

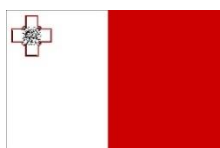
COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

for the
EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AREA (EEA) GRANTS
and the
NORWEGIAN GRANTS

2014 - 2021

**National Focal Point
Malta**

Final June 2018



*Supported by the peoples of
Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway
through the EEA and Norway Grants*

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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
MEAE	Ministry for European Affairs and Equality
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NFP	National Focal Point
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NMFA	Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs
PO	Programme Operator
PP(s)	Project Promoter(s)

1. STRATEGIC OVERVIEW

The official signing of two Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) for EEA and Norway Grants 2014-2021, one with the EEA and one with Norway, was accomplished during the state visit made by the Norwegian Prime Minister to Malta on the 1st of February 2017. The MoUs were signed by high rank officials in the presence of the Prime Ministers of both member states. The ceremony, which was extensively covered by the media, was very relevant in communicating Europe-wide the good relations existent between the Donor States and Malta.

This Communication Strategy shall be drawn up to reflect the requirements of the Regulations, the [Communication and Design Manual](#) and any other guidelines issued by the FMO, with the primary goal of supporting and communicating the overall objectives of the Grants, namely:-

- to contribute to the reduction of economic and social disparities in the EEA; and
- to strengthen bilateral relations between the Donor States and the Beneficiary States¹

through the information and publicity measures to be implemented throughout the programme lifetime.

This Communication Strategy, combined for both mechanisms, covers both the national and the programme level requirements and hence, all aspects are included in one joint strategy. . Since it has been agreed that the NFP will also act as the PO, this Strategy shall cover all the requirements for the programme level Communication Plan, sharing similar and complementary activities between them.

The overall objectives of this strategy is for all entities involved in the implementation of the EEA and Norway Grants 2014-2021 programme to *share responsibility for carrying out the information and communication activities, in accordance with the principle of proportionality, to ensure the widest possible dissemination of information, raise awareness and strengthen transparency of information about funding opportunities, beneficiaries and achievements* (Article 1.7 of the Regulations).

The NFP is drawing up and shall be implementing this communication strategy in order to provide information to the public, and increase awareness on the existence of the Grants in Malta, their objectives, the implementation and overall impact and results, as well as on cooperation with, *inter alia*, Donor State entities (Article 3.2 (1) and (2a) of the Regulations). Transparency and legitimacy of the assistance from the Donors is thus ensured and a coherent picture of the EEA and Norway Grants is created both in the Beneficiary and in the Donor States. The NFP shall fulfil all the obligations emanating from this strategy as delineated in Section 2.1 of Annex 3 of the Regulations, '*Information and Communication Requirements – EEA and Norway Grants 2014-2021*'.

For this purpose, one of the desk officers shall be designated to take responsibility for information and communication by coordinating the implementation of the information and communication activities related to the programme in Malta. This person shall support and act as coordinator for information and communication activities.

The NFP shall ensure that all entities involved in the preparation and / or implementation of the EEA /Norwegian Financial Mechanisms 2014-2021 in Malta, contribute, as appropriate, to the dissemination of information.

¹ Refer to Article 1: 'Objectives' of the MoU on the Implementation of the EEA/Norwegian Grants 2014-2021

2. CONTEXT ANALYSIS

2.1 SWOT Analysis of Current Situation

Experience gained through Malta's publicity measures, implemented during the two previous programming periods 2004-2009 and 2009-2014, especially in recognising our target groups and how to effectively reach them according to their specificities, will inevitably further enhance the outcomes of the information and communication measures to be implemented during the current programming period, 2014-2021.

Keeping in perspective the lessons learned through past experiences in communication and information, the following SWOT analysis could be mapped out listing the strengths and weaknesses of the Maltese scenario, which, in turn, could be translated into opportunities and threats respectively.

