, MEUSAC was reconstituted to enable it to continue its role after membership. With an even wider representation, MEUSAC sought to give civil society an opportunity to make itself heard and to help shape Malta's position in various aspects of membership.

Between 1999 and 2004 operating in parallel with MEUSAC was the Malta-EU Information Centre (MIC). Its aim was to provide the general public with information related to the European Union and Malta's progress during the negotiations. MIC interfaced directly with MEUSAC. Following accession to the EU on the 1st May 2004, the need to review pre-accession structures was felt in order to align them with the new responsibilities emerging from Malta's membership in the EU. In this context, in 2005 *Forum Malta fl-Ewropa* was set up within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to encompass the roles that had hitherto been assigned to MEUSAC and MIC. In March 2008, the Prime Minister appointed a Parliamentary Secretary responsible for Public Dialogue within his office. One of the tasks entrusted to the Parliamentary Secretary was that of the refocusing of the Government's consultation structures. In July 2008, the Government formally reactivated MEUSAC⁴⁶. In this context, the decision to reactivate MEUSAC was taken. Eight key tasks were identified:

- To engage civil society in the EU decision-making process;
- To manage such a consultation process;
- To discuss the impact proposed EU measure could have on Malta, its institutions, its specific sectors and ordinary citizens;
- To establish and maintain dialogue between those participating in the EU decision-making processes;
- To be proactive with regards to EU legislation and policy initiatives;
- To actively support NGOs in their participation in EU programmes and funding;
- To provide plain and simple information to the public on Malta's positions within the EU and its institutions as well as the rights Maltese citizens have as EU citizens; and
- To lead and stimulate a national debate on European ideals, values, objectives and long term strategies.

The three main components of MEUSAC are:

⁴⁵ Adapted from: http://ec.europa.eu/malta/welcome_en.htm

⁴⁶ As a result, *Forum Malta fl-Ewropa* has been integrated within the new MEUSAC structure.

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- Consultation
 - Information
 - Technical Support on EU Programmes and Funds⁴⁷

As part of its tasks related to the provision of information, MEUSAC also hosts and manages the funding-themed website www.funding360.eu where calls for a number of funding opportunities and funding-related articles, including those published by the Managing Authority with respect to the two Operational Programmes, are published online on this website. The website also offers the possibility for interested stakeholders to register their email address and receive regular alerts on funding opportunities. The website has been operational since February 2011. MEUSAC also publishes a newsletter, MEUSACNews that is distributed with The Times every other Saturday. The newsletter periodically features snippets on projects being implemented through Structural Funds. The newsletter is also available online to interested stakeholders and the general public through the organisation's website as well as printed and circulated with one of the major newspapers in Malta. Another means of communication made use of by MEUSAC is radio whereby the organisation produces a weekly programme entitled "*Sehmna fl-Ewropa*". Staff from the Managing Authority occasionally participates through interviews and in order to provide further information on open calls for project proposals, events results achieved.

Additionally, in 2009 MEUSAC has also signed a four year agreement with the European Commission in an effort to bring Europe closer to its citizens and to bridge the communication gap between citizens and European Institutions. This covenant, known as a Management Partnership Agreement, has been active since March 2009. Planned activities and events targeting the general public aim to increase awareness on EU policies and create a better understanding of the EU's institutions working practices and inform the public on their rights as EU citizens.

In 2011⁴⁸, a *National Design Competition Showcasing EU Funded Projects* is being organised. The *National Design Competition* resulted in the selection of the designs for artistic installations a team of artists, architects, organisations and / or institutions within the creative industries to come up with creative methods for the showcasing of success stories related to EU funded projects through artistic installations which will be set up around the Maltese islands. This campaign is being financed by DG COMM.

The MA will be cooperating closely with MEUSAC on this venture in the provision of information related to successful projects being co-financed under Cohesion Policy 2007-2013.

The contact details for MEUSAC are:

The Malta-EU Steering and Action Committee (MEUSAC)

280, Republic Street, Valletta, VLT 1112, MALTA

Info Line: +356 2200 3300

Fax: +356 2200 3329

Email: info.meusac@gov.mt

Web-site: <http://www.meusac.gov.mt>

⁴⁷ Source: MEUSAC website: www.meusac.gov.mt

⁴⁸ "The information campaigns have, up to now, included a campaign to encourage people to cast their vote in the EP elections in 2009; a road show consisting of a mobile vehicle visiting localities in Malta and Gozo providing information to citizens; development of the cartoon characters Tommy and Rosy and production of a 15-minute cartoon in Maltese, English and French distributed to students in DVD Format as well as a story book featuring the cartoon characters; the training of teachers on EU matters; an inter-generational camping activity on environmental issues and climate change; and events promoting social inclusion. Operations being implemented in 2011 include the second episode of the Tommy and Rosy cartoon based on the 2011 European Year for Volunteering, and the Europe 2020 Strategy conference complemented by a series of workshops focusing on the EU's flagship policy framework and its priority areas. MEUSAC is also implementing the information campaign entitled "l-Ewropa max-Xatt", with the onus being placed on raising awareness on a number of EU-related themes and citizens' basic rights. An online Citizens' Toolkit will also be developed.

Line Ministries

Communication Offices within the various Line Ministries under which remit projects are implemented, play a fundamental role in the dissemination of information on the projects being implemented and co-financed under the two OPs. The involvement of Ministers in the promotion of interventions being implemented through EU Funds is crucial since media coverage is practically guaranteed across all sources. Furthermore, the Government's own centralised information hub, the Department of Information, keeps a record of all press releases, press conferences and project visits which would have involved the Minister in charge of the project. Close coordination and cooperation with these offices, whether by the Beneficiary, the IB or the MA is required in order to ensure the correct and widespread dissemination of the information on EU Funds. Line Ministries often organise or help in the organisation of project inaugurations, press conferences and press releases, all of which are financed through national resources when and simultaneously generate a lot of free publicity through media coverage as explained above.

Another source of unexpected free publicity is Parliamentary Questions (PQ) which are tabled in relation to EU Funded projects. Replies to such PQs are then reported across all media in their coverage of Parliament sittings and therefore serve as an unsolicited, and free publicity measure.

2.3 Communication Plan 2007-2013 : Strategic Objectives

Through Cohesion Policy 2007-2013, the European Union can demonstrate its impact on the everyday life of its citizens. It is therefore essential that results and achievements are communicated as widely and effectively as possible.

The strategic objectives of the Communication Plan 2007-2013 can be summarised as follows, based on Article 69 of the Council Regulation:

- **Ensuring transparency:** Communication activities should ensure that assistance from the Funds is in the first instance made available is transparent and accessible.
- **Increasing visibility and awareness:** Communication activities should highlight the role of the Community in Cohesion Policy 2007-2013, thereby increasing awareness and knowledge of the benefits and results of Structural Funds for the socio-economic development of the territory.

2.4 Communication Plan 2007-2013 : Operational Objectives

The operational objectives of the Communication Plan 2007-2013 are outlined in OPI and OPII, Section 5.3.6 as follows:

- Provide transparent information on the opportunities provided by Structural Funds and the Cohesion Fund assistance to potential project proponents;
- Devise a system that provides information about Structural Funds and Cohesion Fund interventions;
- Inform the media, the general public and interested stakeholders about the role played by the EU in implementing the assistance;
- Make visible results achieved through the assistance given by the Funds;

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- Promote an understanding and appreciation of the role of Structural Funds and the Cohesion Fund and the EU's contribution to the overall socio-economic development of Malta and Gozo.

A number of tools will be employed to reach these operational objectives. The Managing Authority will also comply with the specific requirements of the Implementing Regulation.

2.5 Target Recipients of the Communication Actions

In line with Article 2b of the Implementing Regulation, the target audience for this Communication Plan consists of:

1. **Potential Beneficiaries** as defined in the broad target groups identified in OPI and OPII. These include Public Sector organisations (including horizontal structures forming part of the implementation system), Government Ministries, Departments, Entities, Authorities, Public Commissions, Public Sector Foundations; Local councils; other organisations such as Social Partners, **Business Organisations**, NGOs and voluntary organisations who conform to the eligibility criteria as well as public or private firms which may be eligible for funding through aid schemes.
2. **Beneficiaries**, that is, organisations responsible for implementing projects selected for funding under Cohesion Policy 2007-2013, as defined by Article 2 of the Council Regulation. In the context of aid schemes, these include public or private firms carrying out an individual project and receiving public aid **under Article 87 of the Treaty**.
3. **The Public**: This target group can be further sub-divided into the following two main groups:
 - The Professional Public and Potential Multipliers of Information, including the media; information agencies; research or academic institutions; local councils; social partners and NGOs; trade and professional groups; potential contractors and economic operators; lobby groups and other organisations.
 - The General Public, including both the population as a whole and specific sub-groups which particular Programmes or measures are designed to benefit.

2.6 Key Communication Messages

To ensure that Communication Activities are delivered in a consistent and targeted manner during the entire implementation period, key communications messages need to be given continuous exposure.

These messages are summed up very clearly by the statement recommended by Article 9 of the Implementing Regulation with reference to Cohesion Policy 2007-2013: **'Investing in your future'**. The MA has chosen this statement to highlight the added value and long-term effects of Community interventions and this must feature on all information and publicity measures aimed at beneficiaries, potential beneficiaries and the public. It is also visible, clear and easily identifiable. As mentioned in Section 1.4, the statement 'Investing in your Future' was also used during the information campaign implemented for the Structural Funds 2004-2006. Retaining this statement therefore ensures continuity between both programming periods.

This statement can also be complemented by the messages conveyed clearly through the titles of both Malta's Operational Programmes, namely:

- **European Regional Development Fund; Cohesion Fund:** 'Investing in Competitiveness for a Better Quality of Life'.
- **European Social Fund:** 'Empowering People for More Jobs and a Better Quality of Life'.

Both these statements refer to the objectives and results of Cohesion Policy 2007-2013, and can be used for both Programme and project level initiatives.

Although more customised short-term messages relating to specific project goals and successes may take centre stage at specific times during the Programme cycle, the key long-term messages should be made to feature consistently to allow the public to absorb and understand them over the long term.

2.7 Key Message Content

The key messages identified by this Plan must be adapted to suit the needs and experience of the target audience. Furthermore, they must be backed up by clear, consistent and focused message content.

