



Ireland's EU Structural Funds
Programmes 2007 - 2013

Co-funded by the Irish Government
and the European Union



**EUROPEAN UNION
STRUCTURAL FUNDS**

Ireland

NSRF & ERDF Communication Plan



Ireland's EU Structural Funds
Programmes 2007 - 2013

Co-funded by the Irish Government
and the European Union



EUROPEAN UNION
STRUCTURAL FUNDS

Table of Contents

1. Introduction	Page 3
2. Aims and Target Groups	Page 3
3. Strategy and Content	Page 4
4. Budget	Page 8
5. Bodies Responsible for Implementation	Page 9
6. Evaluation	Page 9
7. Annex 1 Progress Indicators BMW OP	Page 11
8. Annex 2 Progress Indicators S&E OP	Page 12
9. Annex 3 Contact details	Page 13



Ireland's EU Structural Funds
Programmes 2007 - 2013

Co-funded by the Irish Government
and the European Union



EUROPEAN UNION
STRUCTURAL FUNDS

Communication Plan

1. Introduction

Article 27 of the Council General Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 requires each Member State to prepare a National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRF) setting out its strategy for deploying available EU funding. Ireland's NSRF was agreed with the Commission on the 27th of July 2007.

Article 32 of the Council General Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 required each Member State to draw up Operational Programmes to outline how the funds would be utilised. Under the Regional Competitiveness and Employment Objective three Operational Programmes were prepared by Ireland; two Regional Operational Programmes under the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the Border, Midlands and Western (BMW) and the Southern and Eastern (S&E) Operational Programmes and one Human Capital Investment Operational Programme under the European Social Fund (ESF). The Regional Operational Programmes and the Human Capital Investment Operational Programme were adopted by the Commission on the 16th of October 2007 and the 6th of November 2007, respectively.

This Communication Plan sets out the information and publicity strategy for Ireland's National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRF) and for the two Regional Operational Programmes (OPs). It outlines how the Managing Authorities and other bodies responsible for administering and delivering the programmes will provide information on the Operational Programmes and publicise their outcomes and achievements. It should be noted that there will be a separate Communication Plan for the Human Capital Investment OP which is entirely consistent with this Communication Plan. This Communication Plan has been drawn up in accordance with the Commission Implementation Regulation (EC) No 1828/2006, for submission to the Commission within four months of the date of adoption of the Operational Programmes, i.e. 16th of February 2008.

2. Aims and Target Groups

2.1 The aims of this communication plan:

The aims of this Communication Plan are to increase public awareness, transparency and visibility of the Operational Programmes and of EU Cohesion and Regional Policy at National, Regional and Operation level. It will do this by:

- Highlighting the role and contribution of Ireland's EU Structural Funds Programmes 2007-2013 and the progress achieved;
- Emphasizing the joint actions taken by the EU and Ireland and the results accomplished;
- Ensuring that assistance from the Funds is transparent by providing potential beneficiaries with clear and detailed information on conditions of eligibility and procedures for applying for funding;



Ireland's EU Structural Funds
Programmes 2007 - 2013

Co-funded by the Irish Government
and the European Union



EUROPEAN UNION
STRUCTURAL FUNDS

- Supporting the implementation of the NSRF and the OPs by increasing the understanding of the objectives of the programmes among potential beneficiaries, the general public, implementing bodies, the social partners and other interested organisations;
- Disseminating information on Ireland's EU Structural Funds Programme 2007-2013 widely through all available communication channels;
- Ensuring compliance with the EU Regulations; and
- Ensure that the responsibilities of beneficiaries, as specified in Article 8 of Commission Implementation Regulation (EC) 1828/2006, are understood and applied.

2.2. Target groups:

The key target groups for the Communications Plan include the following;

- The General Public;
- Beneficiaries and Potential beneficiaries (individuals, businesses, NGOs);
- Government Departments, Regional Assemblies, Regional and Local Authorities, Intermediate Bodies, Public bodies and Agencies;
- MEPs, TDs, Senators and Councillors;
- International Groups (visiting groups, parliamentary delegations and other Member State Managing Authorities);
- The Social Partners incorporating Trade Unions, Employers and Business Groups, Farming Organisations and the Community and Voluntary sector; and
- Local, Regional and National opinion formers and influencers including Journalists and the Media, Academics, Researchers and Educators.