<p>STRENGTHS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reliable track record in successful implementation of programmes; • Malta's relatively small geographical size; • Malta's relatively small population; • Malta's own national airline and a large number of other air operators; • High incidence of internet usage and awareness by the Maltese population; • The main Programme Area selected for 2014-2021: PA10 '<i>Local development and Poverty Reduction</i>' is a national priority as well; • Pre-defined projects selected according to national priorities; 	<p>WEAKNESSES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insularity of the Maltese islands; • Pre-defined projects instead of competitive calls ; • Lack of competitive proposals from the general public; • Relatively small financial grant; • Bilateral relations with Iceland and Liechtenstein are less stronger than with Norway; • Cultural differences between Malta and the Donor States
<p>OPPORTUNITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To build on lessons learnt; • To mitigate risks by not repeating past mistakes; • To easily communicate through various media thanks to reliable connectivity and widespread access to internet all across the island; • Travelling made-easy to project sites/promoters, due to the shorter routes on Malta's geographical coverage. 	<p>THREATS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very selective target groups and audiences; • Lack of interest from other stakeholders who are not directly involved in the pre-defined projects; • Lack of financial resources (forming part of the Programme Management costs) to be dedicated specifically to publicity and information; • Lack of bilateral exchanges between Malta and the Donor States due to lack of synergies between processes and systems.

Mitigation efforts shall be made to exploit all the opportunities listed above while, concurrently, working on reducing the effects of the threats highlighted as well. This will not always be an easy task

due to the architecture of the programme and the contained number of pre-defined projects granted funding for the duration of the programming period 2014-2021. Efforts shall be made to widen the scope of this strategy with regards to target groups, thus reaching out to a wider audience, preferably coming from other fields of interest, besides those covered by the pre-defined projects. The results shall be communicated as widely as possible to different interest groups, not only in Malta and Gozo but also, in the Donor States, so as to attract interest from all the countries representing the EEA in bilateral exchanges with Maltese counterparts.

2.2 Past experiences and lessons learnt

What this strategy aims to achieve is not stand-alone but it is a build-up on past experiences and lessons learnt, gathered from various communication measures carried out along the years, always with the main objective of increasing transparency and raising public awareness of the Grants in Malta.

Concrete examples of such lessons learnt and which can be replicated in the future are:-

1. Making sure that extensive media (both visual and written) coverage is given to the signing of the MOUs with the Donor States for every programming period, thus ensuring visibility of the Grants and their impact on the relationship between Malta and the Donor States;
2. Information and Publicity Campaigns can be very effective when organised in connection with the programme closure, in pursuit of the principle of transparency, visibility and dissemination of the results achieved by the projects during a specific programming period. An activity worth mentioning as one of these campaigns (2010/2011) was a competition amongst pupils, participating in project visits, on their artistic interpretation of the projects visited, followed by a public exhibition of the best twelve renditions. Once again, this activity was launched through a press conference and promoted through the media, covering also the award-giving ceremony presided by the Royal Norwegian Embassy to Malta.
3. Awareness questionnaires among specific target groups can give crucial insight on the level of awareness before and after a campaign, thus yielding the impact of the campaign on the level of knowledge and information about the Grants, the Donors, the projects and activities attributed to them. One has to bear in mind that the target audience shall then act as multipliers amongst their colleagues, friends and families.
4. During the 2009-2014 programming period, a mid-programme campaign was launched, targeting a different target group and utilising another means as communication medium. This time, the campaign consisted of 2 distinct, full-page colour promotional adverts on the in-flight magazine, *Bizzilla*, made available for each and every passenger travelling on board Airmalta, Malta's national airline. One colour advert featured in all editions of the magazine over the 3 summer months of 2015 and was made accessible to over 700,000 passengers cumulatively.

An attractive and striking audio-visual/video production, based on the results achieved by the financed projects, highlighted the Grants received and their impact on the Maltese islands. This production opened the Closure Conference organised in June 2017, which not only left an impact on the projects' stakeholders but also the general public interested in the subject matter of the projects.

Besides promoting the accomplishment of the investments resulting from the successful completion of pre-defined projects, the NFP also made sure that the bilateral relations between Malta and the three Donor States is highlighted through the measures. These relationships, apart from disseminating the benefits derived from the Grants, also established excellent working relations with the FMO and the Embassies of the Donor States, contributing to the strengthening of the collaborative disposition evident between the different stakeholders.

This collaborative relationship was further enhanced through official visits affected during 2016, notably the one by the Norwegian Minister for EU Affairs, Hon Elisabeth Aspaker to Malta, meeting two Ministers during her visit. Both visits were once again extensively promoted through media and through them, it was acknowledged that, apart from the financial support and cooperation provided under the EEA and Norway Grants Programme, the two countries should explore new possibilities to further augment commercial exchanges and contacts, as well as maximising existing potentiality for tourism. Hon. Aspaker also met the Maltese Parliamentary Secretary for EU Affairs with whom the negotiations on the new EEA and Norway Programmes 2014-2021 were discussed.