Clear and timely messages need to be delivered to all the key target groups in a considered and organized manner using the best available media. All activities need to deliver a consistent communications message that provides visibility and transparency for all the actions and investment of Funds allocated through Cohesion Policy 2007-2013. The actions highlighted in this Plan aim to develop a national understanding of the impact of the Cohesion Policy 2007-2013 to bring about an increased level of support for these Programmes.

It is possible to divide the Communication Plan's key message content into two main categories, including the requirements of the Implementing Regulation:

A) Ensuring Transparency: Technical and Procedural Information

- The content of Malta's OPI and OPII and the ERDF, Cohesion Fund and ESF financial contributions;
- Information on the financing opportunities offered by joint assistance from the **European Union** and Malta;
- The conditions of eligibility to be met in order to qualify for financing under OPI and OPII and the application process;
- A description of the procedures for examining applications for funding and of the time periods involved;
- Time frames relating to each call for proposals;
- The criteria for selecting the operations to be financed;
- The contacts at national, regional or local level who can provide information on the Operational Programmes.

B) Increasing Visibility and Awareness: Information relating to Strategy, Aims and Results

- The aims and objectives of Cohesion Policy, as well as its underlying principles and relation to other EU policies and national objectives;
- The role of the European Community and Malta in Cohesion Policy;

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- The aims and objectives of OPI and OPII;
 - The list of beneficiaries, names of operations and amount of public funding allocated to each;
 - The aims and objectives of projects under both OPI and OPII;
 - The achievements and results of OPI and OPII, including major projects, where relevant;
 - The Cohesion Policy 2007-2013 visual identity: mainly through the use of a set of logos.

The above message content is applicable to all three target groups to varying extents and can be communicated using a wide range of tools. These communication tools will be outlined in Chapter 3.

2.8 Style and Approach

Through a comprehensive communications strategy, combining advertising with public relations, a variety of channels and strategies would be used to make Cohesion Policy 2007-2013 and both OPs a local reality.

The MA will generally adopt an informative style and tone when delivering its message, to ensure that its communication activities are perceived as being neutral, unbiased and factual. This style is appropriate for all target audiences and will ensure that no messages are interpreted as propaganda. Ample use of the widespread media opportunities available across Malta and Gozo as indicated earlier, will be made to ensure the widest outreach among the general public. The MA may also take an educational approach to certain communication activities where the target audience requires training as well as the delivery of information. This may be particularly necessary for Beneficiaries or Potential Beneficiaries in order to equip them with the necessary knowledge to successfully implement their respective projects. Entertainment-style measures will be used sparingly, mostly at annual events to introduce or illustrate information designed to target the general public who would require a less technical approach to ensure comprehension of the subject matter. Such measures could be reserved for the presentation and interpretation of more tangible projects, such as those which involve infrastructure, but which in their publicity budgets, do not include running information / awareness raising / publicity campaigns. These actions can complement already running campaigns at IB or Beneficiary level in a cross-cutting presentation of the ultimate objectives of Cohesion Policy 2007-2013.

2.9 Language

As recommended by the Commission's White Paper on a European Communication Policy, all citizens should have access to information about matters of public concern in their own language.⁴⁹ Malta has two official languages: Maltese and English, so the language used in the planned activities would be either Maltese or English or both, depending on the target audience and the nature of the publicity action. The use of Maltese is encouraged to ensure the widest audience possible.

Interactivity is to be encouraged where possible and all communication measures must involve the use of simple, clear diction, avoiding jargon or acronyms as much as possible, except when addressing experienced practitioners or specialists. This is essential to overcome the public perception of Structural Funds as being "complicated, bureaucratic and difficult to understand".⁵⁰ These are outlined in detail in the relevant annual reports.

⁴⁹ European Commission, 'White Paper on a European Communication Policy', Part II, paragraph 1.

⁵⁰ Evaluation of ESF Information and Communication Activities, Final Report to the Commission, Evaluation Partnership, 25th July 2007; p. 108.

2.10 Timing

Some events are related to the Programming cycle and must therefore be implemented within strategic time-frames. Given the delays encountered in implementation in the first half of the Programming period, communication activities relating to results will be launched towards the latter half of the programming period. It is also important to point out that although most activities will be implemented during the entire period 2007-2013, certain communication activities – particularly those relating to results – may be conducted until 2015.

The schedule below reflects the actual activities which have taken place during the first half of the programming period as well as the original and proposed revised approach to be implemented in the second half of period:

Timeline Comparison		Actual ⁵¹					Projected			
		2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Development of a Visual Identity	Original CP									
	Proposed revised CP									
Advertising	Original CP									
	Proposed revised CP									
Promotional Material	Original CP									
	Proposed revised CP									
Informative Publications	Original CP									
	Proposed revised CP									
Media Relations	Original CP									
	Proposed revised CP									
Informative Public Events	Original CP									
	Proposed revised CP									
Launching of Ops	Original CP									
	Proposed revised CP									
Audio-Visual Products	Original CP									
	Proposed revised CP									
Website	Original CP									
	Proposed revised CP									
Helpdesk	Original CP									
	Proposed revised CP									
Mail-shots	Original CP									
	Proposed revised CP									

2.11 General Risk Assessment

Considering the requirements of the Communication Plan strategy and time-span, it is essential to anticipate any potential risks which could hinder the smooth progress of the Plan. The potential risks identified in relation to this Plan could include:

⁵¹ Cells shaded in light blue denote the actual years in which measures indicated have taken place.

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- Delays in the implementation of the various Structural and Cohesion Funds projects which might require a rethinking of actions, timing, frequency and cost and variety of proposed communication activities⁵²;
 - Changes in financial allocations that might arise due to factors such as inflation or the use of alternative resources (including free publicity and information measures funded by national resources) which could modify the necessity, scope and size of eventual information and communication activities;
 - Changes in information and publicity trends including change in the audience/reader shares;
 - Insufficient capacity;
 - Multiple events and actions occurring at the same time
 - Negative media coverage.

⁵² The revisions to the Communication Plan have been primarily devised in the light of the actuality of this risk.

3. Information and Publicity Measures

In order to reach the communication objectives and target audiences outlined in the previous chapter, it was essential to identify the most suitable and effective communication tools and methods to be used.

As recommended by the European Commission's 'Action Plan to Improve Communicating Europe', three strategic principles **had** to be respected to earn the public's interest and trust. These **being**: listening, communicating and connecting with citizens by 'going local'.⁵³ In short:

- Communication **had to** be approached as a dialogue, giving citizens the chance to interact and express their opinions;
- EU policies and their impact on everyday lives **had to** be communicated in a way that people can relate to;
- And finally, communication activities **had to** be resourced and organised in such a way that they matched demographic and local concerns and conveyed information through the channels citizens prefer, in the language they **could** understand.

This Communication Plan recommends the use of both one-way and two-way [interactive], communication measures. Measures that were utilized under the previous Programming period (2004 – 2006) and which proved successful could **have been** refined and redeployed. These measures **were** outlined on the understanding that they **are** adapted to each individual funding Programme as required. Notwithstanding, preference **is** given to activities which promote a holistic approach as to how Malta is benefiting under the two Programmes jointly. OPI and OPII envisage projects and aim to achieve results which are complementary to each other and hence, this complementarity would go a long way to delivering a more positive and all-encompassing message on the benefits achieved under Cohesion Policy 2007-2013.

One of the lessons learnt in the previous Programming period as well as in the first half of the current Programming period, was that a lot of concurrent campaigning takes place in the promotion of OPII projects and schemes, tilting the balance of visibility more towards ESF than ERDF. While ERDF and Cohesion Fund co-financed projects tend to be more physical and one could argue that they 'promote themselves', there is less awareness among the general public about what the works in progress that they see during implementation will finally achieve. It is with this in mind that the MA is proposing to increase the amount of Programme-level publicity on OPI interventions through *ad hoc* measures in order to allow the better comprehension and interpretation of the results being achieved, among the general public.

An indicative list of tools, complete with the mandatory measures stipulated by the Commission and Council Regulations referred to in chapter 1, is at the end of this chapter as a guideline (*Table 3.1*). The table illustrates the most appropriate kind of tools to be used on a national, regional and local⁵⁴ level to reach the various target groups with the key messages mentioned earlier in chapter 2. Furthermore, in light of the revision being made, a table with indicative actions for the second half of the programming period, including the targeted output and result indicators and budgetary provisions, is included at Annex I.

⁵³ Action Plan to Improve Communicating Europe, European Commission, 20.07.05, pp. 3-4

⁵⁴ National: Malta and Gozo; Regional: Malta/Gozo; Local: Specific localities

3.1 Development of a Visual Identity

In order for communication activities to be successful, it was imperative that measures related to the Structural Funds are immediately and consistently recognizable by all target audiences in Malta and Gozo over the entire programming period. Therefore a coordinated visual identity was drawn up and developed by the MA. This involves the following:

3.1.1 *The use of the EU Flag and the EU Emblem*

As required by the Implementing Regulation, the MA ensures that the EU flag is hoisted outside the MA premises for one week each year. This has been done from the start of the Programming period and is a commitment which the MA has taken to carry out every year. In addition, and where possible, an attempt is made to have the EU flag, together with the Maltese flag, displayed during events and information sessions. These always form part of the specifications of items to be provided by the venues procured for the holding of training seminars, information sessions, conferences etc.

On the other hand, the EU emblem, together with the Maltese flag, is featured on all publicity and information materials, in conformity with the requirements specified in Article 9 and Annex I of the Implementing Regulation. The use of the EU emblem ensures that all MA publicity and information tools serve as a link between the European public sphere and the national sphere.⁵⁵ It also ensures that the role of the European Community is highlighted in all Structural Funds actions, as required by Article 69 of the Council Regulation. As referred to already at an earlier stage in this document, the MA has drawn up Visual Identity Guidelines whereby information on the correct display of such items can be made available. Provisions are also made in case of limited space (on, for instance, promotional items procured) where one can place the full visual identity requirements. In such case, an abbreviated version, still comprising the compulsory information as per Regulation has been provided in the guideline.

