



COMMUNICATION PLAN

for the
EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AREA (EEA) FINANCIAL MECHANISM
and the
NORWEGIAN FINANCIAL MECHANISM
2009 – 2014

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**Programme Operator
Malta**

FINAL

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

DPP(s)	Donor Project Partner(s)
EEA	European Economic Area
FM(s)	Financial Mechanism(s)
FMC	Financial Mechanism Committee
FMO	Financial Mechanism Office
FPD	Funds and Programmes Division
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NFP	National Focal Point
NMFA	Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MEAIM	Ministry for European Affairs and Implementation of the Electoral Manifesto
PO	Programme Operator
PP(s)	Project Promoter(s)

1. STRATEGIC OVERVIEW

Two Memoranda of Understanding were signed between Malta and the Donor States: one for the implementation of the Norwegian FM 2009-14, which was officially signed between Malta and the Kingdom of Norway on 27 September 2011 in Valletta, Malta, and the other one for the implementation of the EEA FM 2009-14. The latter was signed officially by all parties on 10 October 2011.

The MoU establish seven Programme Areas for the 2009-14 period. Two will be implemented by third party operators selected by the Donors whilst the other five will be managed by one Programme Operator. As stated in the MoU, the NFP itself will be acting as this PO.

As stated under Article 5.1 (4) of the Regulations on the implementation of the EEA and the Norwegian FMs 2009-14 (henceforth referred to as the 'Regulations'): 'on the basis of the approved MoU and within the programmes identified therein, the PO shall, through the NFP, submit a formal proposal for each programme to the FMC within eight months of the date of the designation of the PO'. In addition it was agreed by the Donors that Malta is to submit two programme proposals, one for each Financial Mechanism. The PO has consequently submitted these Programme Proposals to the FMO (through the NFP) in April 2012.

Following on this, and in accordance with Article 4.7(2)(a) of the Regulations, the PO is required to prepare a Communication Plan to cover the programmes for the period 2009-14. On 7 October 2011, the FMO informed the NFP/PO that only one Communication Plan covering both FMs is to be submitted by the PO together with the Programme Proposals, as outlined in Article 3.13 of Annex 9 – The PO's Manual.

As further set out in the next chapter of this document, the aim of the Communication Plan is to raise awareness of the existence, the objectives, the possibilities for and actual bilateral cooperation with the Donor States entities, the implementation and the overall impact of support from the financial mechanisms through the Programmes. Furthermore, the PO shall, through the information and publicity measures being implemented, support the NFP in achieving the overall objectives of the Financial Mechanisms, that is:

1. to contribute to the reduction of economic and social disparities in the EEA, and
2. to strengthen bilateral relations between the Donor States and the Beneficiary States.

The information and publicity measures defined within this Plan will primarily target the general public with the involvement of the key stakeholders, mainly the Project Promoters, the NFP, the FMO, the Royal Norwegian Embassy to Malta in Rome, the Donor States and other national stakeholders working on promoting funds and programmes. This Communication Plan has been drawn up to reflect the requirements of the Regulations and its Annexes, and the respective guidelines issued by the FMO and the NFP, and to support and communicate the aforementioned objectives.

Since the NFP will act as the PO, similarities and complimenting activities will be encountered in the PO's Communication Plan and the NFP's Communication Strategy.

2. CONTEXT ANALYSIS

2.1 Malta's past experience in communicating the EEA and the Norwegian FMs

The implementation procedures of the 2004-09 period differ from the requirements being expected in the 2009-14 period in a number of areas: 1) the role of the PO did not exist and its duties and responsibilities were part of the role of the NFP; (2) programme proposals were not a requirement, and (3) a Communication Plan/Strategy was not a requirement either. Consequently, on the basis of these circumstances, the context analysis has to rest on the experience which the NFP has acquired during the 2004-09 period.

During the 2004-09 period, the NFP implemented various information and publicity activities with the aim of increasing transparency and raising public awareness of the FMs in Malta. The outcomes of these successful activities generated significant awareness amongst the public generally and particularly the targeted audience (school pupils and staff).