As highlighted already above, these events and others related to the bilateral cooperation between Malta and the Donor states were given full coverage by the national media on both TV and daily newspapers, while all press releases and links to the media coverage were afterwards uploaded on the NFP's website for further dissemination of the outcomes of these relations. These good practices shall all be adopted in this current communication strategy framework.

3. COMMUNICATION STRATEGY FRAMEWORK

3.1 Specific Objectives of the Strategy

Building on the past experiences and lessons learnt in the area of information and publicity activities, the NFP shall now focus on the following specific objectives of this Strategy for the new programming period 2014-2021, namely:-

- a) To promote a general understanding, appreciation and increased awareness of the EEA and Norway Grants, their results, impact and contribution to the overall socio-economic development of Malta and Gozo;
- b) To communicate, nation-wide, the contribution and role played by the donor countries as the subjects behind the funding, making people aware that the Grants are tools in the hands of the donor states;
- c) To reach a wider audience, even outside those groups directly targeted by the results of the pre-defined projects;
- d) Give a coherent image to the EEA and Norway Grants by way of complementarity between the information and publicity activities carried out by PPs and the campaigns and activities carried out by the NFP;
- e) To ensure regular collaboration and sharing of information with the Donor States in the implementation of publicity and information measures, thus ensuring the promotion of the relationship between Malta and the Donor States.
- f) to highlight the results of actions related to the fund for bilateral relations in order to strengthen bilateral relations with the Donor States;
- g) To attract interest from all three countries representing the Donor States i.e. Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein and thus further enhance bilateral exchanges between counterparts in common fields of expertise;

Keeping in focus the overall and specific objectives of this Communication Strategy, the messages emanating from all the information and publicity measures will primarily target the general public with the involvement of the key stakeholders, mainly the PPs, the FMO, the Royal Norwegian Embassy to Malta in Rome and the Donor States. Special emphasis shall be given to continuous collaboration with the PPs, knowing too well that this is crucial for the successful implementation of this strategy and the programme at large.

3.2 Key Target Groups of the Strategy

The key main target groups identified for the purpose of reaching the objectives of this strategy through the ‘messages’ delivered to them through the communication measures are outlined in the following table:

Key Main Target Groups	Objectives achieved through the ‘Messages’ sent to each target group
Policymakers and other national stakeholders, both on a national and regional level, including local councils	Awareness, understanding and appreciation of the Grants towards the socio-economic development of the Maltese Islands; Knowledge and awareness of the results achieved and their impact/new services being offered.
General Public, ranging from primary schoolchildren to working adults	Awareness, understanding and appreciation of the Grants towards the socio-economic development of the Maltese Islands; Knowledge and awareness of the results achieved and their impact/new services being offered.
NGOs	Knowledge and awareness of the results achieved through the Grants and their contribution towards socio-economic advancement in their field of interest
Media	Awareness, understanding and appreciation of the Grants towards the socio-economic development of the Maltese Islands; Knowledge and awareness of the results achieved and their impact; and as a tool to act as multiplier.
PPs	Full understanding of the information and publicity obligations on their respective projects, while collaborating with the NFP on ensuring complementary of activities
Partners and potential beneficiaries/partners from Donor States (including FMO and Embassy)	Sharing of information of all publicity and information measures; Promoting the results of actions related to the fund for bilateral relations; and Attracting interest from all three countries representing the Donor States i.e. Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein and thus further enhance bilateral exchanges between counterparts in common fields of expertise.

The different information and publicity activities identified in the next chapter have been drawn up to target these audiences in a direct or indirect manner.