3.1.2 *Logo and Visual Identity Guidelines*

The development of one logo adapted for each Fund (ERDF, ESF and Cohesion Fund) helped in defining a clear and holistic identity for the Structural and Cohesion Funds, reflecting the role played by both the EU and Member State. The approval of the logo(s) paved the way for the definition of the visual identity guidelines, including graphical specifications, created on the mandatory use of the logo(s) and their incorporation in relation with the Maltese Flag and the EU Emblem on different media. The guidelines also make reference to the use of the Maltese Flag and the use of the European Emblem in accordance with the graphic standards outlined in Annex 1 of the Implementing Regulation. Given the dynamic nature and constant innovation in the fields of media and online communications, the MA is to make sure to keep updating its guidelines to reflect current trends (e.g. use of social networks, websites, etc) and ensure that correct use of the visual identity requirements is done even on the less traditional means of communication and promotion of EU Funds.

⁵⁵ European Commission, 'White Paper on a European Communication Policy', Part I, Article 2.

3.1.3 Communications Guidelines

Further support to the Managing Authority and Stakeholders implementing Information and Publicity measures is provided through the development of Communication Guidelines as mentioned in the previous chapter. These guidelines contain support and directions on the implementation of the following topics:

- Press Releases and Media Relations
- Interviews
- Presentation techniques
- Event management
- Design of advertising, stationery and publications
- Audio Visual Productions
- Websites
- Internal and External Signage – *including mandatory billboards, plaques and posters*

Together with the Information and Publicity section of the Managing Authority's Manual of Procedures and the Annex to the Letters of Grant, these guidelines assist the beneficiaries in drawing up their communication and publicity activities and ensure they carry out the responsibilities and requirements set by the Implementing Regulation. Furthermore, the MA has issued guidelines on the obligatory text to be used on adverts, publicity items and any templates issued in relation to projects part-financed by the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, and the Cohesion Fund. The guidelines include the publicity requirements set by Commission Regulation (EC) 1828/2006 for the 2007-2013 programming period. These texts, together with templates to be used on the front pages of tender documents are easily downloadable from the MA's website.

The various guides are distributed by the MA to all persons involved in carrying out communications actions at project level. These guidelines are reinforced by regular communication between the Project Leaders and the MA and through training sessions on the various steps of project implementation, including the publicity requirements at the outset of the project. Furthermore, the MA envisages the setting up of an *ad hoc* network meetings involving key Project Leaders and a host of other stakeholders involved in publicity of EU Funds. These proposed meetings are described in further detail below. All this information is available on the MA website for downloading and during courses and network meetings.

3.2 Annual and other Information Events

In order to keep the information and publicity exercise visible and to encourage a consistent dialogue with the internal and external target groups, a range of events and outdoor initiatives are undertaken. These events consist of both national public events aimed at the whole spectrum of the target groups, as well as internal events targeting a defined range of sub-groups, such as institutional stakeholders.

The aim of these events is to connect the MA with the target audiences and to allow for two-way debate and feedback. The main purpose of these events is to keep the target audiences informed, to deliver transparent information, to heighten awareness, and to highlight Structural Funds success stories.

An overview of the events which have been carried out since the start of the Programming period is found in Chapter 1.

3.2.1 National Public Events

Annual Information Events: Article 7 (b) of the Council Regulation requires the organization of at least one major information event per year. These events endorse a specific theme and/or slogan related to the Cohesion Policy (2007-2013) and/or the OPs or commemorate a milestone achieved by the Structural Funds Programmes or projects in general. The event **is generally** spread out **over** one or more days and **is** adapted to focus on different target audiences.

These events **are further** enhanced through the participation of horizontal stakeholders, project leaders and project participants, together with high profile guests and/or speakers. During the event(s) talks and activities **are** held to communicate on a direct and face-to-face level. The mid-term evaluators recommended that the MA should adopt a ‘pull-marketing’ type of strategy in the organisation of such events, the expectation being that this would attract the wider public. A more pro-active, push-strategy should also be used in an effort to impart information more effectively.⁵⁶ The information and content delivered during these events is adapted according to the target audience selected.

Moreover, these public events **are** be supported by a communications campaign which comprises press releases, advertising, distribution of promotional material and display of relevant signage such as backdrops, posters and audio-visual material. The publicity campaign is spread over 2-3 weeks prior to the public events. Notwithstanding, such a campaign **is** in proportion to the scale of the annual event being implemented.. A call for tenders or quotations **is** the standard procurement procedure used to deliver such events and related communications campaign.

Participation in related events and activities: Apart from the annual information events, the **MA may also** participate in various events and activities organised by institutional stakeholders, the professional public and potential multipliers. **Should the occasion arise,** the MA **will** participate by staffing its own exhibition stand, giving talks and participating in relevant discussions, distributing promotional material, displaying posters and audio-visual material, and/or giving interviews to the press.

At times, the MA **does** not have direct control over the publicity campaign of such events, but **in that case** it issues its own press releases, mentions its participation in such activities and publicity campaigns, and seeks to be part of the communications campaign in general.

Training Seminars: As part of the *Training Strategy for the Structural Funds Stakeholders*, a number of information seminars **are** organised with a capacity building purpose. The seminars deal with the development of specific skills or competences according to priority area and aim at the general upgrading of capability of the stakeholders. Training, in particular on implementation-related **aspects**, is indispensable to Beneficiaries upon being awarded a grant. **The training also comprises sessions on the various information and publicity requirements which are set out in the Regulation. This is done through a technical presentation as well as through a show of best practice examples and discussion on innovative ways of how to reach out and deliver the right message to the desired audience.** Training seminars are conceptualised further in the Managing Authority’s Training Strategy which takes a more pedagogical rather than promotional approach. The MA works in conjunction with the Government’s Centre for Development, Research and Training (CDRT)⁵⁷ or other professionals in this sector.

⁵⁶ *Mid-Term Evaluation for Operational Programme I and II, Assessment of the Communication Plan, Overall Report, Vol. II*, KPMG, April 2011.

⁵⁷ Formerly known as the Staff Development Organisation (SDO)

Information Events and Sessions: Information sessions are seen as a critical tool when a call for project proposals is launched. At least two information sessions are held for each call for project proposals issued. Information sessions are usually held both in Malta and in Gozo in order to ensure the widest outreach to potential project proponents. During these sessions, Senior Management and Project Managers from the Managing Authority, walk the participants through the various steps which are involved in the application process and the eventual project selection and implementation. In this way, project proponents would be in a better position to submit well written applications which are supported by the required time and human resources, as well as any required documentation (depending on the nature of the project). The sessions also include a Question and Answer session whereby participants can request further clarifications and information on the subject of the open call. These questions and answers are then collected and included in the documents uploaded on the MA's website in relation to the open call (i.e. the guidance notes and the application form).

The various IBs and Beneficiaries, particularly those with projects of a less tangible nature such as schemes, training initiatives and similar, also hold a number of meetings with potential applicants as well as full blown events. Having said that, larger infrastructural projects are most times also subject to large inaugural events in proportion to the size of the operation which in themselves often double as an information event.⁵⁸

Network and Exchange of Experiences

The Council Regulation and Article 10 of the Implementing Regulation speaks about the setting up of Community networks to ensure exchanges of good practice in the field of information and publicity, including the results of the implementation of the Communication Plan, and exchanges of experience in implementing such measures. In this regard, the MA **participates in and organizes** Community networks dealing with this Plan and its measures.

Local Networks: Network seminars could be realized to bring together those *directly* involved in implementing publicity and information measures at Programme and/or at project level for the Cohesion Policy (2007-2013), including an invitation to current contracted information and/or publicity agencies. Other participants could also include publicity and/or information representatives from other bodies, such as the European Commission Representation in Malta, Europe Direct Network in Malta, MEUSAC, and the Communication Co-ordinators at the Office of the Prime Minister **and other Ministries**. **Informal meetings with the Commission Representation, MEUSAC and other stakeholders involved in the promotion of EU Funds are held upon request by one of the parties.**

In terms of networks involving the Project Beneficiaries, no formal set up is envisaged for such networks and their organisation would preferably be conducive to frank and informal discussion on the way Cohesion Policy 2007-2013 and the benefits reaped from the projects being implemented, can be transmitted to the general public in the clearest, most comprehensible and friendly manner. These networks would serve as a platform for sharing best practice and would also be a valuable two-way tool for obtaining suggestions and/or for giving feedback on communication matters. The importance of the communication function would be enhanced by the distribution and thorough explanation of the guidelines mentioned in section 3.1. **Given as the first half of the Programming period did not see the desired speed of project implementation, and therefore the majority of results are expected to be made visible in the latter half of the Programming period, the MA has opted to**

⁵⁸ For example; Inauguration of the Malta South Sewage Treatment Plant June 2011; and Youth Employment Programme Launch March 2010

postpone the setting up of a local network for Beneficiaries to the later years in order to first allow more focus on implementation and then enable a concerted effort to promote the results being achieved in a most coordinated, efficient and effective manner through an open dialogue with the project implementers.

The network is now in the process of being set-up and the first meeting will be held in the fourth quarter of 2011, with annual subsequent meetings until the end of the Programming period. Cohesion Policy 2007-2013 Beneficiaries, Line Ministries and Ministers' Communication Coordinators, MEUSAC and the EU Commission Representation in Malta make up this network together with the Managing Authority.

Participation in European Networks: The MA's Communications Unit is kept updated on examples of best practice and new tools developed by other MAs and is prepared to share its own research and experiences through participation in the INFORM Network and the Informal Network of ESF Information Officers (INIO) established by the European Commission, and participates in fora, meetings and conferences organised dealing with information and publicity on Structural Funds such as the; conference ***Keep Ahead with EU Information in the Enlarged Europe EU Information and Communication Strategies*** held Netherlands in November 2007 which addressed the information implications of the evolving policy-making processes in the EU and the role of information and communication in the debate on improving European governance; the ***Information & Publicity on EU Funds Conference*** held in Seville in October 2010 which was organised by the European Funds and Planning Unit within the Ministry of the Economy, Innovation and Science of the Regional Government of Andalucía in order to promote good practices of communication about EU Funds and projects; and the Conference and the ***Keeping EU Funds attractive*** conference in Prague in September 2011 where information officers from the various Member States were given lectures by experts on PR of governmental institutions, political marketing, Strategy of EU Funds Communication and How To Work With Target Groups. Workshops revolving around the topics introduced by the lecturers were then held to discuss further and share best practices and experience. A discussion on Communication of Cohesion Policy After 2014 was also held.

