

COMMUNICATION STRATEGY PLAN

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Action: A1



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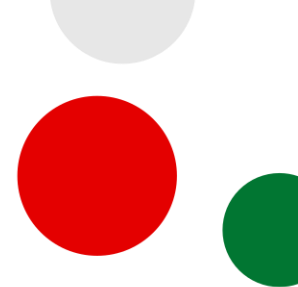
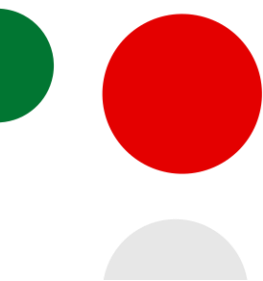
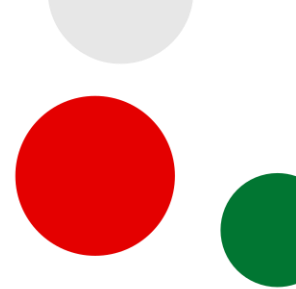


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1. INTRODUCTION

On the basis of the survey and experiment results of sub-actions A1.1 e A1.2 and according to the requirements of the international standard ISO 14063 on Environmental Communication, ENEA with the support of SSSUP and all LIFE MAGIS partners defined the structure for the Communication Strategy Plan (Sub-action A1.3).

The Communication Strategy Plan (CSP) has the general goal to create awareness and disseminate the Made Green in Italy scheme and the Product Environmental Footprint (PEF) method to the different target groups, mainly on the basis of the outcomes of their implementation during the project by the pilot companies (Action B2).

The CSP can be also a reference point for the Italian Ministry of the Environment for supporting the adoption of Made Green in Italy scheme.

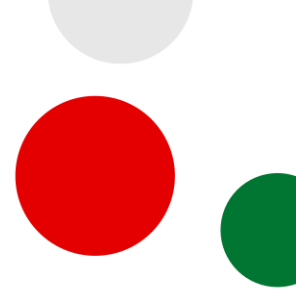
This document describes the objectives, approaches and framework of LIFE MAGIS CSP (chapters 2 and 3) and provides supporting information about product-specific communication based on Life Cycle Assessment/PEF results (chapter 4). Furthermore, a table was developed to support each partner to define the product-specific communication strategy, including target groups, communication tools/activities, responsibilities and timing, targets and evaluation. Contents of the table are described in chapter 5 and an example of the table is presented in Annex 1.

Partners will start to fill in the contents of this table, also in collaboration with pilot companies, starting from July 2020. A first version of the table will be prepared for December 2020 as a deliverable for Action “B5 – Awareness raising campaign on PEF”.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE LIFE MAGIS COMMUNICATION STRATEGY PLAN

The objective of the LIFE MAGIS CSP is to define, in accordance with the ISO 14063 standard, the reference framework, main features and content of the environmental communication realized during the project and to identify a set of tools, tailored to the PEF and the Made Green in Italy scheme, able to raise awareness and knowledge on these topics and to communicate the environmental footprint of the pilot products to the different target groups.

The CSP implementation will be performed in action “B5 – Awareness raising campaign on PEF”, which will include two levels: a general level, aiming at explaining the features of the PEF method and the Made Green In Italy scheme, and a sectoral level, aiming at describing the environmental performances of green products that experimented PEF and Made Green in Italy in the 8 product categories considered in the project.



To reach these goals, 4 sub-actions will be realized:

- B5.1 – Mindfulness communication campaigns,
- B5.2 – Barcode for environment,
- B5.3 – “In the field” communication initiatives,
- B5.4 – Footprint-oriented campaigns.

The first one (B5.1) will be dedicated to wide campaigns, designed by SSSUP and ENEA, aiming at increasing a general awareness of citizens, companies and policy makers on PEF methodology and Made Green in Italy scheme. The second, third and fourth sub-actions, mainly implemented by sectoral partners with the support of SSSUP, CNR IBE and RWTH, will focus on the communication to final consumers and other interested parties of the product environmental performance, computed by means of the application of the PEF method and according to the Product Category Rules developed during the project.

Videos, radio spots, leaflets and other outputs will be created to explain the added value of PEF and Made Green in Italy for different types of interested parties.

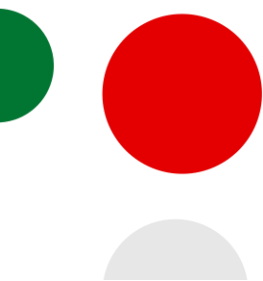
Filling the partner-specific tables of which an example is presented in Annex 1, a definition of target groups, tools/activities, timing, resources, responsibilities, targets and evaluation to implement action B5 will be done by each partner, constantly updated until the full implementation of the communication tools and initiatives. In action B5, each sectoral partner, supported by SSSUP and other technical partners (CNR IBE e RWTH), will revise the table, by detailing, integrating or changing some of the information, to develop the “Communication Strategy Plan – Final Edition”.

The final CSP will encompass at least 5-7 communication actions for any sector involved and at least, overall, 3 initiatives to increase the awareness for each typology of campaign described in the sub-actions B5.2, B5.3 and B5.4.

3. REFERENCE FRAMEWORK

In the following paragraphs the reference framework of LIFE MAGIS CSP is described, according to some aspects of the ISO 14063/2006 (“Environmental management – Environmental communication – Guidelines and examples”) relevant for LIFE MAGIS activities, in order to provide all partners some guidelines to define their specific communication plan.

In ISO 14063 Standard **environmental communication** is defined as “the process of sharing information to build trust, credibility and partnerships, to raise awareness, and to use in decision making. The processes used and the content of environmental communication will vary with the objectives and circumstances of the organization and should be built on substantive information” (ISO 14063, 2006).



According to the different type of stakeholders, there may be different **motivations and needs for communication** (ISO 14063, 2006):

- the interest to communicate environmental performances and practices;
- a request for information by employees or investors, government bodies, a community group, a customer or supplier;
- the need to discuss with interested parties, a proposed action such as expansion of an existing facility, or siting of a new facility, or the introduction of a new product or service;
- environmental risk management;
- a regulatory requirement;
- response to complaints;
- the increasing importance of addressing environmental issues.

Concerning the last aspect, a lot of interest raised in the past years towards: circular economy, green economy, low carbon emissions practices, green labels and certifications, valorisation of national production.

Figure 1 shows the interrelationships and flow of environmental communication (ISO 14063, 2006). Environmental communication is part of the organization's environmental activities and should be aligned with other policies, strategies and relevant activities. Indeed, it relates to organization values and to be successful it has to be based on a continuous interaction with the interested parties (internal and external), to address properly their environmental expectations and concerns.