Following on these information and publicity activities, the PO believes that for the new period it should also take note of the following main issues:

- The information and publicity activities carried out by Project Promoters aid in complementing the campaigns and activities carried out by the PO as they build up a coherent image of the EEA and Norway Grants. Collaboration with the PPs is therefore crucial for the successful implementation of this plan;
- To make use of multipliers to disseminate awareness about the programmes and projects, such as the media, stakeholders, and the general public;
- To focus on specific target groups.

In addition to these, and in order to help get the message out, the PO notes the importance of joint cooperation with the NFP on all matters related to the implementation of communication activities to ensure a consistent and coherent approach. This will be further dealt with in the next chapter.

2.2 SWOT analysis:

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Good level of awareness raised amongst target audience during the 2004-09 period on which to build during the 2009-14 period- Excellent relations established with the different stakeholders which contribute a lot to dissemination and raising of awareness- Two of the five new pre-defined projects build on projects from 2004-09 phase, thus enabling a continuation of good communication measures which have already taken place- Better defined communication and design manual, guidelines and regulations in respect of information and publicity measures for the 2009-14 period	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Potential lack of cooperation from the media in disseminating information

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communication expertise gained from 2004-09 period - Communication Plan provides for a coherent line of action - The NFP acting as the PO ensures that a consistent and coherent approach is taken at programme and project level to communicate the Grants 	
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase bilateral relations with the Donor States in disseminating information and sharing best practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Struggle to stand out from EU funds which are the object of more intense publicity (larger communication budget) - Unpredictable circumstances (such as the outcome of a general national election)

3. COMMUNICATION PLAN FRAMEWORK

3.1 Responsibilities of the PO

The PO will be responsible for the implementation of the present Communication Plan. With the aim of highlighting the Grants and to ensure that the assistance from the Mechanisms' is transparent, the PO shall proactively provide information on the Programmes and on the Grants to the Maltese public, PPs and relevant stakeholders as stated in Annex 4 of the Regulations. Such information will be provided on an ad hoc basis, through the general helpdesk of the NFP/PO, and through participation on the media and external activities, and the activities foreseen in this Plan.

According to Section 3.1 of Annex 4 of the Regulations, the PO is to ensure that the PPs fulfil their information and publicity obligations. Since the NFP will be acting as the PO, as stated in the signed MoU, joint efforts between these two functions will seek to enhance the activities undertaken and shall contribute to the successful implementation of both the PO's and NFP's information and publicity measures. Consequently, the PO's Communication Plan and the NFP's Communication Strategy have been interlinked to mutually work towards the same objectives through joint activities, as will be described in the subsequent chapter.

3.2 Cooperation with stakeholders

Cooperation with all the relevant stakeholders will be critical in achieving the aim and objectives of this Communication Plan. Ongoing cooperation and involvement should ensure stronger relations between the stakeholders and provide for a wider dissemination of the results achieved through the two Programmes and the funded projects.

A. National Focal Point (NFP)

The Funds and Programmes Division within the Ministry for European Affairs and Implementation of the Electoral Manifesto will act as both the NFP and PO. To ensure separation of duties within this entity, the duties of PO and those of the NFP will be carried out by different officers. As mentioned previously, the NFP and PO shall ensure continuous cooperation on a daily basis on all aspects of communication at both programme and project levels.

B. Project Promoters (PPs)

The key collaboration at programme level is the one between the PO and the PPs. This cooperation will aim to build the foundations and overall structure for the successful implementation and dissemination of both Programmes since both will be working directly to obtain the best results from the contribution of the Grants.

To achieve this, the PO will guide the PPs throughout the implementation of their information and publicity activities. The PPs will be provided with the relevant regulations, guidelines and manuals (issued by the Donors and by the NFP/PO) and offered continuous support. The PO will also monitor the PPs communication activities through the Project Progress Reports (PPRs) to be drawn up on a tri-annual basis. It will be stressed to the PPs about the necessity of such communication activities in contributing to reach the objectives of the Programmes and the FMs.