3.2.2 Launching of the Operational Programmes

This event is required by Article 7 of the Implementing Regulation which describes the responsibilities the Managing Authority has in the dissemination of information and publicity measures to the public:

2. *The managing authority shall be responsible for organising at least the following information and publicity measures:*
 - (a) *a major information activity publicising the launch of an operational programme, even in the absence of the final version of the communication plan;*

Given that Malta has only two Operational Programmes, the MA opted to hold one event to launch both OPs. This took place in July 2007. Key dignitaries, including high-profile guests from the European Commission, participated in this event⁵⁹. The audience, adding up to 250 participants, consisted of stakeholders, the potential beneficiaries and the media.

⁵⁹ Among the speakers for the event were the Prime Minister, Hon. Lawrence Gonzi; The Principal Permanent Secretary and Head of the Public Service; Parliamentary Secretary for the Ministry of Finance, & Chairman of the NSRF Steering Committee; The Head of the Managing Authority; Mr. Peter Stub Jurgensen, Director, DG Employment; Mr. Alejandro Checchi Lang, Director, DG Regio; Mr. Andrea Mancini Desk Officer Malta - DG Empl.

The launch event presented the various priorities identified for the two Operational Programmes and threw light on the promotion of territorial cohesion by drawing attention to the fact that Gozo is being targeted cross cuttingly by both OPs. The conference also gave space to questions from the floor and discussions. Three audio-visual documentaries were produced and featured during the conference. These further illustrated the content of each of the OPs. A brand image was drawn up and used to link the conference with the artwork used on all main information material, including the backdrop sign, PowerPoint presentations and documents. This branding is still being used today and is complementary to the logos which were designed and introduced at the OP launch event.

Copies of the Operational Programmes were distributed to all launch participants and to all interested parties in Malta and Gozo. These were also made available online where they are still retrievable today from the PPCD website. A number of promotional items, including A4 folder, notebooks and pens, were also distributed during the event.

The event was publicised through a number of adverts on the local media inviting stakeholders and the general public to attend. Furthermore, a press call to all the local media was circulated prior to the event, resulting to five national media newsrooms⁶⁰ covering the event. Official press releases and speeches were circulated to all local media, together with a press pack and fact-sheet to the journalists attending the launch. Additionally, articles and interviews were given to the local media by DG PPCD.

Following the official launch, and ahead of the call for applications, the MA organised a set of Information Seminars aimed at providing potential beneficiaries with concise information on each of the new Programmes. These seminars provided potential beneficiaries with practical tools that would facilitate their uptake of the schemes being introduced through the OPs and would form part of the Information Seminars mentioned under section 3.2.1 above and 3.6 below.

Should any changes to the Operational Programmes be effected at any time during the programming period, these will be communicated to the stakeholders on a regular basis, or as required. In fact, changes to the Operational Programmes have been communicated to the stakeholders through presentations at the Monitoring Committees. These presentations are also made available online. Furthermore, the updated versions of the relevant OP is immediately uploaded on the MA's website for ease of reference upon approval of changes.

3.3 Promotional material

With the aim of boosting promotional measures in a creative and very attractive way, a series of branded items are developed as free promotional material to be distributed at the MA's key events. Items vary from pens, pen-drives, folders, bags, customized umbrellas, sunshields, hand-powered flash lights, sticky notes and more.⁶¹ Procurement is made through competitive tendering or requests for quotations, depending on cost. Where possible, and according to availability, use of environmentally friendly items and materials is applied.

⁶⁰ TV, radio and print media.

⁶¹ These are all indicative items.

Unless it is decided to procure specific items for specific campaigns or events⁶², promotional items carry the general visual identity symbols and not be campaign/event-specific so as to maximise their utilisation over a longer period, logos and text are included on all items as required by the Implementing and Council Regulations and where feasible the items are also included in the MA's website address where further information about the Programmes could be obtained. Given as ESF related projects and aid schemes tend to be heavy on campaigns and the production of promotional items, mostly to be used by participants, additional promotional items can be procured at Programme Level to compensate for ERDF interventions. Such items would reflect the general thrust of the programme by reflecting the Priority Axes in creative, innovative ways. Examples of items that can be procured include items related to information technology (e.g. usb drives, computer and mobile accessories), items to help in safeguarding the environment (e.g. cycling related items to promote transport modal shift, solar and water powered items like clocks and calculators), items which reflect investment in the tourism industry (e.g. puzzles with key heritage sites receiving co-financing, holiday items such as parasols and beach balls), items promoting health and a general improved quality of life (e.g. first aid kits, weather stations) among others⁶³.

3.4 Media Campaign (audio-visual and print adverts; documentaries) and Relations

A number of creative and appealing communication activities are employed to publicize the funding Programmes and deliver the key messages to the target audience. These activities support the identity of the Programmes on a recurring basis, provide viewers/readers with updated information whilst at the same time increasing their awareness about the role of the EU's assistance in the socio-economic development of Malta and Gozo. The term "Media Campaign" comprises a number of measures that can be used at different points during the lifetime of the Programme's implementation. While print adverts are a constant feature through their use in promoting calls for project proposals and events, other, more expensive measures such as audio visual products like documentaries can be applied at specific milestones like project / programme launch or closure or even throughout the actual implementation of the project if the project is in itself based on raising awareness on a particular policy or initiative.

3.4.1 Advertising

3.4.1.1 Media Advertising

Paid advertising on television, radio, national/local newspapers and Internet sites play a key role in message delivery. These include advertorials and adverts (both printed and audio-visual) on national/regional/local media and publications. Another particular aspect could be to utilize current advertising trends such as cinema advertising. The huge popularity of social networking sites⁶⁴ also made it attractive for the MA to include such new media among the means used to put across its message. Some of these sites allow the creation of adverts and such an option is utilised as additional and complementary to the mainstream sources of advertising. These further support the communications campaign to reach a higher number of persons. Design and

⁶² Specific events would refer to participation in Open Days, anniversary celebrations etc.

⁶³ These are merely indicative items and the full list of items would be finalised upon tender publication.

⁶⁴ The *E-communications Household Survey* published by Eurobarometer in October 2010 indicates that around 36% of the Maltese population use social networking sites. This rate is comparable to that of the EU27 which cumulatively also indicate that a third (35%) of the EU27 population uses such sites. However, Malta ranks second among the EU27 in terms of how frequently social networking sites are accessed during a one week period. According to the Eurobarometer survey, about 56% of the Maltese population uses such sites everyday. Source: http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_335_en.pdf

audiovisual agencies/studios could be needed to assist in the production of these media materials whilst advertising agencies could assist with media space buying.

The MA understands that when developing its media-buying strategy it is important that the latest audience patterns are reviewed and are utilized to ensure that the medium/a selected has the best market coverage and that media budgets are being spent in the most cost-effective manner, unless provided for free. Media surveys are regularly carried out in Malta by various marketing agencies, and radio and TV audience assessment could be provided by the Malta Broadcasting Authority in collaboration with the National Statistics Office. The MA could utilize these publicly available surveys in their media selection process.

Experience over the initial part of the programming period has shown that newspaper adverts are the most cost-effective means of media-advertising, albeit having a limited outreach. Audio-visual advertising would require a certain amount of advancement in projects' implementation so as to provide visual material which is appealing and which further promotes the benefits being derived. It is therefore important to time such measures to coincide with key stages in the programming cycle so as to maximise on their utility.

3.4.1.2 *Outdoor Advertising*

To ensure the highest possible profile for the campaign, outdoor advertising tools **are** made use of to complement the rest of the publicity and information measures. Outdoor advertising result in immediately recognizable information posters being displayed at strategic locations throughout the islands and easily viewable/accessible by passers-by.

The outdoor advertising measures **used so far** include popular tools such as billboards bus shelter advertising, and bus livery advertising. Average-sized posters could also be created and distributed to various government departments, local authorities and beneficiary organisations to attach to their notice-boards and also utilize during the MA's information events.

Projects which exceed the €500,000 mark are required by Commission Regulation (EC)1828/2006, Art. 8 (3) to put up a billboard at the site of each operation during the implementation of the operation. This is then replaced by a permanent plaque which is affixed no later than six months following the completion of the operation. This applies to projects which consists in the purchase of a physical object or in the financing of infrastructure or of construction operations. On the other hand, projects which are considered as less tangible, tend to use billboards also during the implementation of the project in order to promote the various training courses, schemes and initiatives which the public can benefit from.

3.4.2 *Media Relations*

It is important to ensure that citizens are kept informed about Cohesion Policy and its impact on the national and people's daily lives in Malta and Gozo. It is also useful for news to be communicated through a 'human interest' approach, showing the public how Cohesion Policy is of relevance to them personally and to their quality of life.⁶⁵ The MA **shall** also focus on communicating success stories, **in particular** on concrete results and achievements.⁶⁶

⁶⁵ European Commission, 'White Paper on Developing a European Communication Policy', Part II, paragraph 3.

⁶⁶ Evaluation of ESF Information and Communication Activities, Final Report to the European Commission, Evaluation Partnership, July 2007, p. 90.

The communications team **has therefore focused** on developing solid links and strong relations with the media and other distributors of information. Effective media relations could go a long way towards ensuring that the right opportunities are created in the print media, internet, radio and TV to promote opportunities, progress and success of the Programmes. Also, a solid working relationship **has been** developed with the Malta Government's Department of Information, the Malta-EU Steering and Action Committee (MEUSAC)⁶⁷ as well as the European Commission Representation in Malta for the distribution of information. The specific actions **include:**

- Press Releases and Fact-sheets
- In-depth Print & TV Features
- Interviews With Key Players
- Press Conferences
- Participation of the MA in popular radio and/or TV shows
- Distribution of informative material to newsrooms

The media is also encouraged to gain more precise knowledge about Cohesion Policy (2007-2013) and the OPs through invitations to mainstream Information Events or small workshops, if necessary. 'Curtain-raisers' **have also been** sent to the various TV and radio newsrooms in order to highlight events of a national interest. These range from informational and promotional activities such as annual events to more practical matters such as calls for applications and project approvals.