3.3 Responsibilities of the National Focal Point

The NFP will be responsible for the implementation of this Communication Strategy. With the aim of promoting and increasing the visibility of the Grants, the NFP shall ensure that all the communication measures undertaken are:

- a) **Transparent and accountable** – thus ensuring that the public is informed about how the funding is spent and helps limit the potential for misuse that might arise from insufficient access to information;
- b) **Openness and accessibility** – creating a large network of actors who, can in turn, better communicate the opportunities possible from partnerships formed under these grants;
- c) **Not just process, but results** – engaging the project promoters and end-users (final beneficiaries) in communicating the results and achievements, since, being directly involved in the projects/programme, they have the best knowledge of the results and are best placed to communicate them to national and local audiences.²

In accordance with Article 3.2.1 of the Regulations, “*Responsibilities of the NFP*”, the latter shall proactively provide information on the Grants and their impact to the Maltese public, PPs and relevant stakeholders. The NFP shall designate one of the staff members in his/her office to liaise with the Communication Office for FPD (responding to the DG), which will be responsible for information and communication through the general helpdesk for all programmes under FPD portfolio. He/she shall actively coordinate the implementation of the information and communication activities planned in this Strategy for Malta, facilitate a network for the NFP/PO’s information and communication activities and assist in making the results visible.³

Articles 3.2.2 of the Regulations, and 2.1 of Annex 3 of the “*Information and Communication Requirements*”, both emphasise the role of the NFP to ensure that the PO fulfils its information and publicity obligations. In the particular case for Malta, and as stated in the signed MoUs, the NFP shall also be acting as the PO. Hence, joint efforts between these two functions will seek to enhance the activities planned and shall contribute to the successful implementation of both the NFP’s and PO’s information and publicity measures. Consequently, the Communication Strategy and Plan will be integrated into one document so as to facilitate mutual and joint activities between the NFP and PO, having the same objectives as will be described in the subsequent chapter.

3.4 Cooperation with key stakeholders

A crucial factor underlining this strategy and for making sure that all aims and objectives are reached, is ensuring a strong and cooperative spirit between all the relevant stakeholders involved in the programme. Ongoing cooperation and involvement would ensure stronger relations between all the stakeholders, facilitating wider dissemination of the results achieved through the EEA Grants and Norway Grants.

3.4.1 Project Promoters (PPs)

Throughout the projects’ lifetime, the PPs will be guided by the NFP/PO in the establishment of their respective publicity plan, including the imposition of a mandatory requirement whereby the PPs shall be obliged to keep proper and detailed records of all activities on the project, especially in a visual way e.g. photos and/or videos. Regular bilateral meetings with the PPs will facilitate the implementation of their information and publicity activities. Keeping in mind the necessity of carrying out these activities and the main objectives to be achieved through their implementation, the NFP/PO and PPs shall work in a coordinated manner in all such activities, so that progress and, eventually,

² Refer to Part One: Communication Guidance of the “*Communication and Design Manual*”, pg.5

³ Refer to article 2.1 of Annex 3 to the Regulations: *Information and Communication Requirements*

results/impact are knowledgeable to both sides. Risks related to such activities shall best be mitigated through these coordinated actions.

3.4.2 Donor States

Cooperation with the Donor States, the Royal Norwegian Embassy to Malta in Rome, and the FMO is fundamental in the implementation of this Strategy in order to maintain the good relations established between Malta and the Donor States, and the NFP and the FMO.

The NFP 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 NFP shall also ensure to build its relationship with the Donors through regular contact (mainly by means of email, telephone and sporadic meetings) particularly with regard to plans, priorities and activities.

3.4.3 Other national stakeholders

The Certifying Authority, the Audit Authority and the line Ministries amongst other stakeholders will be informed about (and invited to, where applicable) the information and publicity activities implemented by the NFP. These stakeholders, apart from their direct contribution in the management of the Grants in Malta, can act as multipliers in disseminating the progress and results of the EEA Grants and Norway Grants in Malta and Gozo. Close contact and coordination of communication activities will be ensured with SOS Malta, the Fund Operator for the Active Citizens Fund, as well as Innovation Norway on Decent Work – Social Dialogue and any other Maltese partners participating in other funds, like the Regional Fund and Fund for Youth Employment.

3.5 Key Communication Messages

***“Working Together for a Competitive and Inclusive Europe”
‘Strengthening bilateral relations between Malta, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway’***

The NFP shall utilise the key messages of the EEA Grants and Norway Grants in all its communication activities in order to deliver a consistent message and to highlight the added value and long-term effects of these Grants’ interventions. These will mainly feature on all information and publicity measures aimed at the general public and the media.