Environmental communication should be based on the following **principles** (ISO 14063, 2006, see also Clause 3 in Figure 1):

- **Transparency:** Make the processes, procedures, methods, data sources and assumptions used in communication available to all interested parties, taking account of the confidentiality of information as required. Inform interested parties of their role in environmental communication.
- **Appropriateness:** Make information provided in communication relevant to interested parties, using formats, language and media that meet their interests and needs, enabling them to participate fully.
- **Credibility:** Conduct communication in an honest and fair manner, and provide information that is truthful, accurate, substantive and not misleading to interested parties. Develop information and data using recognized and reproducible methods and indicators.
- **Responsiveness:** Ensure that communication is open to the needs of interested parties. Respond to the queries and concerns of interested parties in a full and timely manner. Make interested parties aware of how their queries and concerns have been addressed.

- **Clarity:** Ensure that communication approaches and language are understandable to interested parties to minimize ambiguity.

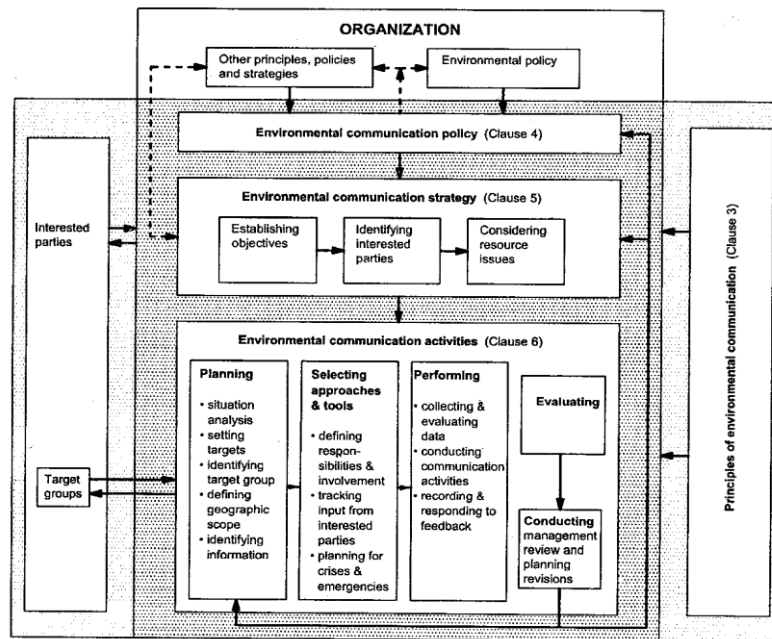
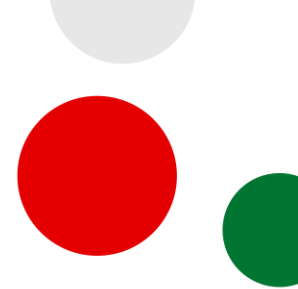


Figure 1 Environmental Communication elements and relationships. Dotted line arrows indicate the relationship with other elements of the organization. Lighter shading indicates the scope of the environmental communication system; darker shading indicates the overlap of the environmental communication system with the organization (ISO 14063, 2006).

3.1 DEVELOPING THE ENVIRONMENTAL COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

In the framework of the environmental policy of the organization the **environmental communication strategy** can be developed, starting by answering to the following questions (ISO 14063, 2006):

- Why is the organization engaging in environmental communication and what are its purposes?
- What are the organization's key environmental issues and impacts?
- What are the main issues to be covered, messages to be conveyed, and communication techniques, approaches, tools and channels to be used?
- How much time is needed to implement the strategy?
- How will the strategy involve and coordinate the environmental managers, interested parties, individual(s) responsible for environmental issues and individual(s) who are responsible for the organization's internal and external communication?
- What are the local, regional, national and international boundaries for the strategy?



In the environmental communication strategy objectives, interested parties and resources are defined (Figure 1). The strategy should be approved by the management and used to implement the environmental communications activities.

When setting the objectives, the organization should ensure that they are aligned with the environmental communication policy, that consider the views of internal and external interested parties and that are consistent with the environmental communication principles reported in the introduction of this chapter.

On setting objectives, the organization should consider its **priorities and desired results**, that may include (ISO 14063, 2006):

- environmental issues related to the organization's activities, products and services,
- complying with legal and other type of requirements to which the organization subscribes,
- influencing public policy on environmental issues,
- providing information and encouraging understanding by interested parties about the environmental activities, aspects, impacts and performance of the organization and products,
- meeting the environmental information expectations of interested parties,
- establishing ongoing dialogue on environmental matters,
- minimizing internal and/or external conflicts,
- improving the organization's credibility and reputation,
- improving public knowledge and the environmental image of the organization's products and services, and stimulating environmental innovation and creativity.

3.2 IDENTIFYING INTERESTED PARTIES AND TARGET GROUPS

The first step for the development of a communication strategy is the identification of actual and potential interested parties and of the specific target groups to address communication actions (Figure 1).

Some examples of **interested parties** that could be considered, according to ISO 14063 and LIFE MAGIS scope, include:

- employees and their representatives,
- customers and consumers,
- suppliers, contractors, retailers, wholesalers and distributors,
- competitors,
- shareholders,
- banks and financial/investment community,
- insurance companies,
- rating agencies,

- public authorities (at local, regional and national level, for example Smart Specialization Strategies managers),
- legislators,
- regulators,
- politicians and opinion leaders,
- local communities,
- communities associated with supply chain organizations,
- schools, academics and researchers,
- environmental consultants and sector experts,
- media,
- non-governmental organizations (e.g. consumers associations),
- the general public,
- the Technical Advisory Board on PEF,
- the Italian Ministry of Environment,
- industrial associations,
- technical service centres for enterprises (i.e. technological centres located in districts).

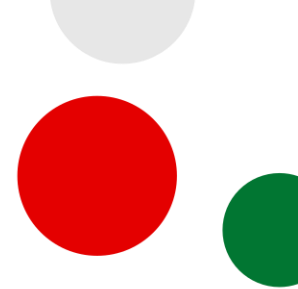
The organization may record relevant contacts between the organization and interested parties, in order to document inquiries or concerns, useful to improve future communication (ISO 14063, 2006). Constant relationships with target groups are fundamental to collect the inputs to address them appropriate communication.

Specific **target groups** will be identified among the interested parties to address the implementation of the communication activities.

In particular, for LIFE MAGIS communication activities **the main target groups are consumers and the general public**. They are heterogeneous groups made up from people who can differ from several variables, for example:

- demographic variables such as age, gender and family composition;
- socio-economic variables such as education, income and job;
- geographical variables such as region and size of the urban centre;
- psychographic variables such as personality traits, lifestyle and values;
- purchase behaviour variables such as frequency, use and quantity.

Having clearly in mind who is the target is necessary to evaluate the suitable **touchpoints** to activate to maximize the scope of the communication strategy. The target analysis defines both the **means** to activate and the **language style** to use to provide the communication contents. For example, a communication initiative on a specific social network (e.g. Instagram) could reach mainly younger generations. Printed



materials distributed at big malls can reach people who use to spend time there, and not people who do shopping in smaller urban centres. Communication by radio probably will reach people who use to listen it while driving car and this will be probably influenced by the frequency of use of the car, the type of job, etc.