Simultaneously with the on-going media relations and advertising, the MA also monitors the media in order to help identify topical issues and areas which require further attention or distribution of information. **A pilot media-monitoring exercise was undertaken during 2008 covering the Structural Funds 2004-2006 period. This media-monitoring exercise was outsourced and provided Media monitoring of national Press and Internet coverage and of Audio-visual coverage and advertising relating to the Structural Funds and all relevant key words during news bulletins. While this contract was not renewed at the MA level, the approach was taken up at Government level through the Department of Information (DOI). Every day DOI sends out a synopsis of the main newspaper stories to various government secretariats and officials. The report is sent out ready every morning before 10am together with a scanned copy of the newspaper which can be viewed via the Government Intranet. The MA is registered with this service and receives the information accordingly.** This ongoing monitoring is outlined in further detail in chapter 4 of this document.

3.4.3 Audio-Visual Products

The production and distribution of audio-visual items facilitates the dissemination of information to the public and to the media. The effectiveness of these products is clearly borne out by the MA's experience in the previous programming period, as outlined by Table 1.2: Advertising Recall. These materials – alongside the official website – are very useful in clearly explaining **objectives** and policies, sharing best practices and disseminating information about the Structural Funds. These materials are distributed to EU information agencies, the media, local authorities **and** stakeholders, and **also** feature during events and broadcast. The MA could also multiply the effectiveness of such products by uploading such audio-visual products on its website, social networking page as well as create a channel on one of the online video-sharing websites widely available on the internet.

⁶⁷ The December 2007 edition of this Communications Plan makes reference to *Forum Malta f'l-Ewropa*. The latter was integrated in MEUSAC following its re-instatement in 2008 when a Parliamentary Secretary responsible for Public Dialogue was appointed.

Furthermore, the MA as well as other Stakeholders identified in this Communication Plan regularly welcomes invitations to participate in radio/TV talk shows in order to illustrate specific themes or the general thrust of the OPs or to promote activities such as the Annual Events. Such participation provides a free avenue for promotion with a broad outreach.

Audio-visual products also includes the design and application of a branded template for PowerPoint presentations which is utilized by the MA during seminars and other events. The template ensures consistency of the MA's identity through the inclusion of logos as mentioned in section 3.1.

Specific products include:

TV / DVD Documentaries: Documentaries developed for airing on television, online or at major events, such as information gatherings, uploading on the various WWW options available, as well as for distribution to potential beneficiaries and other potential multipliers of information. These documentaries serve as a brief but visual summary of the 2007-2013 Programmes. During the 2004-2006 programming period in Malta, television was found to be the most effective medium in terms of recall: 80% of respondents who recalled Structural Funds publicity remembered the television publicity spots issued by the MA.⁶⁸ This statistic was confirmed in 2010 by a Eurobarometer survey which assessed the EU's citizens' awareness of Regional Policy. When questioned what sources were used to retrieve information, TV was the first preference of 36% of the EU citizens, which comprised 77% of the Maltese respondents⁶⁹. Hence, this medium would have first preference in utilisation due to its evident popularity. Studies have shown that internet, as a medium for dissemination is more popular among the younger cohort and therefore any information disseminated through it should be more youthful and friendly in approach. For this reason, different approaches to different publics should be considered and it is therefore opportune to include the internet as another prime means of information dissemination due to its ever-increasing popularity.

The MA could consider producing short documentaries that will highlight the beneficial impact of certain projects on the daily lives of citizens. These documentaries will then be featured on national television and will be used also during public events organised by the MA. The same projects that will feature in the documentaries could also feature in booklets/publication that will collect a set of best practice projects. This publication will be distributed to various stakeholders as well as the general public. Eventually a professional photographer could also be hired to take professional photos of these projects that will feature in the booklet, and these photos will then be made into poster-sized frames for display during MA public events and other national events by various national stakeholders. Snapshots of the booklet/publication will also feature on national newspapers and magazines.

However, the production of such documentaries should be done judiciously in order to be in step with the progress registered in the Programmes' delivery and to cover those areas which are not already heavily loaded in terms of advertising through publicity campaigns or to compensate for the less tangible projects. An example is the annual event for 2011 whereby to compensate for the physical visibility of projects to be visited during the tours organised, a 10 minute documentary on ESF projects is planned. The approach is to go for quality rather than quantity, in that, rather than having documentaries produced yearly which may not show stark differences in the progress registered, documentaries or short features are to be produced at the mid-term and closing periods.

⁶⁸ EU Structural Funds Research Debrief, BPC International, 4th July 2007.

⁶⁹ Source: Citizens' awareness and perceptions of EU regional policy, Flash Eurobarometer 298, October 2010.

3.4.4 Website

The onset of the web2.0 era, the 2nd generation WWW which is focused on facilitating information sharing and online collaboration. this is a user-centred approach which is characterised by blogs, wiki's, online fora, social networking sites etc, has cemented the Internet's place as an invaluable tool in the delivery of information. The Malta Government's experience in relation to e-Government, has enabled Malta to rank second in terms of electronic government among 31 European countries.⁷⁰ The MA could therefore seek to build on the success achieved here.

Internet penetration figures for Malta clearly show that many individuals have become accustomed to referring to the Internet as their primary source of information. Malta is the fourth country in the world to have the most internet users according to an International Telecommunication Union world rating.⁷¹ This modern tool provides a level of flexibility and interactivity that is unlike that of any other medium. Overall, broadband access in the EU has increased by seven percentage points (to 55% from 48%) and almost every country has experienced a significant increase, Malta being one of the countries with the greatest increase in broadband internet access at 13 to 11 percentage point increases (from 54% to 65%) since winter 2009.

With the above in mind, a new website for the Planning and Priorities Co-ordination Division (PPCD) was developed within a common and consistent web framework of websites falling under the Office of the Prime Minister. The new website acts as a cornerstone for communications initiatives throughout the entire implementation period. It contains information on all Programmes and initiatives managed by PPCD, including a specific section on Cohesion Policy (2007-2013) Programmes, providing information on the two Operational Programmes and respective Priority Axes, as well as lists of projects being implemented under the current Programming Period. These lists of Beneficiaries include the name and a short description of each operation and the amount of public funding allocated to the each operation. Furthermore, downloadable versions of all relevant documentation are available on the site, including information required by the Implementing Regulation, Articles 5 and 6.

The website, was designed in line with the visual identity guidelines (*see section 3.1*), and national rules, and contains all the available pertinent information relating to the OPs. The site is accessible and designed in a staggered manner so as to appeal both to people looking for general information as well as to those looking for more specific details. This approach ensures that no users are discouraged because of the amount of information it contains, whilst being accessible to those with a disability.

Downloadable versions of all relevant documentation are available on the site, including the lists of Beneficiaries, the name and a short description of each operation, and the amount of public funding allocated to the each operation as well as the information required by the Implementing Regulation, Articles 5 and 6.

The site has a link to the MA's generic email (info.ppcd@gov.mt) which functions as an Email Helpdesk, as described in section 3.4.4.1 below. The new site is being appropriately publicised on all promotional and advertising material.

⁷⁰ 'Malta Ranks Second In E-Government In EU 27+ (MIIT)' article on the Ministry of Investment, Industry and Information Technology (MIIT) website, 22nd October 2007 - <http://www.miti.gov.mt/site/page.aspx?pageid=3015>

⁷¹ 'Malta ranks fourth in world internet usage rating' article by the MaltaMedia News, 22nd December 2006 - http://www.maltamedia.com/news/2005/In/article_12839.shtm.

Along with the website, a more informal and image-heavy complement was made through the MA's presence on one of the popular social networking sites. As explained earlier, this allows for images from events to be uploaded, sharing of media as well as a secondary outlet for the dissemination of information related to calls for proposals, notifications, event announcements etc. This tool can also be used to carry out informal questionnaires, generate interest through online photo-liking competitions, creation of games as edutainment and includes the possibility of keeping track of the traffic generated by the page, thus allowing regular monitoring.

3.4.4.1 Helpdesk

A specialized Email and Telephone Helpdesk has been set up at the MA's Communication Unit with the aim of facilitating the communication process with the general public, stakeholders and potential beneficiaries, thereby giving Structural Funds a 'human face'.⁷² Contact details are given, as required by Article 5 of Regulation 1828/2006, and any delegated functions would also be publicised.

The Email Helpdesk info.ppcd@gov.mt allows users to send in questions and receive appropriate responses by e-mail. This provides for a direct contact with all stakeholders and enables the MA to gather opinions and suggestions. The Helpdesk service also includes a specific Helpdesk telephone line.

Both connections are publicised on all promotional and informative material produced by the MA. The Helpdesk is mainly targeted for potential beneficiaries and the general public who require more in-depth and specialist information on a one-to-one basis. Given the small size of the island and the ease of communication through personal contact, the various staff members of the MA sometimes receive queries directly to their personal email accounts and hence, queries are addressed at an even more direct and immediate rate.

The MA Help Desk would also refer certain queries to other information points already operating across the Maltese islands, including the Euro-Info Correspondence Centre, MEUSAC, the European Commission Representation for Malta as well as the EU Fund Desk Officers within the various Government Ministries and entities.

IBs have also set up various structures in order to address incoming queries in the best manner possible. TSDU may not have a designated help desk, however they do have a general email (tourismschemes.opm@gov.mt) which all beneficiaries of the IB have access to. They also receive and respond to queries pertaining to the Scheme from both Beneficiaries and potential applicants via the staff's personal emails and via telephone. There are also many cases where they hold one-to-one meetings to aid Beneficiaries and potential applicants.

On the other hand, DSWS has a website which is incorporated within the Ministry of Education, Employment and the Family main website where relevant information is uploaded. Interested parties can also phone the contact person for information. Malta Enterprise provides assistance on the various schemes it manages through a Relationship Management Unit to help clients on any enquiries.

⁷² European Commission, 'White Paper on Developing a European Communication Policy', Part II, paragraph 3.

3.4.4.2 Mail Shots

Through its website, the MA provides the possibility for interested parties to register their email address on a mailing list whereby they can receive update alerts and information related to events and calls being organised and issued throughout the Programming Period. This e-distribution tool offers the possibility of sending information and promotional material rapidly and directly to interested parties within predefined target categories and email databases.