3.5.1 Main message

The key messages shall be coherent with those of the activities of the NFP/PO, together with the following main slogan:

- ***‘EEA Grants and Norway Grants – Strengthened Social and Economic Cohesion through Local Development and Poverty Reduction’***

3.5.2 Co-financing tagline

The main and specific messages will also be supported by a co-financing tagline together with the National Flag 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 the peoples of Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway
through the EEA and Norway Grants'.***

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

This chapter shall identify and describe the most suitable and effective communication media and tools in order to send out the desired 'messages' to the target groups outlined in the previous section, and through these actions, then make sure that the objectives of this strategy is reached as expected. In a proactive manner, 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.

4.1 Increasing the visibility of the Grants

The logo of the EEA and Norway Grants will feature on all promotional and information material in accordance with the Communication and Design Manual issued by the FMO. Furthermore, this Manual will be complemented by guidelines to be issued by the NFP/PO, such as those within the Manual of Procedures, with the intention of supporting the PPs in applying the correct text in both English and Maltese.

The NFP 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 project promoter, stakeholder and beneficiary, as well as the main slogan: ***Strengthened Social and Economic Cohesion through Local Development and Poverty Reduction***. The NFP shall ensure that commemorative plaques, displaying the new logos for this programming period, are placed at all the sites, where EEA and Norway Grants have been granted.

4.2 Major Information Activities

The NFP shall as a minimum *"organise at least three major information activities on the implementation"* of the EEA and Norwegian Grants 2014-2021. Article 2.1.1 (c) of Annex 3: *'Information and Communication Requirements'* elaborates that these three major activities should include *"a major launching event"* and *"a major closing event"*.

4.2.1 Launching event

In line with the above obligations, a *'major launching event'* shall be held in Malta not later than three (3) months after the Programme Agreement is signed by all parties. This launching event shall serve as a platform from where the NFP/PO will publicise the assistance from the Donor States by presenting the objectives of the Grants, the selected programme area and the pre-defined projects selected for the new programming period 2014-2021. During the same event, the bilateral aspects of the Grants will be elaborated on so as to encourage cooperation and possibilities for support with entities from Iceland, Liechtenstein and/or Norway.

Being the very first important event, marking the launch of the EEA and Norwegian Grants 2014-21 Programme, the participation of high ranking members of the Donor States, including officials from the Royal Norwegian Embassy and FMO, and the Government of Malta as key speakers will render the event more impact effective and will help in attracting press attention. The newly-selected PPs will also be invited to introduce their projects and present the project's expected outcomes and results. Representatives from national and local authorities will also be invited to attend this event.

The NFP/PO will also issue a press release on the central government intranet, accessible to all public service/sector employees. The event shall also be covered by the local media, including printed

newspapers and TV coverage, while all press releases/write-ups and photographs will be uploaded on the NFP's website.

In order to raise greater awareness of the funds, efforts will be made to organise this event on one of the sites financed through these mechanisms during the previous programming period.

4.2.2 Closing Event

The main aim of this closing event is *“publicising the results, achievements and impact made possible through the support from the Donor(s), including the bilateral cooperation with entities in Iceland, Liechtenstein and/or Norway and sustainability of the cooperation with the Donor State(s)”*.⁴

In organising this Final Conference in Malta, the NFP will once again seek to attract and invite key stakeholders and high ranking members of the Donor States, the Embassy, FMO and the Government of Malta to participate actively as key speakers, thus also securing press/media attention. The NFP will also issue a press release, which will not only be distributed to the local press covering the event but will also be uploaded on the central government intranet, accessible to all public service/sector employees. All PPs of the pre-defined projects, the Fund Operator for the Active Citizens Fund in Malta, and partners (if any) from project/s related to the Fund for Youth Unemployment shall be invited to present the outcomes and results achieved through all initiatives financed by EEA and Norway Grants and how these have impacted on the socio-economic cohesion of the islands.

For the purpose of this event, the NFP shall procure production services for the creation of an audio-visual production, including video footage of the most prominent results achieved through the various initiatives. The NFP envisages that, after this video serves as the opening attraction of the final conference, it will be further promoted on the NFP's website so as to reach a much wider public audience, both local and foreign. This conference will be open to all key stakeholders and the general public, interested in the subject matter of the projects.

The final conference shall be held in the Maritime Museum, which during this programming period, shall be granted funds to carry out restoration works, representing only a part of a wider holistic plan on how to enhance the visitor's experience to the museum. This will be done in close collaboration with Heritage Malta and the senior curator of the Museum.