Moreover, the same person can actually cover different “roles” during her/his day and therefore can be attentive to different messages: in the morning when she/he is at home she/he is a parent, while she/he drives she/he is a radio listener, in the office she/he is a manager, when she/he eats she/he is a lover of good food and so on. The attention rests on messages considered relevant at that precise moment. Defining who we are speaking to helps to choose the right words and the right channels to use.

The best scenario is to reach different people with different communication activities but also reach with **multiple touchpoints** the same people. This circumstance can create multiple stimuli and generate memory on the topic. For example, reading about Made Green in Italy on a magazine, then finding the logo on a product, then finding a video about it on social-media allows to reach the target group from different touchpoints and the higher they are, the stronger the effectiveness of the communication strategy will be.

3.3 PLANNING ENVIRONMENTAL COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES

Planning of the environmental activities consists in (Figure 1): situation analysis, setting targets, identifying target groups, defining geographic scope and identifying information to communicate.

In **planning an environmental communication activity** an organization should consider the following questions (ISO 14063, 2006):

- Is this activity consistent with the environmental communication principles (see the introduction of chapter 3) and the organization's policy?
- If appropriate, does this activity enhance two-way communication?
- Can this activity promote consensus with interested parties?
- Does this activity offer an opportunity to reach and interact with its target group(s) and potentially address their interests?
- Does this activity provide an opportunity to address multiple issues in depth?
- Does this activity focus on the key issues?
- Does the activity provide information tailored to the target group(s)?
- Is this activity relatively easy to implement?
- Does the activity provide for information transfer at relatively low cost?
- Is this activity easy to update?
- Is the effectiveness of this activity measurable?
- Is this activity a good vehicle for education?
- Is this activity creating a constructive atmosphere?

- Is this activity an effective way to get publicity or increase public awareness?

The development or improvement of an environmental communication activity begins with an understanding of the **context for the communication** (situational analysis in Figure 1). The organization should consider the following issues (ISO 14063, 2006):

- existing environmental communication activities and commitments;
- identification and understanding of issues of concern to interested parties;
- expectations and perceptions of the interested parties about the organization;
- environmental awareness of interested parties, such as local communities;
- communication media and activities that have proven to be the most effective in communicating with interested parties in similar situations;
- identification of the opinion leaders and their influence on issues related to environmental communication;
- public image of the organization on a specific issue;
- latest developments and trends on environmental issues related to the organization's specific activities, products and services;
- economic and financial implications;
- knowledge and understanding of the values and cultures of interested parties.

The situational analysis may lead to revised environmental communication objectives.

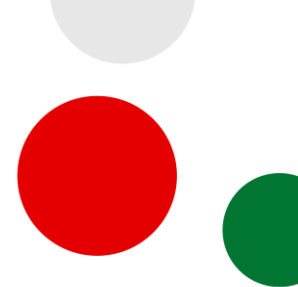
The organization should define the places and locations where the communication activity will be implemented, since the **geographic scope** will influence the type of message and tool to be used (Figure 1). A specific environmental issue can be communicated at different geographic scales. For example, carbon footprint can be communicated with different tools depending on the local, regional, national or international dimension.

3.4 SETTING ENVIRONMENTAL COMMUNICATION TARGETS

Targets should be set according to the environmental communication objectives and have to be SMART: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-related (ISO 14063, 2006). Targets will allow to evaluate the environmental communication activities.

Examples of **objectives and targets** (ISO 14063, 2006):

Objective: Increase customer awareness of the organization's environmental performance.



Targets:

- Reach 80% of the purchasers of a specific product.
- Get feedback from 65% of customers of a specific product regarding their understanding of the organization's environmental performance level.
- Conclude the communication effort two months before the final version of the sustainability report is produced.

Objective: Improve environmental performance across the supply-chain by communicating organizational goals, objectives and targets with suppliers, tracking how supply-chain changes improve environmental performance and sharing improvement information.

Targets:

- Reach 95% of raw material and suppliers and 65% of suppliers of consumption items.
- Get questionnaire return from 100% of raw material suppliers and 85% of suppliers of consumption items.
- Provide conclusions to allow changes in procurement procedures by given date.

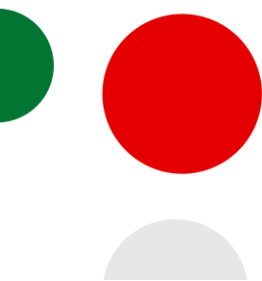
3.5 SELECTING APPROACHES AND TOOLS

The selection of the communication tools/actions is a very important part of the environmental communication and involves: defining responsibilities, tracking input from interested parties and planning for crises and emergencies (Figure 1).

In Table 1 and Table 2, adapted for LIFE MAGIS purposes from ISO 14063, some useful information are provided, with strength and weaknesses, to support partners in the choice of the tools to be used in LIFE MAGIS product-specific communication strategy.

Table 1 Written communication approaches and tools (adapted from tables of ISO 14063).

Technique	Strengths	Weaknesses	Keep in mind
Websites	Offer great potential to reach out to many people on many issues (and to offer tailored information). Easy to update, with potential for effect two-way communication.	Companies often put brochure ware on their websites, which misses the opportunity for interactivity (e.g. video, real data, e-mail feedback).	Keep technical computer requirements to a low level - not everybody has the latest computer hardware. Need not to be expensive. Answers to frequently asked questions can be provided on the website, with a phone number provided for more detailed inquiries.



Technique	Strengths	Weaknesses	Keep in mind
Environmental or sustainability reports	Opportunity to address multiple issues in depth. Basic approach for building trust and credibility. Create internal transparency about all relevant issues of an organization.	Hard work to produce and can be difficult to update frequently. May provide information in a form that does not permit comparison with similar organizations. May set expectations that one will be distributed every year.	Address external and internal interested parties' interests. Include difficulties and failures as well as successes. Appropriate sector reporting standards or indicators should be used to enable benchmarking.
Printed material (reports, brochures and newsletters)	Can cover a single issue if necessary. Inexpensive and quick to produce. Inform large numbers of people. Newsletters can be effective for both external and internal interested parties.	Can be misinterpreted. Only basic information given. No direct feedback. May be difficult to distribute in remote areas.	Issues must be researched. Use basic language. Use photos and maps. Be objective. Include contact name, telephone number and address. Literacy may be an issue and cartoons or graphics can help.
Product or service information labels or declarations	Can inform customers about the environmental attributes of a product or service.	May cause confusion because information is presented in brief form.	Form and content of environmental product labels may conform to the requirements of ISO 14020, ISO 14021, ISO 14024 and ISO 14025.
Posters/Displays	Provide general information at relatively low costs. Reach many that may not participate otherwise.	Giving information, rather than receiving it.	Keep to main points. Use photos and maps. Update regularly. Advertise the location of the display. Provide contact name and number.
E-mail	Inexpensive and easy way for people to send and receive messages and information. Quick exchange, dissemination is immediate. Opportunity to reach a large number of people quickly.	Not everyone has access to a computer or the ability to access e-mails. Message might be deleted before it is read if people think it is unimportant or just spam.	When sending attachments, ensure that the recipient has access to compatible software.
Media/Newspaper feature articles	Can reach a large audience. Convenient for the public. Good vehicle for education.	Likely to be edited by the paper so that only part of the story is told. In remote areas or developing countries, not necessarily widely available.	Local media and nationwide media may require different approaches, style and level of detail.
Media/News releases	An effective and cheap way to get publicity and interest.	Media will not cover unless the story is deemed newsworthy. Likely to be edited to meet guidelines.	Avoid misrepresenting the organization's environmental performance.
Media/Advertising	Reaches a large audience.	Can be expensive. May have limited life span. Limited opportunity to describe complex issues.	Audience profile of publication/programme within which the advertisement appears.