Conversely, the PPs will be involved in the planning and organisation of the activities carried out by the PO in order to include the progress and, eventually, the results/impact of their projects which constitute the main achievements of the Grants in Malta.

The PPs shall be requested to give the PO advance notice of any communication activity in order to provide the PO/NFP and the FMO the opportunity to participate.

C. Donor Project Partners (DPPs)

Apart from the PPs, the PO will also see that the respective DPPs contribute to and are involved in the information and publicity activities carried by the respective PP. The DPPs and the PPs will be also involved in the PO's communication activities to act as direct testimonials to highlight the benefit of partnering between Malta and the Donor States. The experience gained through sharing expertise and best practices will showcase the ability of the Grants to contribute towards strengthening bilateral relations while investing to reduce economic and social disparities.

D. Donor States

The PO shall inform the NFP in advance of any major information activity in order to provide the NFP, the FMO and/or the Norwegian Embassy to Malta the opportunity of participating. The NFP/PO shall also cooperate with the FMO (particularly the Communications Unit) and the Norwegian Embassy to Malta to propagate the benefits and outcomes of the programmes and projects being implemented further afield. The PO shall also ensure to build its relationship with the Donors through regular contact (mainly by means of email and telephone) particularly with regard to plans, priorities and activities. Consequently, it is envisaged that the PO will involve the Donors during the planning stage of the communication activities.

Furthermore, the FMO, the Norwegian Embassy to Malta and other relevant stakeholders from the Donor States (such as the NMFA or other suggested entities) could also be involved in capacity building of the PPs through seminars/training organised by the NFP/PO on different aspects on communications. Such activities could be financed under the fund for bilateral relations at programme level.

E. Other national stakeholders

The Monitoring Committee, the Certifying Authority, the Audit Authority and the line Ministries will be informed about (and invited, where applicable) the information and publicity activities implemented by the PO. Furthermore, the Malta-EU Steering and Action Committee (MEUSAC) and other governmental information agencies will be made aware about the communication activities. These stakeholders, apart from their direct contribution in the management of the Programmes in Malta, can act as multipliers in disseminating the progress and results of the same Programmes and the EEA and Norway Grants in Malta and Gozo.

3.3 Objectives and Key Target Groups of the Plan

According to article 4.7(2) of the Regulations, the PO shall provide information on the existence, the objectives and the implementation of the Programmes, as well as the cooperation with Donor State entities.

Consequently, and to maintain the positive image of the Grants in Malta, this Communications Plan shall broadly aim to:

1. support the NFP to reach the overall objectives of the FMs, that is:
 - a. to contribute to the reduction of economic and social disparities in the European Economic Area (EEA), and

- b. to strengthen bilateral relations between the Donor States and the Beneficiary States.
- 2. increase public awareness of the Programmes, their results and impact.

To bring this about, it is intended to address the aforementioned overall objectives through five specific objectives of the PO's Communication Plan with the aim of contributing to a joint communication effort with the NFP. These are being presented in the table below. The table also identifies the key target groups for each of these specific objectives:

Specific Objectives	Key Target Groups
1. to promote a general understanding and appreciation of the Donor's contribution to the overall socio-economic development of Malta and Gozo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - General Public - The media (<i>a tool to act as multiplier</i>)
2. to increase public awareness about the Programmes, the EEA and Norway Grants, and their results and impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - General Public - The media (<i>a tool to act as multiplier</i>)
3. to inform the General Public about the specific projects being undertaken within the Programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National Stakeholders - PPs and DPPs - Donor States (including FMO and Embassy)
4. to ensure that all PPs are aware of the requirements and procedures, including those for information and publicity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - PPs and DPPs
5. to highlight the results of actions to strengthen bilateral relations with the Donor States (at programme level) and between PPs and DPPs (at project level)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - General Public - PPs and DPPs - National Stakeholders - The media (<i>a tool to act a multiplier</i>)

The different information and publicity activities identified in the next chapter have been drawn up to target these audiences, either directly or indirectly.