4.2.3 Mid-term activity

Complementing the above obligatory requirements, another major information activity, which the NFP/PO plans to organise, is an extensive media campaign during 2019, extending into 2020. These two years have been earmarked due to their strategic positioning during the whole programming period and presuming that work-in-progress on the pre-defined projects would be already at an advanced stage.

The media campaign would include promotional adverts/write-ups related to the Grants, the Programme at large and the projects on locally published Sunday newspapers. The distribution and frequency of the adverts/write-ups will depend on availability of space and budget limitations. As expected, the PPs will be actively involved in this activity and the general public from all sectors and age-groups will be reached through the 'messages' sent out in this activity.

⁴ Refer to Annex 3: Information and Communication Requirements – EEA and Norway Grants 2014-2021, Article 2.1.1

In conjunction with this activity, FPD shall organise a drawing competition for children aged 12 to 16 years of age, with a theme centred on the bilateral cooperation between Malta and the EEA. The best voted drawings will be part of the artworks for the promotional adverts/write-ups described above.

4.2.4 Promotional material

Interlinked with the above three activities, the NFP recognises the need to hand out promotional items, through which the target audience shall not only get a memento of the event, but also something to remind them of the funding opportunities provided by the Grants and their achievements.

To this effect, the following material shall be produced during the programming period 2014-2021, namely:-

- An information leaflet/brochure prepared for the launching of the new programme;
- An information leaflet/brochure prepared for the closure of the programme, after all the projects have been successfully implemented;
- A roll-up banner, with the theme of the selected PA for the programme i.e. '*local development and poverty reduction*';
- A number of promotional items (e.g. USB-drives, pens, notebooks/diaries etc), displaying the logo of the EEA and Norway Grants.

These promotional items shall emphasise the bilateral relations between Malta and the three Donor States, together with the accomplishment of the investments financed through the grants and the support received through them to Malta.

4.2.5 Web Strategy

Continuing on the web strategy followed during the programming period 2009-2014, the NFP/PO shall continue to provide general information about the EEA and Norway Grants on the dedicated joint webpage: eeagrants.gov.mt, under the general website created for the Funds and Programmes Division (acting as the NFP) namely eufunds.gov.mt. The webpage 2009-14 has been kept for information and record purposes, while a new dedicated joint webpage has been developed for the new programming period 2014-2021. The new website will be in line with the EU Web Accessibility Directive (2016) and compliant with the responsive design perspective.

The new webpage shall include information on the overall objectives of the EEA and Norway Grants, and featuring a section with the latest news (including photos and videos) about activities carried out locally, whether they are related to NFP/PO, PPs, bilateral cooperation projects and any other programme initiatives. Latest news will also include and feature the publication of calls for proposals (bilateral fund, small grants scheme, etc) and related documents and information. This particular section will be updated in real time and on a day-to-day basis in order to ensure the validity and significance of the news item. It will also include links to the programme's and PPs' websites, and incorporate copies of all relevant documentation about all funded projects related to this period under both Financial Mechanisms.

In the specific case of Malta, the website will only host web pages in English, bearing in mind that both English and Maltese are considered official languages of the country and all official documentation is normally in English (referring to requirement stipulated in Section 2.1.4 of Annex 3 of the Regulations – Web requirements).

4.2.6 Social Media

Social and digital media have become an integral part of our lives. Considered as a key important and powerful cost-effective tool for communication, the Maltese Public Service is striving to be at the forefront of having a presence on social media. This process is still in its infancy stages and government departments, including FPD, are still in the process of exploring the most effective social media platform/s to reach as many different stakeholders as possible. Alongside the benefits that social media brings, it should be noted that there are also certain responsibilities of which public officials must be made aware of when using social media to communicate, whether on official business or, for personal use.

For this purpose, Government policy guidelines⁵ were issued for all government departments, so as to ensure the proper use of social media in the Public Service. Hence, FPD as NFP of the programme will endeavour to use the Facebook, Twitter or some other relevant channel, after going through the procedures outlined in these policies and adhering to the principles and obligations imposed by these regulations on the professional and correct use of these types of media. The setting up and maintenance of social media channel/s dedicated specifically to the programme is subject to the approval and authorisation of higher government officials. Once, and if, the social media channel/s is/are established, the NFP will make all efforts to update information in real time and on a day-to-day basis in order to ensure the validity and significance of the news item.