Table 2 Verbal communication approaches and tools (adapted from tables of ISO 14063).

Technique	Strengths	Weaknesses	Keep in mind
Public meetings	Seen as "legitimate" consultation. Information provided to a large number of people. Costs are low. People usually willing to attend.	Interactions can be limited. Does not ensure all views are heard. May become an emotional shouting match. Vocal minority may dominate.	Often best to use after smaller activities (interviews, focus groups) to know what the interested parties' reaction will be in advance. Advertise the meeting well. Staff needs proven experience. Use an independent chairperson and/or a facilitator/moderator if possible.
Interested parties interviews/ Personal contact	Two-way exchange of information. People feel they have been heard. Specific issues can be addressed. An honest talk may build trust. Interviews help identify key issues and concerns and establish relationships.	Difficult to identify all interested parties. Time constraining. Non-community feel. May be threatening for some. May sometimes be culturally inappropriate.	Identify individuals who represent the types of interested parties who could be or are being affected by a specific activity. Accept that some people may want professional representation. Often good to include influential interested parties. Meet at a location that is convenient for interested parties.
Focus groups	Allow a free exchange of ideas because participants feel comfortable being with their peers. Often a consensus can be reached about the most important issues.	Time consuming to conduct focus groups with all important interested parties.	Often best used after some initial interviews with interested parties to identify the main issues that may be raised.
Surveys	Helpful to use when a company is planning to establish itself in a community or if a major change in operations is being considered. Also, good to update on some regular basis (e.g. every 2 years).	Surveys may be labour intensive depending on the complexity of the questionnaire, the way questions are asked (personally or via web for example), the number of persons in the sample and the number and size of the geographical locations chosen.	Surveys can be conducted door-to-door or over the telephone. They may also be written or be performed over the internet.
Open houses, information days, site visit, videos	Allow for direct interaction. Provide opportunity to correct misinformation and explore issues. Can be useful for reaching both external and internal interested parties.	Are more giving than receiving. Can be expensive, require many staff hours. Rely on staff knowledge and skills.	Must be well advertised. Staff must be well briefed. Project manager should be present. Issues raised must be recorded. Staff should not be defensive but be listening actively to interested parties comments.

Technique	Strengths	Weaknesses	Keep in mind
Guided tours with an environmental focus	Provide opportunity for face-to-face contacts between the organization personnel and the visiting parties. Allows on-the-spot opportunity to show the organization's environmental activities.	May be interpreted as a public relations exercise if only the good aspects are shown. Limited in terms of the number of people reached by the effort. Can be expensive, require many staff hours. Rely on staff knowledge and skills.	The visit should touch on the issues directly related to the organization's products, processes and activities or to issues related to the organization's business.
Workshops, conferences, dialogue events	They can be very productive and helpful in reaching consensus on issues with high priority.	They can be time-consuming to organize to ensure that a good mix of interested parties is present.	It is usually most effective to host such an event after either interviews or focus groups to provide information on the type of issues that may be raised.
Media/Radio interviews	Avenue to reach many people.	It is not possible to control the questions that will be asked. Unless the radio station permits listeners to phone in, it is difficult to have any type of exchange.	Keep messages sharp, clear and simple. Give these interviews if some major decision is being considered that would be of interest to the broad community.
Citizen advisory groups/Community liaison groups	Investigate issues, put forward suggestions. Two-way exchange of information. Shows that the organization is willing to work with people. Helps maintain the visibility of the organization in the community.	Can have limited power. May not represent all interests, different levels of expertise. Information not always passed on to community. Advisory group members may get out of touch with those they represent.	Must represent full range of interests. The role and authority of the group must be clearly defined. Should have pre-determined life span. Members must communicate with the community.
Helpdesk	Provides opportunity for interested parties to ask and receive responses to specific questions about products.	Calls may cover any subject. Callers may not always listen carefully to answers and may therefore misinterpret responses.	Staff must be well trained and well informed about environmental aspects of the organizations activities, products and services. If responding to difficult questions, it is sometimes better to offer to get back to the caller or to send a written response.
Presentation to groups	Groups can be targeted, information can be tailored to meet group needs, and information may be passed to others. The host group may do some of the work (inviting people). Useful for indigenous communities.	Potential for hostile audience reaction. If used alone can fail to reach sections of the community.	Use it to develop working relationships. Do not exclude non-supportive groups. Provide written material to be considered before meeting. Leave written material to be taken home.

Technique	Strengths	Weaknesses	Keep in mind
Interested parties dinners/Sustainable business dinners	Participants benefit from sharing their views (e.g. enjoy a meal), first-hand interested parties' views obtained. Constructive atmosphere in which to discuss sustainability.	Difficulties in selecting guests and steering conversation to sustainability.	Can be of different sizes, e.g. large with regional and local interested parties, or small meetings with less than 10 participants.

Different types of messages may be required for these communication activities/tools. On the other hand, common information may be presented in different ways, depending on the target groups and geographical scope.

Environmental communication material should be organized, maintained and easily available, to be used for example in a fast way in response to environmental crises and emergencies.

3.6 EVALUATING ENVIRONMENTAL COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES

A very important aspect of communication is the feedback from the target groups, as shown in Figure 1, that can bring to revise the communication strategy (target groups, messages of the communication, geographic scope, etc.). The organization should verify how the communication was received by each target group. Even if the communication was successful, there is still a need to obtain the feedback from the different target groups and to respond, showing that the organization understands their views and consider them (ISO 14063).

A failure in the communication process may be overcome by providing clearer information through direct contacts with the involved target groups, to fully understand their concerns. Organizations issuing environmental reports or other documents for information available to the public, can include types of feedback. This feedback can support the organization in the continuous improvement of the information provided.

In **evaluating the effectiveness of the communication**, the organization should consider the following (ISO 14063):

- its environmental communication policy;
- how it has applied the principles of environmental communication;
- whether its objectives and targets have been achieved;
- the quality and appropriateness of the information provided to target groups and the environmental communication activity;
- the way in which the environmental communication was conducted;

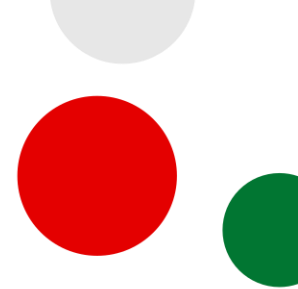
- the responses of interested parties;
- whether the communication programme has fostered effective and meaningful dialogue with target groups;
- whether the procedures and approach were transparent;
- whether the environmental communication addressed the needs of the target groups;
- whether target groups know that they were heard and were made aware of how their input was to be used;
- whether target groups understood the purpose and content of the environmental communication;
- whether appropriate follow up was provided for the issues raised by target groups.