3. Strategy and Content of Information and Publicity Measures

The content and strategy of the communication and information measures are as follows;

- The NSRF Managing Authority will have a role in ensuring a consistent approach across OPs in relation to information and publicity measures. While the mission of the National Development Plan (NDP) Information Office in the Department of Finance is the implementation of the NDP 2007-2013 communications strategy, the Office will provide advice and expertise on the implementation and delivery of this Communications Plan;
- The information and publicity actions will be proportionate to the level of funding available;
- The Managing Authorities will have a primary role in the dissemination of publicity for the OPs and will act as a central point for information and publicity activities across the OPs;
- Raising awareness of EU Regional Policy will be achieved through the promotion of the OPs;



Ireland's EU Structural Funds
Programmes 2007 - 2013

Co-funded by the Irish Government
and the European Union



EUROPEAN UNION
STRUCTURAL FUNDS

- Awareness measures and information actions will occur at the most appropriate level so as to ensure that publicity activities are focusing at the relevant target groups;
- The Managing Authorities will fly the European Union flag for one week starting 9th of May each year, in front of their premises;
- The Managing Authorities will aim at the broadest possible media coverage using all suitable forms and methods of communication at the appropriate territorial level. It will inform the media, both nationally and locally, about the assistance part-financed by the European Union. Appropriate channels, which will result in the most cost effective promotion of the role of the Union, will be used;
- Beneficiaries/intermediate bodies for individual operations will be responsible for carrying out information and publicity measures for the public, relevant to the operations. In doing so, beneficiaries will apply the provisions contained in Article 8 of Commission Implementation Regulation (EC) 1828/2006 as they concern the putting up of plaques, billboards and acknowledgement of funding sources;
- Implementing agencies will promote the individual priorities/themes/operations for which they are responsible using the various channels at their disposal, i.e. websites, launches, sectoral publications, business/community groups, advertisements, information leaflets and selected seminars and conferences;
- Intermediate and beneficiary bodies will report to the OP Monitoring Committees, on planned and completed information actions relating to their priorities/themes/operations and for promoting the role of EU Regional Policy where appropriate. The Managing Authorities will report on a similar basis to the NSRF Monitoring Committee annually; and
- All potential information channels to promote the OPs and the EU Structural Funds Programmes will be availed of in order to achieve the overall aims of the strategy in a cost-effective manner, e.g. on websites related to the OPs.

3.1. Preparation and Dissemination of Identity Guidelines

The NSRF Managing Authority will prepare and publish detailed identity guidelines to ensure the widespread, uniform and consistent application of the correct logos (NSRF, EU, and the Department/Agency) in the correct format in all cases. These guidelines will be available on the website www.eustructuralfunds.ie.

These guidelines will be issued to all Managing Authorities, Intermediate bodies and beneficiaries of EU funding and will also be available electronically on all Managing Authorities' websites.



Ireland's EU Structural Funds
Programmes 2007 - 2013

Co-funded by the Irish Government
and the European Union



EUROPEAN UNION
STRUCTURAL FUNDS

3.2. Promotion of EU Regional Policy

In order to increase awareness and understanding, it is important that clear and simple messages be communicated. The contribution of the EU Structural Funds and EU Regional Policy (focussing on the added value of Community assistance in relation to the Regional Competitiveness and Employment objective at national, regional and local level) will be promoted to citizens, potential beneficiaries and beneficiaries with the aim of highlighting the role of the Community

The role of the European Union will be explained in terms of promoting the aims and achievements of EU Regional Policy, and the contribution of the various Funds. In accordance with Article 9 of Commission Regulation (EC) No 1828/2006, the EU emblem together with reference to the European Union will be included in all appropriate material. Reference will be made to the Fund concerned – ERDF, ESF, as appropriate. The statement “*Investing in your future*”, which highlights the value added of the Community Intervention, will also be included, as appropriate. At a National level, the NSRF Managing Authority will ensure a consistent approach to information and publicity measures, and will have a coordinating role in activities undertaken at a central level.