The MA's mail shot database is further complemented by those lists managed by other stakeholders such as MEUSAC which provides a similar service through its www.funding360.eu website where calls and press releases issued by the MA, as well as examples of best practices, are regularly featured on the website.

3.5 Informative Publications & Collateral Materials

Information materials are essential to ensure successful message dissemination since these play a key communicative role. The MA is considering to have such material primarily in an electronic format in order to respect Green initiatives; however, an amount of printed material is also considered as computerised communication techniques are not accessible to everyone and all the time. Supported by a solid distribution base, the MA ensures that all items are delivered to the actual target audience, thus facilitating message consumption. These materials would be made freely available through door-to-door delivery as was the case with the leaflet produced to accompany the 2010 Annual Event; distributed at the head offices of bodies undertaking measures financed by the Cohesion Policy 2007-2013 including line Ministries, Local Councils and NGOs as well as national information centres amongst others including the European Commission Representation in Malta and MEUSAC. Publications produced by the MA are also complemented by more generic publications which the Commission makes available to all Member States for ease of dissemination through its bookshop.

The more basic publications, such as flyers, leaflets and brochures, aim to deliver general information without entering into too much depth, whilst other publications, including booklets, reports and other documents, highlight or deliver in-depth overviews linked to the OPs and/or to other MA initiatives. Publications are aimed at targeting a definite funding Programme, the Cohesion Policy (2007-2013) in general or a specific thematic aspect. These publications all have a particular target audience set and thus the kind of language is taken into consideration, with the inclusion of a glossary of terms and limited use of jargon.

Given the reality already explained that the majority of publicity, at Aid Scheme and Beneficiary level tends to be skewed towards ESF interventions, the MA is proposing to compensate for this scenario through the publication of books or booklets illustrating the 'before' and 'after' of the larger projects which would have not received as much visibility through publicity. At times, the general public might find it hard to comprehend the benefits which will be derived upon the completion of an intervention and stop at the unavoidable inconvenience some infrastructural works tend to create in the short term. For this reason, it is important to provide a medium by which the general public shares understanding and ownership of the final benefits which are received through the intervention.

Materials are designed and produced in line with the guidelines outlined in section 3.1 and conform with the campaign/event in question – general material is more or less uniform and consistent in manner, whilst event related ones fit with the identity produced for that specific event. Production and distribution of these publications is will coincides with the closure of the programming cycle (2013-2014) in order to present a

holistic scenario of the achievements of this Programme. Delivery of these publications can be facilitated through the use of door-to-door delivery, newspaper or magazine inserts, information agencies and libraries, distribution at events and on request. In terms of longer term availability, the MA has also considered creating online publications which can be accessed at any time and remain available long after the printed publications run out.

3.6 Calls for Applications

The MA organises Information Sessions which are designed to provide guidance to potential beneficiaries on how to apply for funding and the overall implementation process. These Information Sessions, already described in detail in section 3.2.1, are held over a number of days, following the publication of calls for project proposals issued on all local newspapers as well as on the various internet outlets the MA utilises.

Between 2007 to mid-2011, the MA issued nineteen (19) calls for projects and thirty-two (32) information sessions were held with a total of 1,122 participants. All calls and information sessions were advertised in the local media and the PPCD website. Guidance notes, application forms and information about each call were also available online for download.

From 2008 to mid-2011, the IBs under OP I (ME, TSDU and DSWS) issued over twenty-five (25) calls for projects and organised over fifty information sessions between them with over 1,500 persons attending these sessions. For OP II, the IB does not issue any calls since the schemes are demand driven and promoted in a different manner.

3.7 Other

During the Programme period, unforeseen information and publicity requirements may arise which the MA needs to make an allowance for. An example of such situations is the MA's participation in the OPEN DAYS which DG Regio organises in conjunction with the Committee of the Regions, which may require additional promotional or informational material to be produced. Such participation is not pre-planned and depends on an invitation received by the MA. So far, Malta has participated in the 2009 OPEN DAYS through the participation of ETC and the Foundation for Social Welfare in the *Creative and Inclusive Economic Growth Network* which was spearheaded by the Lisbon Region. The participation was through a Public Debate on "Social Innovation: sharing creative ideas for sustainable growth". During 2011, Heritage Malta will be participating during the OPEN DAYS in the *Europe of Traditions* partnership, once again led by a Portuguese region and comprising a number of regions with great historical heritage.

Furthermore, this measure also provides for the purchase of self-adhesive stickers with the co-financing statement which are affixed to items procured through Technical Assistance by the Managing Authority.

Table 3.1: Tools which may be used to deliver specific messages to the different target groups

Measure	Potential Tools	Access measure	Target Groups	Key Message Content
3.1 Development of a Visual Identity	Logo and Logo Guidelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meetings (including one-to-one meetings, training sessions, network meetings) Website Downloads Link MA Manual of Procedures and Project Applications' Terms of Letter Consultation via telecoms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Target Groups, particularly: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beneficiaries and respective contractors Professional Public / Potential Multipliers Horizontal stakeholders 	<p><i>Visibility and Awareness:</i></p> <p><i>Information Relating to Strategy, Aims and Results</i></p>
	Communication Guidelines			
3.2 Annual Event and other Information Events	<p>National Public Events</p> <p>Annual Information Events: [Eg. Information Seminars, Trade Fair participation, Exhibitions, National Conferences, Road shows, Interventions Site Open Days, and/or On-site talks]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Press Releases and Press Conferences Posters Mail shots Helpdesk and Programme / Scheme / project Website (or webpage) Outdoor and Media Advertising. Distribution of information and promotional material Audio-visual presentations Stands or exhibitions in key localities. Participation of trained professionals, stakeholders and beneficiaries Key guest speakers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beneficiaries Stakeholders Media General Public 	<p><i>Transparency: Technical and Procedural Information;</i></p> <p><i>Visibility and Awareness: Information Relating to Strategy, Aims and Results.</i></p>
	Participation in related activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local / Regional / National / Specialised Exhibitions, Fairs, and Conferences Stakeholders / Beneficiaries representations 	All Target Groups	<p><i>Transparency: Technical and Procedural Information;</i></p> <p><i>Visibility and Awareness: Information Relating to Strategy, Aims and Results</i></p>
	Training seminars /Information Sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mail shots / Direct Invitations Stakeholders / Beneficiaries speakers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stakeholders Specific target groups (Potential) Beneficiaries 	<p><i>Transparency: Technical and Procedural Information;</i></p> <p><i>Visibility and Awareness: Information Relating to Strategy, Aims and Results</i></p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key guest speakers • PPCD Website 		Capacity building for the implementation of the Structural Funds
Network and Exchange of Experiences	Local Networking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ad hoc Meetings / Seminars / Workshops • Mail shots / Direct invitations • PPCD Website 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MA • Project Leaders / MC [Communications / Information Officials] • Media • Other stakeholders involved in communicating EU Funds 	<p>Transparency: Technical and Procedural Information;</p> <p>Visibility and Awareness: Information Relating to Strategy, Aims and Results</p> <p>Capacity building for the implementation of the Structural Funds</p>
	Participation in European networking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Membership • Direct invitation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o MA o Other stakeholders involved in communicating EU Funds 	Exchange of best practice and experience.
Launching of the Operational Programmes	Conferences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Press Releases • Interviews • Press • Department of Information • Adverts in the local newspapers • MA Website • Mail shots • Invitation of Key Dignitaries • Helpdesk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential Beneficiaries • Stakeholders • General Public 	<p>Transparency: Technical and Procedural Information;</p> <p>Visibility and Awareness: Information Relating to Strategy, Aims and Results.</p>
	Information Seminars	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adverts in the local newspapers • Mail shots • MA Website • Promotional material • Distribution of information material • Helpdesk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential Beneficiaries • Stakeholders 	<p>Transparency: Technical and Procedural Information;</p> <p>Visibility and Awareness: Information Relating to Strategy, Aims and Results.</p>
3.3 Promotional material⁷³	<p>bags* (messenger, laptop holders, backpacks, calico)</p> <p>office items (magnifiers, pens*, pencils, notebooks*, writing pads*, pad folio,</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seminars / Workshops • Information Events / Fairs / Exhibitions • Any other events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Target Groups, particularly: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Potential Beneficiaries General Public 	Visibility and Awareness: Information relating to Strategy, Aims and Results.

⁷³ Items marked with an asterisk have been produced by a number of entities including the MA. The items listed represent all the items produced up to 2011. More items may be added to the list upon finalisation of the respective tender documents.

	<p>document holders, folders*, sticky notes*, highlighters, calculators, calendars [various formats]*, desk clock)</p> <p>electronics (mouse, usb drives [various shapes]*, CD pocket, mobile phone pockets, mobile phone stands)</p> <p>home and personal (energy saving light bulbs, key chains, umbrella; flash lights, sunshield, energy saving shower timer, pocket for glasses, lanyards)</p> <p>sport (flexible reusable bottles, high visibility band, anti-stress balls, cap, portable radio, Frisbee, t-shirts)</p>			
3.4 Media campaign (audio-visual and print adverts; documentaries) and Relations	Advertising			<p><i>Transparency: Technical and Procedural Information; Visibility and Awareness: Information relating to Strategy, Aims and Results.</i></p>
	Media advertising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Targeted programmes on National/ regional/local TV and radio 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Target Groups, particularly: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential Beneficiaries General Public 	
	TV and Radio Commercials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prime times 		
	Advertisements in Local Daily and Sunday Newspapers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National daily and Sunday newspapers 		
	Advertisements in Lifestyle magazine/s and Targeted publications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Free newspapers' magazines Specialized national and international magazines Targeted national/regional/local publications 		
	Outdoor Advertising			
Billboards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Main traffic arteries around Malta and Gozo Localities where projects are/have been implemented 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Target Groups, particularly: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential Beneficiaries General Public 	<p><i>Visibility and Awareness: Information Relating to Strategy, Aims and Results.</i></p>	
Bus Shelters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategically located shelters Towns and localities 			
	Media Relations			<p><i>Transparency: Technical and Procedural Information;</i></p> <p><i>Visibility and Awareness: Information Relating to Strategy, Aims and Results.</i></p>
	Press Releases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department of Information Information Agencies Press Agencies and Newsrooms MA, IB, Beneficiary, Line Ministry websites 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professional Public and Potential Multipliers General Public 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mail shots 		
In-depth Print & TV Features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialized press • <i>ad hoc</i> basis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Target Groups 	
Interviews with Key Players	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialized press • Main media agencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Target Groups 	
Articles, Fact-sheets and Advertorials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Press Agencies and Newsroom • Information Agencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Target Groups 	
Press Conferences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opening of main MA events • Department of Information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Target Groups 	
Participation of the MA/IB/Beneficiaries in popular radio and/or TV shows	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Popular radio/TV shows especially those on EU matters and OP-related issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Target Groups 	
Audio-visual products DVD Documentary / Short features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribution during events • Featuring on public media stations • Online distribution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Target Groups 	<i>Transparency: Technical and Procedural Information;</i> <i>Visibility and Awareness: Information Relating to Strategy, Aims and Results.</i>
Website Division's official website Web presence on social networks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Links on other Government's and beneficiaries' websites • Featuring web address on advertising, promotional material, information material, press releases, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Target Groups 	<i>Transparency: Technical and Procedural Information;</i> <i>Visibility and Awareness: Information Relating to Strategy, Aims and Results.</i>
Helpdesk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Euro-Info Correspondence Centre • Europe Direct Network in Malta • MEUSAC • EU Desk desks within the various Government Ministries and Authorities • MA generic email • Designated lines of support at IBs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Target Groups 	<i>Transparency: Technical and Procedural Information;</i> <i>Visibility and Awareness: Information Relating to Strategy, Aims and Results.</i>
Mailshots	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Users of MA generic address • Databases • MEUSAC alerts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific Groups • All Target Groups 	<i>Transparency: Technical and Procedural Information;</i> <i>Visibility and Awareness: Information Relating to Strategy, Aims and Results.</i>