It is important to note that since the projects under the Programme Areas being managed by the PO have been already pre-defined in the MoU, and since the two other Programme Areas will be managed outside the NFP/PO, no calls for project proposals (and any related publicity and information measures) will take place as part of this Communication Plan.

3.4 Key Communication Messages

The communication measures carried out by the PO shall tie in with the key messages to be used by the NFP in order to deliver a consistent message and to highlight the added value and long-term effects of these Grants' interventions:

*'Investing to reduce economic and social disparities'
'Strengthening bilateral relations between Malta and Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway'*

However, the main focus of the messages on a programme level will focus on the programmes and the programme areas under which the various pre-defined projects, complete with their information and publicity objectives, fall, rather than on the FMs. Building on this, the PO shall make use of specific messages tailored according to the publicity and information measure to be used and/or focus of the information activities.

1. Main message

Where the communication activity will take a general approach (such as the information activities listed under Section 4.2), the key messages used shall be coherent with those of the activities of the NFP, together with the following main message:

- *EEA and Norway Grants – Working together for our future*

2. Specific messages

Where the communication activity (at programme and/or at project level) is specific to or related to one of the Programme Areas, the message shall be tailored around the Programme Area itself, such as:

- *EEA Grants – Working together to increase renewable energy production (PA6)*
- *EEA Grants – Working together to reduce the vulnerability of our sea to climate change (PA7)*
- *EEA Grants – Working together to protect our cultural heritage (PA16)*
- *Norway Grants – Working together to strengthen our local government (PA25)*
- *Norway Grants – Working together to improve our Young Offenders Rehabilitation Services (PA32)*

These will mainly feature on all information and publicity measures aimed at the general public and/or specific audiences through the PO, the PPs, and the DPPs.

3. Co-financing tagline

The main and specific messages will also be supported by a co-financing tagline together with the National Emblem of Malta and the EEA/Norway Grants logo/s to acknowledge the official support of the Grants. The obligatory co-financing tagline will read:

*'Supported by a grant from Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway
through the EEA and the Norwegian Grants 2009-2014'.*

The NFP, PO and PPs will be requested to feature the above tagline on all information and publicity measures financed by the Grants.

4. PROMOTION AND INFORMATION MEASURES

In order to reach the communication objectives and target audiences outlined in the previous section, it is essential to identify the most suitable and effective communication tools and methods to be used. Rather than just taking a passive approach, the measures are envisaged to actively engage the target audience in the activities implemented and to eventually act as multipliers in order to reach an ever wider audience.

It is important to note that since the budget allocated for this Plan is restricted, as indicated in Chapter 6, the PO plans to make extensive use of cost-free activities.

4.1 Increasing the visibility of the Programmes

The EEA and the Norway Grants' logos will feature on all promotional and information material in accordance with the Communication and Design Manual issued by the FMO. Furthermore, the manual will be complemented by guidelines to be issued by the NFP and the PO with the intention of supporting the PPs in applying the correct text in English and Maltese.

The PO shall ensure that explicit and visible reference to the support of the respective Grant is made on the information and promotional activities implemented by any stakeholder and beneficiary.

4.2 Major Information Activities

In accordance with Article 4.7 (2)(b), the PO is to organise:

'at least two major information activities on progress in the programme and its projects'

The PO has planned to hold these two activities concurrently with the mid- and closing-activities of the NFP in order to highlight these two major milestones of the implementation of the programme period.

The aim of these activities would be to connect the PO and the NFP with the target audiences and to allow for active engagement. The main aspects of these events would be to keep the public informed through direct involvement, to deliver transparent information, to heighten awareness, and to highlight success stories. These events may be enhanced through the participation of key stakeholders (that is the Donor States, the FMO and the Royal Norwegian Embassy to Malta in Rome) and the Project Promoters, together with high profile guests and/or speakers. The information and content to be delivered during these events shall be appropriate for the target audience.