The results of the evaluation should provide a basis for top management's review of its environmental communication policy.

To monitor if the environmental communication objectives and targets have been met, the organization should define a **set of communication indicators**, able to monitor critical steps and interests of target groups. A good set of environmental communication indicators should be quantitative and qualitative and be simple, precise, easy to understand and relevant to the process they are related to (ISO 14063):

- number of visitors per unit of time to parts of the organization engaged in environmental activities (e.g. visitors/year);
- number of letters/phone calls/e-mails per unit of time received from interested parties about environmental issues. (e.g. e-mails per month) and analysis of content being negative or positive;
- number or rate of complaints about certain environmental aspects, activities or issues;
- number of award applications;
- number of awards received;
- number of articles published by media;
- number of visitors to the organization's environmental information pages on its web site (e.g. visitors per month);
- rate of response to an environmental survey/questionnaire;
- number of outreach activities conducted, and analysis of which ones were most effective according to the target groups via an evaluation survey/questionnaire.

Environmental communication policy, strategy and activities may be reviewed based on the result of the evaluations, by assessing opportunities for improvement and the need for changes. The organization should communicate the reasons of these changes to target groups.



4. PRODUCT COMMUNICATION BASED ON LCA/PEF RESULTS

4.1. PRODUCT ENVIRONMENTAL COMMUNICATION AND MULTI-CRITERIA INFORMATION

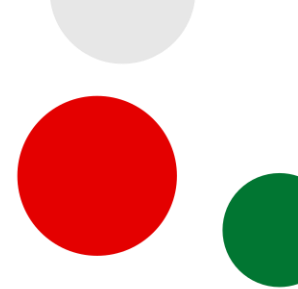
The International Standards Organization (ISO) has developed standards for three types of environmental product claims and declarations, called ISO Type I, II and III, with Type I and III particularly based on a life cycle approach:

- **Type I claims (*EN ISO 14024:2018. Environmental labels and declarations – Type I environmental labelling – Principles and procedures*)**: require to comply with environmental criteria set by a third party and based on the product's life cycle impacts. The awarding body may be a governmental organization or a private body. Examples include the EU Ecolabel, Nordic Swan and German Blue Angel;
- **Type II claims (*UNI EN ISO 14021:2016 Environmental labels and declarations – Self-declared environmental claims (Type II environmental labelling)*)**: based on self-declarations by manufacturers or retailers, are related to a specific environmental characteristic of the product. There are several examples of such claims on the market, as for example: “made from XY% recycled material”;
- **Type III claims (*UNI EN ISO 14025:2010 Environmental labels and declarations – Type III environmental declarations – Principles and procedures*)**: consist of quantified product information based on life cycle impact categories. These impacts are presented in a form that facilitate comparison between products. Examples are the Environmental Product Declaration (EPD) systems and the EU PEF method. Carbon and water footprints can be also included in this category.

Other labelling schemes such as the private Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) and Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC) certification, energy labels and organic food labels do not fall within any of these types but can often refer to **UNI EN ISO 14020:2002 – General Guidelines for Environmental Claims and Declarations** (DG Environment, EC, September 2000).

Finally, the Made in Italy scheme can be considered as a hybrid between Type I (since there is a benchmark to comply with, a certification scheme, an external verification, etc.) and Type III declaration (since it's based on the PEF method).

The European Commission – Directorate-General for the Environment (DG ENV) launched in 2012 the study “Different options for Communicating Environmental Information for Products” (DG ENV, February 2012),



to review and analyze the existing different means to provide to final consumers multi-criteria environmental information related to products, based for example on LCA results. One of the objectives of the study was to identify the mechanisms which are able to maximize consumers' use of the information, understanding of the content and the possibility to compare between different products belonging to the same category.

Some relevant aspects that the study addressed are (DG ENV, February 2012):

1. What to communicate (i.e. how many different indicators can a consumer realistically be willing to check and be able to understand and compare?)
2. How to communicate the information (i.e. using what sorts of formats: figures, grades, scaling systems, aggregated indicators, best in class label)
3. Where to communicate the information (e.g. shelf-tag, package, bar code).

The main findings of the literature review performed in this study are (DG ENV, February 2012):

What to communicate:

- Too many environmentally indicators confuse consumers, therefore no more than three indicators should be communicated.
- Food and drink products, household cleaning products, and clothing are fast moving consumer goods that most consumers purchase quickly and without in-depth reflection. Higher degrees of aggregation are quicker to take in and take up less space on the packaging, but are less transparent.
- The use of an aggregated indicator, combined with up to three individual indicators, is recommended as an effective presentation of data.

How to communicate:

- The information should come from a trusted source and, ideally, a third-party and not the manufacturer.
- Communication over multiple channels generally has the most positive effects. For example, information made available in a brochure or on a website can support the more limited information made available on a label on the product packaging.
- Using smartphone technology to communicate environmental information could allow consumers to access detailed product information when making their purchasing decision. Obtaining real-time purchase input will become increasingly common as consumers become more comfortable using

their smart phones as a shopping tool. Information can be updated more frequently and at lower cost than, for example, changing the tags on a shelf of products.

- The quality and clarity of information is more important than the quantity of information as too much information inhibits decision-making.
- General terms for the indicators and simple units of measurements using an easy to understand rating system are preferred over technical descriptions (e.g. "climate change" is preferred over "CO₂- equivalent").
- Absolute values by themselves are not sufficient to communicate multi-criteria environmental information to consumers and a scale should be used.
- Colours can be a strong factor to help comprehension, but it creates often problems to manufacturers as it can be difficult to integrate into existing packaging designs.

Where to communicate:

- Information at the purchase point is necessary to impact behaviour.
- The physical constraints of the packaging influence labelling options (for example small electronic products have limited opportunities for on-product information).
- Indicators of uncertainty or data reliability should be avoided on in-store and on-product information as they can confuse consumers. They could be presented, however, to more advanced consumers interested in such questions via websites or other tools.

Based on the findings of the literature review, different designs for communicating environmental information were developed and tested through focus groups in three target countries (Italy, Sweden, and Poland). Afterwards final designs were developed and presented to 500 participants in each of the three countries through an online questionnaire. The results of the consumer survey helped in identifying the optimal design options, shown in the Figure 2 (DG ENV, February 2012).

Other important findings of the focus groups activity and the consumers survey are (DG ENV, February 2012):

- The concept of multi-criteria environmental impacts across product life cycle is unfamiliar, therefore any ambiguity in the design or language can lead to confusion.
- Consumers express a desire for environmental information, but only about half look for it. The information therefore needs to be obvious (impossible to miss) and explicit (impossible to misunderstand).
- Consumers expect the relevant information to be available at their point of decision, this means in general on the product or shelf. For most products, consumers are unlikely to be willing to look on a smartphone or to visit a website in order to be informed for the purchase decision. Such media,

however, could be useful to describe supporting information (e.g. methodology used, explanation of the impact categories, indicators, etc.), that could increase consumers understanding and trust in the label.