3.3. OP level Publicity

Information and communications activities will be undertaken by or on behalf of each Managing Authority at the level of the OP. The primary role of OP level publicity will be to disseminate as widely as possible using all appropriate media; the overall objectives and content of the Operational Programme and to publicise the progress being made in implementing the OP and the achievements of specific priorities/themes/operations. Specifically the **Managing Authorities** will;

- Tailor promotional activities to their specific regional audiences using regional and local media, as appropriate i.e. press, radio and the internet;
- Be responsible for ensuring that the EU Structural Funds publicity and information requirements are met for its Operational Programme. In order to achieve this, the Managing Authorities will include guidance on meeting the Information and Publicity requirements in Guidance Seminars which are scheduled to take place annually for all Intermediate and Beneficiary bodies. It will publish information regarding this on their website and update it as necessary;
- Enter into Administrative Agreements with Intermediate Bodies that will set out the respective roles and responsibilities and will include clauses relating to ensuring compliance with information and publicity requirements;
- Host a high profile event each year with a theme relevant to the achievement of regional policy objectives;



Ireland's EU Structural Funds
Programmes 2007 - 2013

Co-funded by the Irish Government
and the European Union



EUROPEAN UNION
STRUCTURAL FUNDS

- Publish an Annual report that will set out the actions undertaken in the previous year and the contribution of the EU structural funds. This report will be widely disseminated, available online and in two languages, Irish and English;
- Provide progress reports to each OP Monitoring Committee, which will include a section on the implementation of the Communication Plan;
- In due course, invite representatives of the EU Commission to attend major public events, major conferences, launches, openings, announcements and may invite senior Commission personnel to address meetings of the Regional Assembly. This will highlight the EU contribution to the Operational Programmes;
- Inform both the NSRF and OP Monitoring Committees of progress in implementing the Communication Plan, the information and communication measures carried out, the means of communication used and the list of beneficiaries.

Intermediate Bodies and Beneficiaries will;

- Publicise the availability of funding, the selection process, deadlines, eligibility criteria and associated regulations concerning EU funding through all appropriate channels;
- Inform the public of the assistance obtained from the European Union; and
- Promote the individual priorities/themes/operations for which they are responsible using the various channels at their disposal including websites, launches, sectoral publications, business/community groups, advertisements, information leaflets and selected seminars and conferences.

The procedures for spot-checking of co-financed projects by the Managing Authority and Intermediary Bodies in accordance with Article 60 (b) of the Council General Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 will include checks on compliance with Information and Publicity regulations.

3.4 Web based Information and Publicity Actions

Each OP Managing Authority will maintain an up to date and high quality website that will contain the following:

- Programming documents (OP, SEA Reports and Ex Ante Evaluation)
- Implementation Plans & Funding Opportunities
- Press Releases
- Details of Major Events (Conferences and Seminars)
- Identity Guidelines
- EU Regional Policy Regulations
- Presentations used in Guidance Seminars



Ireland's EU Structural Funds
Programmes 2007 - 2013

Co-funded by the Irish Government
and the European Union



EUROPEAN UNION
STRUCTURAL FUNDS

- Reports and Publications including Evaluation Reports
- Link to Beneficiary Lists
- Annual Implementation Reports
- Photographs from Launches, events and visiting delegations
- Links to other OP websites, NSRF website and various EU websites (other related websites-government, EU Treaty, forum on Europe etc)
- Links to various Intermediary body websites providing specific information on funding available, application process and eligibility criteria
- Other information that may be relevant from time to time.

4. Budget (Indicative)

The Technical Assistance Priorities (Priority Axis 4) of the Operational Programmes provide the main funding for information and publicity activities for the NSRF and for the OPs.

The budget for this Communication Plan will be in the region of €1.25 million from the allocation to the Technical Assistance Priority of the Regional OPs; of this the BMW OP will contribute approximately €750,000 and the S&E OP will contribute approximately €500,000.

The budget includes items listed below:

- Website development and maintenance;
- Annual Report publication;
- Annual Conference costs;
- Publicity at launches;
- Preparing and issuing press releases;
- Activities undertaken at a central level (e.g. NSRF website, Attitudinal survey, annual event etc);
- Participating in local radio interviews;
- Photography;
- Advertising in relevant publications;
- Costs associated with publishing advertorials;
- Production of promotional materials (e.g. pens, flags and associated merchandising);
- Attendance at EU events relating to Communications;
- Hosting of visiting delegations;
- Addressing seminars and conferences;
- Responding to specific requests for information from the general public, media queries, political representatives, parliamentary questions, researchers and academics and international queries (e.g. from other MAs);
- Presentations to the EU Operational Committees of the Regional Authorities;
- Presentations to the Regional Assemblies and their sub-committees on progress in relation to the implementation of the Regional OPs;
- Collating data on information and publicity actions for monitoring and progress report purposes;