A. Mid-term activity

Mid-way through the programme period, a mid-term activity is intended to be held in order to present the progress achieved by the programmes and the projects and to compliment, on a national level, the seminar envisaged to be organised by the NFP. The PO is envisaging that this activity might entail a minor publicity campaign which will mainly include online and/or print adverts, publicity through the social media network, and the production and distribution of an eco-friendly promotional item.

B. *Closing event*

The closing event is envisaged to entail a public video/photo competition through the social media based on a theme or themes related to the programmes or projects with scope to highlight also bilateral relations between Malta and the Donor States. The competition, which might mainly target young people aged 16 – 30 yrs, could be complimented with publicity through the social media networks and online and conventional media. The general public will be further engaged in this competition as the selection of the best photo/video will entail a combination of the number of 'likes' registered by the general public (applicants will be sharing their photo/video with their friends on the network to increase their number of 'likes' and this will result in a multiplying effect), and a jury composed of the NFP/PO and FMO – Communication Unit. The competition prize will also comprise part of the budget of this Plan.

Furthermore, as part of this closing activity it is planned to design and print booklets or leaflets to showcase the five main projects receiving support through the Grants together with emphasis on the bilateral relations between Malta and the three Donor States as strengthened in the accomplishment of these investments. The booklets/leaflets will be distributed during the closing activity itself and thereafter.

4.3 Website

A webpage providing general information about the EEA and Norway Grants 2009-14 has been created by the NFP/PO (<http://www.ppcd.gov.mt/eeanorway0914>) as a temporary arrangement until a new website is developed for the Division acting as the NFP/PO (the Funds and Programmes Division). The new website will host webpage(s), in Maltese and in English, which will present the requirements enlisted in Section 3.2 (d) of Annex 4 of the Regulations. The webpage will be linked to the addresses www.eegrants.gov.mt and www.norwaygrants.gov.mt, and shall be used for promotional purposes.

4.4 Cost-free publicity

The PO intends to resort to the use of cost-free publicity, in collaboration with the NFP particularly through press releases and press kits to disseminate information about the EEA and Norwegian Grants to the general public. Such information could include activities being organised by the PO and the PPs, general information and publicity carried out by the FMO, the Donor States and the PPs on these Grants, and publicity of the milestones achieved by the Programmes and projects.

The possibility of using social media (e.g. *facebook* and *twitter*) will be investigated.

4.5 Helpdesk

A general helpdesk has also been established within the Division acting as the NFP/PO to answer queries received. The new website will display the generic email associated with this helpdesk.

4.6 Mail Shots

Mail shots may also be utilised by the PO to publicise the activities it organises. This could be done through the mailing list of the Department of Information which reaches the Inboxes of all public officers; through the mailing list of the Funds and Programmes Division and through the Malta-EU

Steering and Action Committee (MEUSAC). MEUSAC is the main public EU information agency of Government.

4.7 Timing

The following table shows the indicative timeline of when the major information activities are envisaged to be held:

	2012				2013				2014				2015				2016			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4																
Mid-term <i>(with NFP)</i>																				
Closure <i>(with NFP)</i>																				
Other minor and on-going publicity and information activities																				

The dates of the activities will be specified nearer to the relevant time-period and communicated to the key stakeholders beforehand.

5. EVALUATION AND MONITORING

Section 3.2 (f) of Annex 4 of the Regulations require the PO to provide an indication of how the information and publicity measures will be evaluated in terms of visibility and awareness of the FMs, their objectives and impact, supported Programmes and of the role played by the Donor States.

The PO understands that the effectiveness of information and publicity actions needs to be measured to ascertain that the desired level of message penetration is being achieved. The results of evaluation and monitoring exercises can then be used to adapt or reinforce the Plan as necessary. The means used for monitoring and evaluating the Communication Plan shall be proportional to the information and publicity measures identified in this document.