4.2.7 Helpdesk

A general helpdesk has also been established within the Division, acting as the NFP, to answer queries received. The new website will also display a generic email address of this helpdesk, for any written queries.

4.2.8 Cost-free publicity

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

Mail shots may also be utilised by the NFP to disseminate calls launched by the other Programme Operators (e.g. Active Citizens Fund and Fund for Youth Unemployment) and to publicise the activities organised by the NFP. These mail shots may be sent 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 the Government, with the primary remit of assisting Local Councils and NGOs in the application for, and implementation of, EU-funded projects.

The aim of all the above activities shall be to connect the NFP/PO with the target audiences and to allow for active engagement, by:-

- ***keeping the public informed;***
- ***delivering transparent information;***
- ***increasing awareness and visibility; and***
- ***highlighting success stories.***

Linkages between activities, target groups and objectives:-

⁵ <https://intra.gov.mt/en/ManagementResources/Pages/Social-Media-in-the-Public-Service.aspx>

Activities	Main target groups	Strategic objectives	Specific Objectives
<p>Launching event</p>	<p>Policymakers and other national stakeholders, both on a national and regional level, including local councils; NGOs; Media; potential beneficiaries/partners from Donor States (including FMO and Embassy).</p> <p>Project Promoters and the beneficiaries, directly benefitting from their projects</p>	<p>To promote a general understanding, appreciation and increased awareness of the EEA and Norway Grants, their results, impact and contribution to the overall socio-economic development of Malta and Gozo;</p> <p>To communicate, nationwide, the contribution and role played by the donor countries as the subjects behind the funding, making people aware that the Grants are tools in the hands of the donor states;</p>	<p>publicise the assistance from the Donor States by presenting the objectives of the Grants, the selected programme area and the pre-defined projects selected for the new programming period 2014-2021.</p> <p>introduce their projects and present the project's expected outcomes and results to the audience</p>
<p>Closing event</p>	<p>Policymakers and other national stakeholders, both on a national and regional level, including local councils; NGOs; Media; potential beneficiaries/partners from Malta and the Donor States (including FMO and Embassy);</p> <p>Project Promoters and the beneficiaries, directly benefitting from their projects</p>	<p>To reach a wider audience, even outside those groups directly targeted by the results of the pre-defined projects;</p>	<p>Promote and publicise the results of actions from the pre-defined projects and the fund for bilateral relations, while attracting interest from all the Donor States and hence further enhancing bilateral exchanges between counterparts in common fields of expertise.</p>
<p>Mid-term event (promotional adverts/write-ups on locally published Sunday newspapers & drawing competition for children aged 12 to 16 years of age)</p>	<p>General Public, ranging from primary schoolchildren to working adults, who represent Maltese potential beneficiaries at large</p>	<p>Give a coherent image to the EEA and Norway Grants by way of complementarity between the information and publicity activities carried out by PPs and the campaigns and activities carried out by the NFP;</p> <p>To reach a wider audience, even outside those groups directly targeted by the results of the pre-defined projects;</p>	<p>Awareness, understanding and appreciation of the Grants towards the socio-economic development of the Maltese Islands; Knowledge and awareness of the results achieved and their impact/new services being offered.</p>

Promotional material	PPs; policymakers and other national stakeholders; Media; potential beneficiaries/partners from Malta and the Donor States (including FMO and Embassy)	To ensure regular collaboration and sharing of information with the Donor States in the implementation of publicity and information measures, thus ensuring the promotion of the relationship between Malta and the Donor States; to highlight the results of actions related to the fund for bilateral relations in order to strengthen bilateral relations with the Donor States;	emphasise the bilateral relations between Malta and the three Donor States, together with the accomplishment of the investments financed through the grants and the support received through them to Malta
Web strategy	PPs; policymakers and other national stakeholders; Media; potential beneficiaries/partners from Malta and the Donor States (including FMO and Embassy) as well as the general public who will have full access to these tools	Above all, to attract interest from all three countries representing the Donor States i.e. Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein and thus further enhance bilateral exchanges between counterparts in common fields of expertise;	Awareness, understanding and appreciation of the Grants towards the socio-economic development of the Maltese Islands; Knowledge and awareness of the results achieved and their impact/new services being offered.
Social media	The public in general	To attract interest from all three countries representing the Donor States i.e. Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein and thus further enhance bilateral exchanges between counterparts in common fields of expertise;	Awareness, understanding and appreciation of the Grants towards the socio-economic development of the Maltese Islands; Knowledge and awareness of the results achieved and their impact/new services being offered.
Helpdesk	potential national beneficiaries/partners/stakeholders, as well as from Donor States (including FMO and Embassy)	Give a coherent image to the EEA and Norway Grants by way of complementarity between the information and publicity activities carried out by PPs and the campaigns and activities carried out by the NFP;	answer any queries received, either verbal or written