Ireland's EU Structural Funds
Programmes 2007 - 2013

Co-funded by the Irish Government
and the European Union



EUROPEAN UNION
STRUCTURAL FUNDS

- Apportionment of staff time relating to the above; and
- Additional costs that may arise from time to time

Priority/theme level publicity will perform a key role in informing and raising awareness among key target audiences and sectoral groups of the availability of funding and the role of EU Regional Policy at priority/intervention level.

5. Bodies Responsible for Implementation

Article 2.2 (d) of (EC) No 1828/2006 requires that Government Departments or bodies responsible for the implementation of information and publicity activities be identified. As elaborated in Section 3.3, Administrative Agreements will be prepared between the Managing Authorities and Intermediate bodies to outline the roles and responsibilities accruing.

6. Evaluation

The criteria to be used to evaluate the information and publicity measures are set out in Annexes 1 and 2 of this document. These indicators have been agreed for monitoring the implementation of the Information and Publicity measures by the OPs and NSRF Monitoring Committees. They will also be included in the reporting under the Technical Assistance priorities of the Regional Operational Programmes and in the OPs annual and final reports. These indicators will be used as a benchmark of the effectiveness of the Plan's implementation and to inform communications interventions over the timeframe of the Plan. The Managing Authorities in conjunction with the NSRF Managing Authority will be responsible for commissioning the public awareness survey, which will be a key element of the evaluation process.

6.1 Visibility and Awareness

In accordance with Article 4 of the Implementation Regulation (EC) No 1828/2006, the Annual Implementation Reports and the Final Implementation Report will include examples of information and publicity measures carried out, the arrangements for the publication of the list of beneficiaries and the contents of any amendments to the Communications Action Plan. In addition, as required under Article 4(2) of the Implementation Regulation an assessment of the results of the information and publicity measures in terms of visibility and awareness of operational programmes and of the role played by the EU community will be included in the 2010 Annual Implementation Report and in the Final Implementation Report. The Annual Report on Implementation of the Operational Programme shall include examples of information and communication measures for the Operational Programme taken in implementing the communication plan; the arrangements for the information and publicity measures and, where applicable, the electronic addresses at which the data may be found; and the details of approved amendments to the communication plan.

6.2 Implementation and Monitoring

The means used for implementing, monitoring and evaluating the communication plan shall be proportional to the information and publicity measures identified in the plan



Ireland's EU Structural Funds
Programmes 2007 - 2013

Co-funded by the Irish Government
and the European Union



EUROPEAN UNION
STRUCTURAL FUNDS

and to the overall level of EU funding allocated. Reporting on the progress of the information and publicity measures during the programming period will be through reports provided for the NSRF and OP Monitoring Committees. These reports will be made available on the associated websites, and to the general public and representative organisations on request. In addition, the mid-term review and evaluation reports, once approved, will also be made available to the public as appropriate. The implementation of information and publicity measures relating to the management, monitoring and evaluation of assistance from EU Structural Funds will be addressed via publicity and information activities at the time of meetings of Monitoring Committees as laid out in Section 3.3 above.

6.3. Ensuring Transparency/Information Measures for Potential Beneficiaries

The Managing Authorities through the Administrative Agreements will;

- Ensure that Intermediate Bodies have clear and detailed information on at least the following:
 - (a) the conditions of eligibility to be met in order to qualify for financing;
 - (b) a description of the procedures for examining applications for funding and of the time periods involved;
 - (c) the criteria for selecting the operations to be financed; and
 - (d) the contacts at national, regional or local level that can provide information on the operational programmes.
- Require that Intermediate Bodies know and inform potential beneficiaries that the acceptance of funding is an acceptance of their inclusion in the list of beneficiaries published in accordance with point (d) of Article 7(2) of Commission Implementation Regulation (EC) No 1828/2006.
- Ensure Intermediate Bodies and Beneficiaries publicise the availability of funding, the selection process, deadlines, eligibility criteria and associated regulations concerning EU funding through all appropriate channels.