This section outlines the approach to be followed with regard to the evaluation of the Communication Plan activities, setting out the assessment exercise to be carried out.

5.1 Assessing the Communication Plan

The following table shows how the PO intends to assess the results of the activities identified under Chapter 4:

Activity	Assessment tool		Source of verification
	Quantitative	Qualitative	
Online and print adverts	The readership / viewership of the media tool selected	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Original copies of the printed issues featuring adverts - Printscreens of featured online adverts
Distribution of an eco-friendly promotional item	Maintain a database of the distribution of the items per activity	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The number of items distributed - The number of events/activities at which the items were distributed
Public video/photo competition through the social media	Monitor the competition's social media network page	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The number of followers on <i>twitter</i> and the number of likes/followers on <i>facebook</i> - The number of 'likes'
Distribution of booklets or leaflets	Maintain a database of the distribution of the items per activity	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The number of booklets / leaflets distributed
Visibility measures	Ensuring that the appropriate slogans, taglines and logos feature on all the PO's communication actions	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Copies or photos of all information and publicity material produced
Other information and publicity measures	Monitoring of the NFP/PO's social media pages and of the national and local media to the extent possible by the PO	Carry out occasional opinion/knowledge polls on the NFP/PO's social media pages to assess the active involvement of followers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The number of likes/followers on the social media pages
		Media monitoring of the main national online news/papers during the launch/implementation of an activity, and/or programme milestones. Analysis to evaluate the quality / impression (positive/neutral/negative) of this media coverage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of press releases and press-kits published/broadcasted by the media

5.2 Reporting on the Communication Plan

As part of the monitoring process, the PO will annually report to the NFP and to the Monitoring Committee about the Communication Plan and its progress in implementation, about the information and publicity measures carried out, about the means of communication used and about the results achieved.

An assessment of the implementation of the Communication Plan will also be described in the Annual Programme Report to be submitted to the NFP annually in accordance with Article 5.11 (1) of the Regulations and which will combined with the NFP's Strategic Report as agreed with the Donor States in Annex B (2) of the MoU. This assessment will be also presented and discussed, where necessary, during the Annual Meeting between the Donor States and the NFP/PO.

6. COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES BUDGET

The cost of the information and publicity measures will be co-funded from the PO Management Costs' budget as agreed in the Programmes approved by the Donor States. A total of €14,809 is allocated under the budget line 'Promotional and Information Activities' for the whole implementation period.

In order to carry out the major information activities required by the Article 4.3(4)(b) of the Regulations, as mentioned in the previous chapters, the NFP will jointly plan and organise these activities with the promotional and information activities of the PO (apart from the launch event). This will allow the activities to yield greater impact and reach a wider audience.

The table below shows how the budget will be divided annually per activity (all amounts are exclusive of VAT):

Year	Activities	Programme Operator Costs				Total (100%)
		EEA + MT share (65%)		Norway + MT share (35%)		
		EEA share (85%)	MT share (15%)	Norway share (85%)	MT share (15%)	
2011	n/a	-	-	-	-	0
2012	n/a	-	-	-	-	0
2013	n/a	-	-	-	-	0
2014	Mid-term activity*	2,239	395	1,203	213	4,050
2015	n/a	-	-	-	-	0
2016	Closing event*	5,949	1,050	3,196	564	10,759
TOTAL						14,809

The activities marked with an asterisk (*) will be jointly organised with the activities of the NFP. The PO will ensure that separation of costs is maintained between the PO Management Costs and the TA to facilitate financial and implementation reporting.

7. CONCLUSION

7.1 Ongoing development of the Communication Plan

This 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.

7.2 Contact details

This Communication Plan will be implemented by the PO which may be contacted for further details on the content of this Plan:

National Focal Point for the EEA and the Norwegian Financial Mechanisms 2009-2014
Funds and Programmes Division (FPD)
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Malta

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The contact person responsible for implementing of the Communication Plan in the PO is Ms Leonie Aquilina Xuereb, Projects Manager.