- Aggregated indicators help understanding and are considered very helpful by consumers, they also allow easier comparison amongst products. In particular younger consumers appreciate indicators, since they increase their confidence in the accuracy of the label, even if they did not understand exactly what the numbers meant.
- It is important that the information is verified by an independent party.
- Scales using a letter as an indicator of overall performance are quite familiar to consumers (for example the energy labels). Consumers prefer ranking systems using letters, rather than just the technical environmental indicators.
- Consumers have different expectations for different product groups: for example, for food products the understanding of some impacts was closely related to nutritional and health concerns; in case of electronics to energy use and related cost, for household cleaning supplies to potential harm of toxic or hazardous substances. Finally, for clothing, participants suggested a simplified label, like the EU Ecolabel, to indicate if the product is “environmentally-friendly” or not.

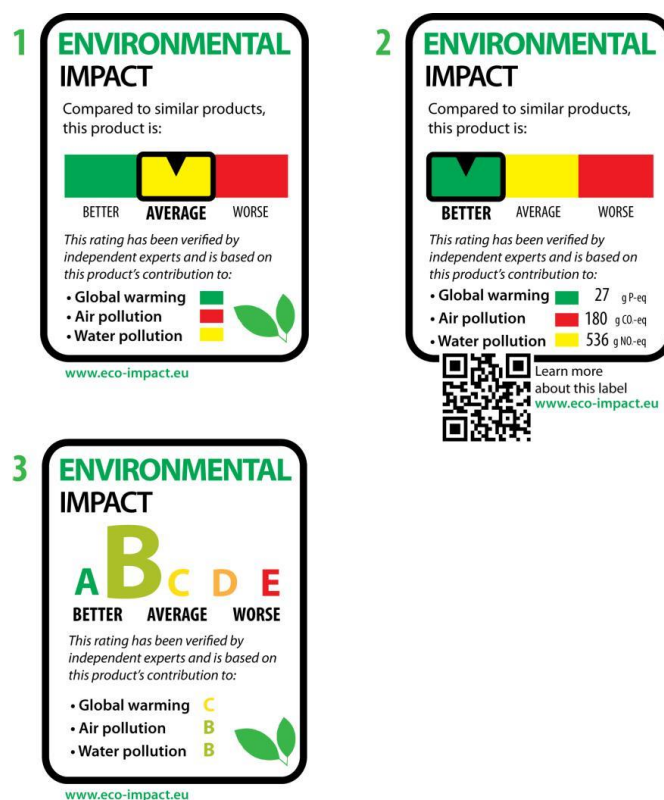
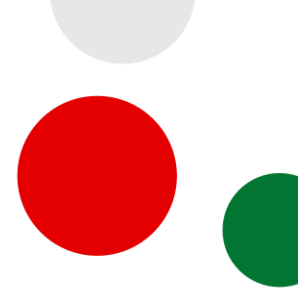


Figure 2 Optimal design options for communicating environmental information as identified by DG ENV focus groups.



4.2 PEF-RELATED COMMUNICATION

The European Commission work on the development of the Product/Organization Environmental Footprint (PEF/OEF) method started in 2010 to overcome the difficulties due to the proliferation of environmental labels/certification schemes and with some companies making unsubstantiated or unverifiable “green” communication. Based on the PEF/OEF Pilot phase, a number of conclusions concerning communication vehicles and stakeholders’ views were defined (EU, DG ENV, 2018):

- The majority of European citizens are concerned about sustainability and the preservation of the environment for future generations.
- Consumers are interested in receiving information about the environmental impact of products but price, quality, brand and availability are still the more relevant considerations affecting their purchases.
- In some product categories, environmental performance of products is an important issue, suggesting that environmental performance has the potential to become more and more relevant.
- The commercial and business sectors and in particular large and medium sized enterprises acknowledge the inevitability and increasing importance of sustainability issues.
- The benefits of providing PEF information include: improving brand values, the opportunity to compare products, driving up the higher quality of products in terms of their environmental performances and the availability of common rules for EU products.
- Retailers agree on the increasing public awareness of environmental sustainability.
- The concept of Life Cycle Analysis is not readily accessible. Some of the environmental impact categories are not understood by consumers (for example acidification, terrestrial eutrophication, eco-toxicity).

There is a need to achieve consensus at the EU level about the communication vehicles related to PEF and the benchmarking strategy, in order to avoid information overload and to integrate and test them with other product/business information currently used.

Furthermore, on the design of a communication vehicle, it should be considered (EU, DG ENV, 2018):

- An emphasis on clarity, simplicity and transparency.
- Avoiding numeric and scientific terms (e.g. kg CO₂-eq / kg).
- Using graphics, bar charts and colour scales.
- Emulating the readily understood Traffic light and Energy Labels.
- Certification from named, independent and trusted sources.
- Offering QR codes, bar codes, links, websites and banners for those who want further information.
- The most effective label is PEF label, A-E rating and an average product score.

In the Business-to-Business activities labels are seen as the most effective communication vehicles, followed by public relation campaigns, environmental reports, product passports and environmental product declarations. Business-to-Consumers enterprises use especially websites, leaflets and labels to communicate.

In conclusion, PEF Information could be presented in many forms, as shown in Figure 3 (DG ENV, EC, 2019):

- on a performance scale, where A is best environmental performance and E is worst performance;
- as a "traffic light" system, where the average, the better and the worse than average is shown;
- how the product performs respectively to itself some years ago;
- as factsheets that present the most relevant environmental impacts, the performance of the product and tips on how to use them;
- as infographics explaining the environmental features of the product;
- information on websites, online shops or apps.