3.5 Informative Publications & Collateral Materials	Flyers / Postcards / Leaflets / Brochures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information Events and Seminars Mail shots and Website Info Points and Libraries MC Meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Target Groups, particularly: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beneficiaries; Potential Beneficiaries; Public: All sub-groups. 	<i>Transparency: Technical and Procedural Information;</i> <i>Visibility and Awareness: Information Relating to Strategy, Aims and Results.</i>
	Booklets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General circulation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential Beneficiaries Public: All sub-groups 	
	Key Publications		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential Beneficiaries Stakeholders Media + General Public 	
	Posters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Councils Information Centres Fairs / Exhibitions / Annual Events Mail shots 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Target Groups 	<i>Visibility and Awareness: Information Relating to Strategy, Aims and Results.</i>
3.6 Calls for Applications	Call for Applications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adverts in the local newspapers Mail shots MA ,IBs and MEUSAC Website Department of Information Press Releases 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential Beneficiaries Stakeholders Media 	<i>Transparency: Technical and Procedural Information;</i> <i>Visibility and Awareness: Information Relating to Strategy, Aims and Results.</i>
3.7 Others	Ad hoc publicity actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any of the above 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Depending on access measure selected 	

4. Evaluation & Monitoring

The successful implementation of the Plan depends on ensuring that all decisions made are based on sound information. The effectiveness of communications interventions needs to be measured on a regular basis to ascertain that the desired level of message penetration is being achieved.

It is therefore essential to take a sustained, systematic approach to evaluation and monitoring. The results of evaluation and monitoring exercises, such as the Mid-Term Evaluation on Operational Programmes I and II (Cohesion Policy 2007-2013) and the periodical assessment of Project Progress Reports (PPR), are used to adapt or strengthen the Plan where necessary. The means used for monitoring and evaluating the Communication Plan shall be proportional to the information and publicity measures identified in the Plan.

This chapter outlines the approach being followed with regard to the evaluation of the Communication Plan activities, setting out impact, output and result indicators. It includes an outline of the data collection measures and assessment exercises to be followed to support the evaluation of the Plan. Finally, this chapter concludes with the reporting procedure to be conducted with regard to the Communication Plan.

4.1 Monitoring and Evaluation of the Communication Plan: Main Impact Indicators.

The Strategic Objectives set by the Communication Plan, namely 'Ensuring Transparency' and 'Increasing Visibility and Awareness', as well as the Operative Objectives are measured and assessed in Malta through the following overall impact indicators:

- Increase in public awareness of EU cohesion policy and its results;
- Increase in public positive attitude towards EU cohesion policy.

The overall impact indicators are based on the objectives identified in Article 69 of the Council Regulation and Article 5 of the Implementing Regulation, as well as on the recommendations of the European Commission's White Paper on a European Communication Policy and the Green Paper on a European Transparency Initiative.⁷⁴

These impact indicators can be measured through ad hoc, mid-term and ex-post research exercises. There could also be pre-test research exercises prior to every large-scale event or on a yearly basis, and post-test research exercises with the targets being an approximate 3% overall increase. Evaluation exercises are to look at the popularity of the OPs and increase in the public's general awareness of its existence and knowledge of the key projects.

The specific impact indicators are outlined with reference to the Operative Objectives listed in chapter 2 of this document as follows:

⁷⁴ White Paper on a European Communication Policy, COM (2006) 35 final – Introduction; Green Paper, European Transparency Initiative, COM (2006) 194 final.

Table 4.1 Operational Objectives

Ref.	Operational Objectives	Impact Indicator	Unit	Indicative Initial Value ⁷⁵	Target Value
A	Provide transparent information on the opportunities provided by Structural Funds and the Cohesion Fund assistance to potential project proponents	Increase in public knowledge about Structural Funds and the Cohesion Fund among potential beneficiaries.	% awareness of Structural Funds opportunities.	<i>To be based on pre-campaign pre-tests carried out.</i>	60% awareness of Structural Funds opportunities.
B	Devise a system that provides information about Structural Funds and Cohesion Fund interventions.	Increase in public awareness of projects funded by the Operational Programmes I and II for the Cohesion Policy 2007-2013.	% awareness of Structural Funds interventions.	22% spontaneous awareness of Structural Funds Interventions (SPD) ⁴⁶ .	25% spontaneous awareness of actual Structural Funds (OP I & II) Interventions.
C	Inform the media, the general public and interested stakeholders about the role played by the EU in implementing the assistance.	Increase in public knowledge about Operational Programme I and II for the Cohesion Policy 2007-2013.	% perceived knowledge of Cohesion Policy 2007-2013.	66% possessing basic knowledge about the SPD for the Cohesion Policy 2004-2006 ⁴⁶ .	69% possessing basic knowledge about OP I & II - Cohesion Policy 2007-2013.
D	Make visible results achieved through the assistance given by the Funds.	Increase in public perception of the benefits of Cohesion Policy 2007-2013.	% positive attitude towards Cohesion Policy.	72% perceived benefit of EU Structural Funds ⁴⁶ .	75% perceived benefit of EU Structural Funds.
E	Promote an understanding and appreciation of the role of Structural Funds and the Cohesion Fund and the EU's contribution to the overall socio-economic development of Malta & Gozo.	Increase in public support for EU membership.	% support for EU membership.	47% support for EU membership ⁴⁶ .	50% support for EU membership.

⁷⁵ *Structural Funds for Malta 2004-2006 – Research conducted by BPC International, 4th July 2007.*

4.2 Monitoring the Communication Tools: Output and Result Indicators

The use of output and result indicators is recommended to evaluate the tools and measures to be created during the implementation of the Communication Plan, as outlined in chapter 3. The proposed output and result indicators are outlined in Table 4.2 below, in relation to the Operational Objectives and Impact Indicators identified previously.

The output indicators aim to quantify the tools and measures created through the activities involved in implementing the Communication Plan, **at policy, programme and project level**, while the result indicators measure the quantitative changes achieved through the application of the individual tools or measures. Reaching the targets set by the indicators is expected to contribute towards achieving the Operative Objectives and corresponding Impact Indicators. Ongoing monitoring is recommended in this regard. **For this reason, the Communications Unit, apart from keeping track record of all the publicity measures it implements at programme level, also keeps in close contact with other entities which promote EU policies and funds as well as Project Leaders in order to ensure the best approaches are implemented.**

Further **more, following** the review exercise first presented to the Monitoring Committee in May 2010 as well as the findings and recommendations made in the Mid-Term Evaluation on OPI and II, the MA has made a number of amendments to the result and output indicators in order to ensure that these tally with the restructured Plan as well as with a view to ensure better monitoring.

It is recommended that the following measures are taken by the MA to facilitate the collection and assessment of the data required for the ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the indicators relating to the Communication Tools:

- **Ongoing Press Office Monitoring** **through outsourcing or Department of Information services**, of newspaper clippings and radio/television coverage to collect information at both Programme and project level;
- **Consultation of official Media Survey Reports** showing viewership/listener levels on specific channels and during time-bands and programmes as well as readership of newspapers and magazines;
- **Web software and applications** **such as Social Networking sites** to measure website visitors and downloads;
- Ongoing monitoring of **Email Helpdesk queries**;
- Ongoing monitoring, **stock-takes and record-keeping** of items, adverts and publications produced and distributed at Programme level;
- Compilation of **attendance sheets or head counts** at all information events⁷⁶;
- Compilation of **evaluation and feedback sheets** at information events;
- **Ad hoc research surveys and exercises**, both qualitative and quantitative in scope.

The above forms of data collection may be carried out by the Communication Team, whilst the evaluation will be outsourced to specialists.

⁷⁶ Where possible. Events which would have either no registration requirement or no specific entry/exit point may create a difficulty in quantifying actual attendees.

During the Mid-Term Evaluation carried out in 2010/2011, the evaluators further recommended the use of an effective and appropriate monitoring system for both the measuring of indicators as well as the financial spend, suggesting also that for the monitoring of the indicators, the financial split existing between OPI and OPII should be reflected. A further recommendation was to ensure that the information available allows good monitoring, and hence, “the Communication Plan budget should reflect monitoring needs so that quantities and costs that need to be monitored are adequately planned for.”⁷⁷ To this end, the MA is endeavouring to ensure that any procurement of supplies or services is quantified at item cost to enable assessments on cost effectiveness and efficiency of measures taken.