6.4. Responsible Persons and Exchange of Experience

Article 10 of Commission Implementation Regulation (EC) No 1828/2006 requires that each Managing Authority shall designate and inform the Commission of the contact persons to be responsible for information and publicity. Details of the persons responsible for the NSRF and OPs level information are set out in Annex 3 to this document.

In order to ensure a better implementation of the information measures and to allow a better exchange of information between the Member States and the Commission on the information and publicity strategies and results (as set out in Section (5) of the preamble to Commission Implementation Regulation (EC) No 1828/2006) the relevant contact persons will participate in appropriate European Community networks as provided for in Article 10 of the Regulation.



Ireland's EU Structural Funds
Programmes 2007 - 2013

Co-funded by the Irish Government
and the European Union



EUROPEAN UNION
STRUCTURAL FUNDS

6.5. Amendments to Communication Plan

Proposed amendments to the Communication Plan can be submitted to the OP and NSRF Monitoring Committees for decision. Amendments, if approved, will be notified to the European Commission.

ANNEX 1 – PROGRESS INDICATORS BMW OP

Progress Indicators for monitoring progress on implementation of Communication Plan for BMW OP.

Indicator Type	Indicator	Baseline 2007	Mid-term 2010	Final Target
Output (Key management indicator)	Number of people dealt with/accessing information (website and public information office) breakdown by Operational Programme	3,000 per month	3,000 per month	3,000 per month
Output BMW	Number of annual events	0	3	7
Output	Number of seminars/presentations	0	45	105
Output	Number of public launches/events/press releases/interviews of interventions by Operational Programme	This is a monitoring indicator designed to monitor transparency of the individual measures. Targets have not been set.		
Impact or result	Level of satisfaction with seminars and related documentation			
Impact	Level of overall public awareness of the EU Structural Funds Programmes*.			
Impact	Level of awareness of the role of the BMW OP*.			
Impact	Level of awareness of individual Funds (ESF and ERDF)*			
Impact	Local press coverage by operational programme/priority.	This is a monitoring indicator designed to monitor transparency of the individual measures. Targets have not been set.		

* A public awareness survey will be commissioned. The survey will provide figures for public awareness and enable targets to be set.

ANNEX 2 – PROGRESS INDICATORS S&E OP

Progress Indicators for monitoring progress on implementation of Communication Plan for S&E OP.

Indicator Type	Indicator	Baseline 2007	Mid-term 2010	Final Target
Output (Key management indicator)	Number of people dealt with/accessing information (website and public information office) breakdown by Operational Programme	3,000 per month	3,000 per month	3,000 per month
Output S&E	Number of annual events	0	3	7
Output	Number of seminars/presentations	0	45	105
Output	Number of public launches/events/press releases/interviews of interventions by Operational Programme	This is a monitoring indicator designed to monitor transparency of the individual measures. Targets have not been set.		
Impact or result	Level of satisfaction with seminars and related documentation			
Impact	Level of overall public awareness of the EU Structural Funds Programmes*.			
Impact	Level of awareness of the role of the S&E OP*.			
Impact	Level of awareness of individual Funds (ESF and ERDF)*			
Impact	Local press coverage by operational programme/priority.	This is a monitoring indicator designed to monitor transparency of the individual measures. Targets have not been set.		

* A public awareness survey will be commissioned. The survey will provide figures for public awareness and enable targets to be set.

ANNEX 3 – IMPLEMENTATION

CONTACT NAMES AND ADDRESSES AT NATIONAL AND OP LEVEL

NSRF

Barry Harrington,
EU Structural Funds Policy Section,
Department of Finance,
Mount Street,
Dublin 2,
Ireland.
Barry.Harrington@finance.gov.ie
Tel: +353 1 6045429

Human Capital Investment Operational Programme

John Kelly,
Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment,,
Davitt House,
Adelaide Road,
Dublin 2,
Ireland.
John_m_kelly@entemp.ie
Tel: +353 1 6313120

Border Midland and Western Regional Operational Programme

Gerry Lavelle,
BMW Regional Assembly,
The Square,
Ballaghaderreen,
Co. Roscommon,
Ireland.
glavelle@bmwassembly.ie
Tel: +353 94 9862970

Southern and Eastern Regional Operational Programme

Derville Killian,
S&E Regional Assembly,
O'Connell Street,
Waterford,
Ireland
dkillian@seregassembly.ie
Tel: +353 51 860700