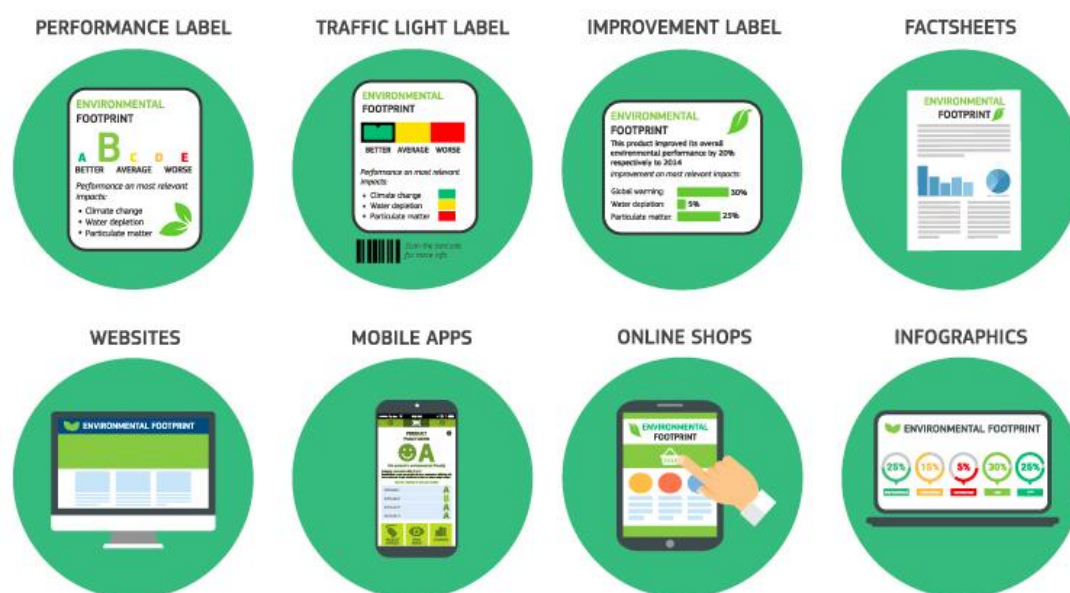
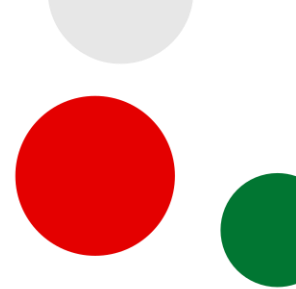


Figure 3 Different ways and vehicles to present PEF.

Additional information related to these issues can be found on the report published by European Commission in 2019: "Consumer testing of alternatives for communicating the Environmental Footprint profile of products" [available on-line](#).



5. GUIDELINES FOR LIFE MAGIS COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES

LIFE MAGIS communication strategy will be focused on actions able to influence capacity through daily behaviour. Communication strategy aims at influencing the behaviour of:

Pilot companies:

- reduce the environmental footprint of products along the life cycle, in a continuous improvement approach;
- use PEF results to support eco-design;
- use PEF as a tool to implement actions of industrial symbiosis and circular economy, considering the impacts of the all “system”;
- use PEF as a tool to reduce CO2 emissions;
- use PEF and Made Green in Italy label in green procurement and in Green Public Procurement (GPP) procedures;
- improve capacities to communicate to consumers and in focusing marketing choice;
- identify more innovative and sustainable solutions.

Suppliers:

- to green their products and increase competitiveness.

Consumers:

- in the use and end-of-life phase of products and their packaging;
- in the purchasing and product choices;
- in brand loyalty.

Local bodies:

- implementing economic and political measures to disseminate the use of PEF and Made Green in Italy scheme. Integrate these tools in Smart Specialization Strategies, with appropriate supporting measures (e.g. training, involvement of the whole supply chain, consultancy vouchers, etc.).

Retailers:

- supply of green products.

Policy makers:

- use of Made green in Italy scheme in GPP.

Considering the inputs presented in the previous sections of this document, partners should focus on the type of message they want to address to each target group and identify the most appropriate communication tool/activity.

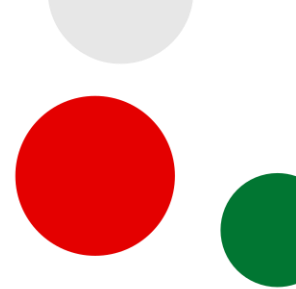
For example, ENEA and SSSUP will identify communication tools more suitable to disseminate the PEF methodology and the Made Green In Italy scheme to the general public, the scientific community and other target groups, while the sectoral partners, with the support of SSSUP, CNR IBE and RWTH, will identify the

tools/initiatives to be tested with the piloting companies and tailored for the specific products and target groups.

In Table 3 some communication tools to be used in LIFE MAGIS (action B5) are reported as examples.

Table 3 Examples of communication tools to be used in LIFE MAGIS.

Communication tool	Examples of application
Barcode for Environment app for mobile devices	To give access to the environmental profile of the pilot products.
Videos	Videos on project-related topics and activities. Videos can be made by partners but also by different testimonials involved (pilot companies, consumers, policy makers, Ministry of Environment, industrial associations, etc.), to be shown on the project website, on partners websites, social networks, and social media, during exhibitions, events, conferences, etc.
Radio campaigns	On PEF, Made Green in Italy scheme, pilot companies and products, PEF studies results, etc. addressed to general public or sector-specific programs.
Leaflets	On PEF and Made Green in Italy scheme, pilot companies and products, PEF studies results, etc. to be distributed mainly at events.
Factsheets	On PEF results of pilot products to be disseminated to suppliers and dealers and distributed at stores, exhibition etc.
Claims on the packaging	Claim or informative sheet on PEF results on the packaging of the pilot products.
News on magazines/newspapers	On PEF and Made Green in Italy scheme, pilot companies and products, PEF results, etc. addressed to general public but also to specific stakeholders on sector magazines.
Websites and social media	Project website, partners/pilot companies web sites and newsletters, blogs, Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube channels (created for LIFE MAGIS and already available by partners).
Events and “in field initiatives”	In store initiatives where the pilot products are sold. Project/Partners/Pilot companies’ corners at fairs/exhibitions. Conferences on PEF, Made Green In Italy scheme, environmental issues related to LIFE MAGIS sectors, etc. Thematic workshops at fairs/exhibitions, at regional level, involving policy makers, industrial association, companies, etc. Training events and seminars at university, industrial associations, companies, public bodies on LIFE MAGIS experience and train on related issues.



To support partners in planning, implementing and checking the specific communication activities of action B5 a format is provided in Annex 1, where each partner will define:

- type of message to be communicated to each target group;
- target groups;
- communication tools/activities to be used to communicate to one or more target groups;
- where and when each tool/activity will be implemented;
- goals (target numbers) to be reached with each communication tool/activity;
- roles and responsibilities to implement each communication action/tool and internal and external human resources to be involved;
- costs for the implementation of each activity/tool (external assistance, travel and others);
- methods to evaluate the effectiveness of each communication tool/activity according to the target numbers planned to be reached;
- target numbers reached after the implementation of each communication tool/activity according to the evaluation method.

To support partners to define their specific communication strategy, a summary is attached to the tabel containing also:

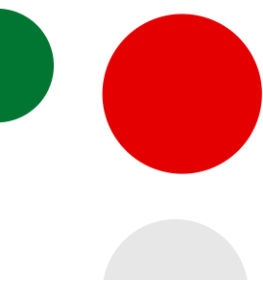
- deadlines of milestones and deliverables of Action A1.3 and B5;
- description of activities and targets of Action B5 (as defined in LIFE MAGIS Application form);
- description of activities and targets of Action D1 (as defined in LIFE MAGIS Application form), since some of them can be beneficially related to some B5 activities (e.g. showing a video on Made Green in Italy and PEF during a project event);
- costs (external assistance, travel and others) foreseen for each partner and for the entire Action B5.