Additionally, in line with another recommendation by the evaluators, the MA is extending its monitoring to project-level actions through an annex to the Project Progress Report (PPR). The new annex within the PPR requests Project Leaders to periodically quantify the publicity measures implemented with a view to keeping a track record of actions carried out over a particular reporting period. Project Leaders are also requested to carry out a ‘self-evaluation’ and identify those measures which were considered to be most effective (e.g. increase in applications following a publicity campaign) as well as those areas which proved to be problematic. These questions provide a qualitative approach to the reporting aspect, directly from the Project Leaders’ perspective, thus making it possible for the MA to pre-empt future problems and recommend best practices to new beneficiaries. The reporting carried out in the PPRs complements the day to day contact which the MA has with Project Leaders and their respective teams in terms of drawing up of publicity measures. The MA is regularly consulted by the Beneficiaries who seek to ensure that the proposed information and publicity actions, as agreed to on the Grant Agreement and subsequent implementation contracts, follow the guidelines issued by the MA and provide the best possible promotion of the intervention and its co-financing sources.

Other sources of information could include reference to nation-wide studies together with Europe-wide studies, such as the Eurobarometer database set up by the Commission, which regularly monitors public opinion across the EU, as well as Independent Social Research on European issues supported by EU research funds.⁷⁸ Furthermore, close cooperation with local entities involved in the dissemination of EU policies and funds such as the Office of the Commission Representation in Malta, the Malta-EU Steering and Action Committee (MEUSAC) and other agencies is encouraged in order to have a more holistic approach towards the provision of information to the general public.

Updated Output and Result Indicators, together with the Publicity Measures they are targeted by, and respective indicative budget, are to be found at Annex 1.

Any consequent changes made to the Communication Plan, such as those indicated above, are to be communicated to the Monitoring Committee, as required by the Implementing Regulation and as mentioned in chapter 1 of this Communication Plan.

⁷⁷ Mid-Term Evaluation Overall Report, Vol. 2: Communication Plan, KPMG, p. ???

⁷⁸ European Commission, ‘White Paper on a European Communication Policy’, Part II, paragraph 4.

4.3 Reporting on the Communication Plan

As specified by the Implementing Regulation, the Monitoring Committee of each Operational Programme is to be informed of the Communication Plan and progress in its implementation; the information and publicity measures carried out and the means of communication used.⁷⁹ Furthermore, the annual reports and final report on the implementation of each Operational Programme shall include examples of information and publicity measures and the content of any major amendments to the Communication Plan.

On a daily basis, the Communications Unit within the MA is also kept informed of any publicity actions being implemented at project level both through the Project Leaders themselves via telephone and email exchanges, as well as through the on-the-spot checks carried out by the Operational Units within the MA. Record of publicity measures implemented is kept at the Communications Unit in both physical and electronic format through the cataloguing of images and sample items. At times corrective actions may be required in the event of incorrect implementation of publicity measures (e.g. logo misuse or wrong referencing). The Communication Unit within the MA provides guidance on how such actions can be corrected as well as pre-empted in the future.

The Annual Implementation Report contains a chapter assessing the results of the information and publicity measures in terms of visibility and awareness of the Operational Programmes and of the role played by the Community. This requirement emerges from Commission Regulation (EC) No.1083/2006 Art. 67 (2) (e) as well as the Implementing Regulation (EC) No. 1828/2006 Art. 4 (2). Moreover, the Annual Implementation Report for the year 2010 contained a detailed qualitative and quantitative assessment of the achievements made in the implementation of the objectives of the Communication Plan. A similar chapter shall be included in the Final Implementation Report.

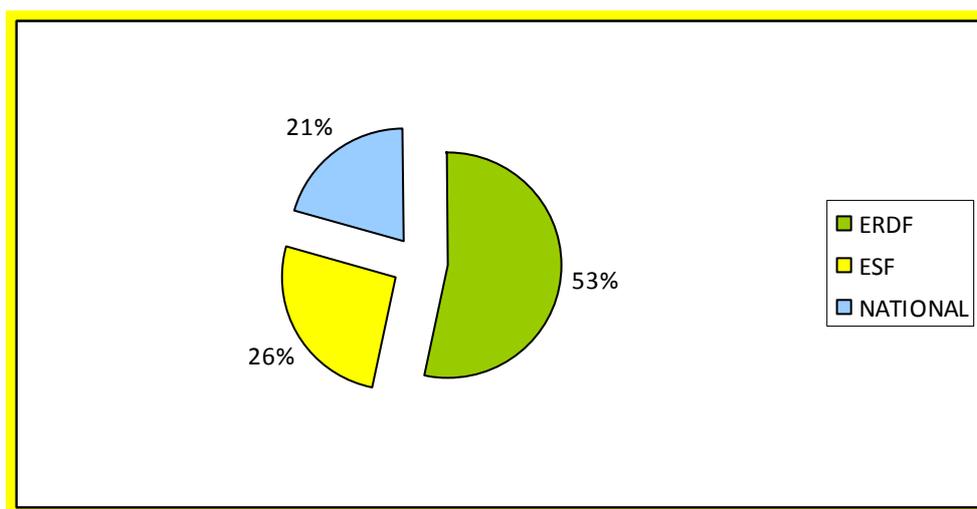
⁷⁹ EC 1828/2006, Article 4.

5. Communication Activities Budget

5.1 Overall Budget

In line with the Implementing Regulation, the MA needs to indicate a budget for the implementation of the Communication Plan for the period 2007 - 2013. In view of the experience so far, OP I and OPII envisage a revised total expenditure of approximately €2 Million on communications and publicity distributed as indicated in the following table and chart:

ERDF	€1,000,000.00
ESF	€ 500,000.00
National	€ 388,000.00
Total	€1,888,000.00



In terms of budgets associated with the implementation of the Operational Programmes, the following tables illustrate the costs being entertained both through the respective Technical Assistance budget lines within the two OPs as well as funds invested by the IBs from their own budgets. These amounts, however, do not include any marketing campaigns which are carried out by Beneficiaries. The amounts spent on publicising Cohesion Policy 2007-2013 through the various measures carried out by MEUSAC are also difficult to quantify and are therefore to be considered additional to the above indicative costs⁸⁰.

⁸⁰ These include the National Design Competition run by MEUSAC, designed to showcase success stories related to EU funded projects, including those carried out under Cohesion Policy 2007-2013, through artistic installations, which is fully funded by DG Communication, the upcoming *L-Ewropa fuq ir-Roti* campaign, various articles on MEUSACNews and www.funding360.eu.

Table 5.1: OP I – Technical Assistance and National Contribution: Information and Publicity Allocation

Total	ERDF	National	
€ 1,178,000	€ 1,000,000	€ 178,000	OPs
€ 100,000	€ -	€ 100,000	IBs - from own budget
€ 1,278,000	Grand Total		

Table 5.2: OP II – Technical Assistance and National Contribution: Information and Publicity Allocation

Total	ESF	National	
€ 590,000	€ 500,000	€ 90,000	OPs
€ 20,000	€ -	€ 20,000	IBs - from own budget ⁸¹
€ 610,000	Grand Total		

5.2 Budget per Action

On a purely indicative basis, the MA is recommending that 45% of the overall budget managed by the MA will be allotted to Publicity Measures relating to the organisation of Information Events which increase Visibility and Awareness of Cohesion Policy Aims and Results, while 40% is invested in the complementary measures to support the Information Events. These mostly take the form of promotional items, media campaign and other informative publications. Information Measures relating to Transparency, Technical and Procedural Information through calls and information sessions for project proposals, other ad hoc publicity measures such as participation in DG REGIO / Committee of the Regions Open Days and ongoing Monitoring and Evaluation make up 15% of the MA's budget. The Tables below demonstrate the tentative percentage split for each particular action identified in this Communication Plan:

Table 5.3: Indicative Budget split for Information Events

Visibility and Awareness of Cohesion Policy Aims and Results	% of Budget
Annual Event including launch events	43%
Local and other Communication Networks	2%

Table 5.4: Indicative Budget split for complementary measures to support the Information Events

⁸¹ Inclusive of adverts, seminars, bilateral meetings, joint information events with stakeholders, mailshots, website, and other measures.

Support the Information Events	% of Budget
Publications and collateral material	10%
Media Campaigns	15%
Promotional Items	15%

Table 5.5 - Indicative Budget split for measures relating to Transparency, Technical and Procedural Information

Transparency, Technical and Procedural Information etc	% of Budget
Calls for Project Proposals incl. Information Sessions	12%
Other ad hoc measures incl. ongoing monitoring and evaluation	3%

6. Conclusion

The Communication Plan is expected to be flexible and dynamic, taking feedback provided through exchange of experience and evaluation exercises into consideration. Furthermore, the Plan may need to be adjusted to cater for unforeseen events or developments. The July 2011 revision is being carried out in this context.

6.1 Ongoing development of the Communication Plan

According to Article 4 of the Implementing Regulation, amendments to the Plan must be communicated to the Monitoring Committee for each Operational Programme, together with updates on its implementation and the tools utilised.⁸² Results obtained through the Evaluation and Monitoring research carried out could guide the MA into making the Communication Plan more effective in its choice of media and publicity tools, as well as helping identify areas of intervention.

The drawing up of the Communication Plan can be considered as a cycle process composed of six major steps: Context analysis, followed by the actual Drawing up of the Plan, the Implementing Activities, Monitoring and Reporting, Evaluation and then the Adjustment of the Plan where necessary, based on the results of the monitoring and evaluation activities.⁸³

It is envisaged that, through the implementation of this Communication Plan, the Managing Authority will be able to enhance the visibility and transparency of EU Cohesion Policy and its contribution to Malta and Gozo's socio-economic development, while establishing a strong two-way communication with the target audience, particularly the public in general.

⁸² Article 4, EC 1828/2006.

⁸³ 'Guidelines for the Drawing Out of Communication Plans for 2007-2013 Programming Period of Structural Funds', Ministry of Public Administration and Administrative Reform, Bulgaria. Twinning Light Project BG/2005/IB/SPP/02/UE/TWL, Strengthening the capacity of the Ministry of State Administration and Administrative Reform for managing the Operational Programme'; www.db.formez.it

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Structural Funds Programme for Malta (2004-2006)
The Plan was co-financed by the European Union
European Regional Development Fund
Co-financing Rate: 75% ERDF; 25% Government of Malta