		To reach a wider audience, even outside those groups directly targeted by the results of the pre-defined projects;	
Cost-free publicity	Media The general public	To reach a wider audience, even outside those groups directly targeted by the results of the pre-defined projects;	To serve as a tool to act as multiplier; Awareness and information

4.2.9 Timing

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

Year	2017				2018				2019				2020				2021				2022			
Activities	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Launch event																								
Closing Event																								
Mid Term Activity (Media Campaign and Drawing Competition)									Dra win g com peti tion															
Promotional items (leaflets, roll-up banner & items)																								

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

The NFP 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 Strategy as necessary. The means used for monitoring and evaluating the Communication Strategy 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 Strategy activities, setting out the assessment exercise to be carried out. Further detailed evaluation and monitoring exercises of this Strategy will be covered by the NFP's Evaluation Plan, which will be presented in the first Annual Strategic Report (in accordance with Article 10.1(1) of Regulations and Chapter 8 of the Evaluation Guidelines).

5.1 Assessing the Communication Strategy

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

Activity	Assessment tool		Source of verification
	Quantitative	Qualitative	
Launch activity (information session)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extent of media coverage • Number of participants 	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Invitations sent and attendance sheet - Published photos of the activity - Copies of newspaper cuttings, online pages, broadcasted features
Mid-term activity (Media Campaign on local newspapers and drawing competition)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequency of adverts on newspapers • Readership Number 	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Copies of adverts on actual newspapers - Media Survey report for Malta
Closure activity (Final conference)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extent of media coverage • Number of participants 	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Invitations sent and attendance sheet - Published photos of the activity - Copies of newspaper cuttings, online pages, broadcasted features
Promotional material	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of items produced and distributed 	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Records of how items were distributed (in excel format)
Visibility measures	Ensuring that the appropriate co-financing text and logos feature on all the NFP/PO's communication actions	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Copies and/ or photos of all information and publicity material produced.

5.2 Reporting on the Communication Strategy

An assessment of the implementation of the Communication Strategy will be described in the Strategic Report to be submitted to the FMO annually in accordance with Article 2.6 of the Regulations. This assessment will also be presented and discussed, where necessary, during the Annual Meeting between the Donor States and the NFP.

6. COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES BUDGET

The cost of the information and publicity measures will be fully funded by the Technical Assistance (TA) budget as agreed in the TA Agreement signed between the NFP and the Donor States. The TA Agreement allocates EUR 25,000 for the whole implementation period for the budget line '*Promotional and Information Activities*'.

The table below shows how the TA allocation only will be divided annually (all amounts are exclusive of VAT):

Year	Activities	TA Amount EUR (100%)
2018	Launch	5,000
2018	Promotional material	2,500
2019/2020	Mid-term activity (<i>Media campaign</i>)	10,000
2020	Promotional material	2,500
2021/2022	Closing event	5,000
TOTAL		25,000

7. CONCLUSION

7.1 Ongoing development of the Communication Plan

This Communication Strategy is expected to be flexible and dynamic, taking into consideration any feedback provided through exchange of experience and evaluation exercises. Furthermore, the Strategy may need to be adjusted to cater for unforeseen events or developments.

7.2 Contact details

This Communication Strategy will be implemented by the NFP, which may be contacted for further details on the content of this Strategy, at:

National Focal Point for the EEA and Norwegian Grants 2014-2021
Funds and Programmes Division (FPD)
Ministry for European Affairs and Implementation of the Electoral Manifesto (MEAIM)
Triq il-Kukkanja
Santa Venera SVR1411
Malta

Tel. No.: (+356) 2200 1151
Email: fpd.meae@gov.mt

The Head of NFP, Mr Raphael Scerri, is the person responsible for overseeing that the Communication Strategy is implemented as foreseen. He is also the Director General of the Funds and Programmes Division, under which the Bilateral, Other Funds and Programmes fall.