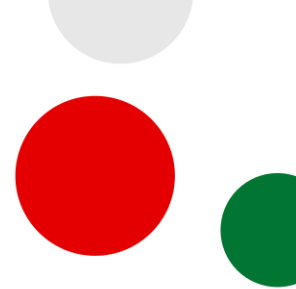
The table could be constantly updated during action B5 according to new needs or changes in the communication strategies. The final version of the table will be delivered at the end of action B5, with the description of the implementation of all tools/activities and the evaluation of the targets reached. This activity will be coordinated by UNIONFOOD. Sectoral partners will be supported by technical partners (in particular SSSUP, CNR IBE and RWTH) and they will cooperate in the design and the realization of the communication activities for their product category and sector.

6. REFERENCES

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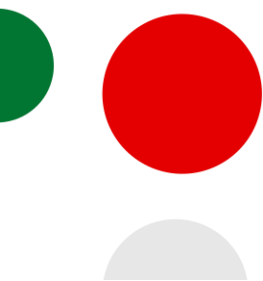
DG ENV, EC, 2019. Consumer testing of alternatives for communicating the Environmental Footprint profile of products Final report.

https://ec.europa.eu/environment/eussd/smgp/pdf/2019_EF_commtest_report.pdf

DG ENV, EC, Webpage dedicated to Product Environmental Footprint information (consulted in May 2020).

https://ec.europa.eu/environment/eussd/smgp/communication/product_information.htm

ISO 14063 – Environmental management- Environmental communication – Guidelines and examples, August 2006.



ANNEX 1 – FORMAT OF THE TABLE TO BE FILLED BY EACH PARTNER

LIFE MAGIS COMMUNICATION STRATEGY PLAN
PARTNER-SPECIFIC PLANNING

Partner:

PARTNER'S BUDGET ON ACTION B5

STAFF

TRAVEL				
Total (Ax8)	Destination	Description	Travel and subs. rate (A)	Number of travels (B)

OTHER COSTS		
Total	Procedure	Description

PARTNER'S ACTIVITIES ON ACTION B5

REFERENCE SUB-ACTION	INVOLVED PILOT COMPANY	MESSAGE	TARGET GROUPS	TOOL/ACTIVITY	WHERE	WHEN	EXPECTED RESULTS (TARGET NUMBERS)	ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES	COSTS	EVALUATION	RESULTS (REACHED NUMBERS)	COMMENTS
INSTRUCTIONS Which B5 sub-action this activity refers to? Select among: B5.1 - Mindfulness communication campaigns B5.2 - Barcode for Environment B5.3 - "In the field" communication initiatives B5.4 - Footprint oriented campaign												
	If there's a pilot company involved in the communication activity, please report its name here.	What message do you want to communicate related to the product environmental performances? And about PEF and Made Green in Italy scheme? (see par. 3.1, 3.4, 3.6 of the Word document)	To which target groups is targeted your message? For each message, different target groups can be identified. (see par. 3.2 of the Word document)	What kind of tools/ initiatives do you want to implement to communicate your message to each target group? For each target group different tools/activities may be identified. (see par. 3.3, 3.5, 3.6 of the Word document)	Which is the geographical scope of each tool/action (local/regional/national, international)? Specify where do you plan to implement your communication activity and/or use your tools. (see par. 3.3 of the Word document)	When and for how long do you plan to implement each communication activity and/or use each tool? (see par. 3.3 of the Word document) In defining the timing, please consider the milestones and deliverables reported in the "Deliverables and Milestones" sheet of this file.	Which are the targets (numbers) you want to reach with the implementation of each communication tool/activity? Please refer to the project targets of action B5 and the connections with targets of action D1 ("Expected results" sheet of this file) and define specific and additional targets (if needed) for each tool/initiatives according to the guidelines in par. 3.4 of the Word document.	Which are the roles and responsibilities (internal and external) of the people involved in the realization of each activity/tool? Define the type of internal human resources (e.g. responsible of marketing and communication, management, technical experts, etc.) and of external assistance needed (communication experts, typography, web designer, etc.). Specify who will be	Define costs for the implementation of each activity/tool, in terms of external assistance, travel and others (see your budget reported above).	How are you going to evaluate each communication activity/tool with respect to each expected result in terms of target numbers (column H)? (see par. 3.6 of the Word document) Describe the evaluation method/s.	Referring to the target numbers (column H) and the evaluation method used (column K), report the numbers reached after the implementation of each communication tool/activity.	
EXAMPLE B5.2 B5.3												
	Company XYZ	message 1 (environmental footprint of a cup of coffee consumed at home and in bars)	target group 1 (consumers of coffee at home, 20-50 yrs. old, living in big cities in Lombardy and Veneto, family of 4 people,...)	tool/activity X (barcode on product packaging, leaflet on the barcode, in-field initiatives at supermarket of medium-high size)	geographical scope for tool/activity X (Veneto and Lombardy regions for the "in-field initiatives and national scope for the barcode and leaflet)	timing for tool/activity X (3 in-field events (supermarket in Lombardy and Veneto) between September and December 2021 (each event will last 1 week). Barcode and leaflets to be distributed in supermarkets available by September 2021. Barcode content will be updated every 2 years).	target A for tool/activity X (Reach 8,000 purchasers of the product and feedback from 2,000 customers)	Human Resource for tool/activity X: (Partner: definition of the technical content of barcode, leaflet and in-field event. Responsible of marketing and media will be involved in the organization of the in-field initiative and barcode and leaflet development. External Assistance: communication experts, typography, barcode developer)	Costs for tool/activity X: (external assistance: communication expert for the organization of each supermarket event €..., app and barcode developer €..., communication expert for development of leaflet and printing €..., travel: for organizing the in-field event €...).	evaluation method for target A (number of consumers reached, rate of response to a survey)	target A reached (85% of consumers reached, feedback from 60% of customers, because...)	
			target group 2 (suppliers from ...)	tool/activity Y (environmental report sent to suppliers, information available on the company website)	geographical scope for tool/activity Y (international)	timing for tool/activity Y (report will be sent to suppliers in November 2021, report and other PEF related information will be available on the company website starting from November 2021 and updated every 2 years).	target B for tool/activity Y (get questionnaire returned from 100 suppliers)	Human Resource for tool/activity Y: Partner:... External Assistance:...	Costs for tool/activity Y: (external assistance: company to send and elaborate questionnaires €...)	evaluation method for target B (rate of response to a questionnaire)	target B reached (questionnaire returned by 70% of suppliers because...)	
			target group 3 (consumers at bars, 20-50 yrs. old, in Italy, drink more than 1 coffee/day, workers...)	tool/activity Z (leaflet distributed at bars)	geographical scope for tool/activity Z (national)	timing for tool/activity Z (Distribution of leaflets will start in December 2021 and will continue for 1 year in bars at national level).	target C for tool/activity Z (20,000 leaflets distributed, at least 10 articles published by media)	Human Resource for tool/activity Z: Partner:... External Assistance:...	Costs for tool/activity Z: (external assistance: communication and media expert €..., and printing company €..., other costs: distribution of leaflets €...)	evaluation method for target C (number of articles published by media)	target C reached (12 articles published by...)	
PARTNER ENTRIES												