



Ireland's EU Structural Funds
Programmes 2007 - 2013

Co-funded by the Irish Government
and the European Union

European Social Fund Human Capital Investment Operational Programme 2007-2013



EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND

Communication Plan



an roinn fiontar, trádála agus fostaíochta
department of enterprise, trade and employment

Index

Section	Page	Content
1	3	Introduction
2	4	Aims and Target Groups
2.1	4	The Aims of this communication plan
2.2	4	The key target groups of the Communication Plan
2.3	5	Target Groups and Information and Publicity tools Matrix
3	6	Strategy and Content of Information and Publicity Measures
3.1	6	Key messages to be conveyed in Information and Publicity Activities
3.2	7	Strategic approach for Information and Publicity Activities
3.3	8	Promotion of ESF Policy
3.4	8	Roles and Responsibilities for Information and Publicity Activities
3.5	11	Publicity Activities Matrix
4	14	Budget
5	15	Bodies Responsible for Implementation
6	16	Evaluation
6.1	16	Criteria and Indicators
6.2	16	Implementation and Monitoring
6.3	17	Ensuring Transparency/Information Measures for Potential Beneficiaries
6.4	17	Information and Publicity measures for the Public
6.5	18	Responsible Persons and Exchange of Experience
6.6	18	Amendments to the Communications Plan
Annex 1	19	Budget
Annex 2	20	Information and Publicity Indicators
Annex 3	21	Contact Names and Addresses for OP Level Information

1. Introduction

This is the Communication Plan for European Social Fund (ESF) Human Capital Investment Operational Programme (HCI OP) for the period 2007-2013. The plan sets out the information and publicity measures that will be taken to promote the transparency of the programme. The plan has been prepared by the HCI OP Managing Authority, Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment.

Article 32 of the Council General Regulation 1083/2006 requires each member state to draw up operational programmes to outline how the structural funds are utilised. The Human Capital Investment Operational Programme was adopted by the European Commission on the 6th November 2007. The Operational Programme's budget is €1,360 million of which the contribution of the European Social Fund is €375 million.

This Communication Plan sets out the information and publicity strategy for Ireland's ESF and sets out how the Managing Authority and other bodies responsible for administering and delivering the ESF programme will provide information on the Operational Programme and publicise its outcomes and achievements. The Human Capital Investment OP Communication Plan has been drawn up in accordance with the Council Regulation (EC) 1083/2006 and Commission Implementation Regulation 1828/2006, for submission to the Commission by 6th of March 2008, i.e. within four months of the date of adoption of the Operational Programme.

2. Aims and Target Groups

2.1 The aims of this communication plan:

- Increase public awareness, transparency and visibility of the ESF.
- Highlight the role and contribution to Ireland of the European Social Fund and inform key target groups of progress achieved as a result of its implementation.
- Ensure that assistance under the ESF is transparent by providing potential beneficiaries with clear and detailed information on conditions of eligibility and procedures for applying for funding.
- Support the implementation of the ESF by increasing the understanding among potential beneficiaries, the general public, implementing bodies, the social partners and other interested organisations of the role and contribution of the ESF.
- Ensure that the responsibilities of beneficiaries, as specified in Article 8 of Regulation (EC) 1828/2006, are understood and applied.
- Disseminate information on ESF widely through all available communication channels.
- Ensure compliance with the EU Regulations.

2.2 The key target groups for the Communications Plan:

- The General Public
- Intermediate bodies and beneficiaries
- Central Government Departments
- Public bodies and Agencies (including Regional Assemblies, Regional and Local Authorities)
- Elected Public Representatives (Local, Regional, National and EU)
- Irish-speaking public
- International Groups (visiting groups, parliamentary delegations and other Member State Managing Authorities)
- The Social Partners incorporating Trade Unions, Employers and Business Groups, Farming Organisations, NGO's and the Community and Voluntary sector
- Local, Regional and National opinion formers and influencers including Journalists and the Media, Academics, Researchers and Educators

2.3 Target Groups and Information and Publicity Tools Matrix

	Seminars & conferences	Press Releases	ESF/SF Newsletter	Advertising	Evaluations/Research	Website	ESF Publications and Reports	Project level promotion	Promotional Materials
General Public	●	●	●	●		●			●
Intermediate Bodies	●		●		●	●	●		●
Government Depts	●		●		●	●	●		
Public Bodies & Agencies	●		●		●	●	●		
Public Representatives	●		●		●	●	●		
Irish speakers		●	●	●		●			●
Visiting Delegations	●						●		●
Social Partners	●		●					●	
Influencers	●		●		●	●	●		

3 Strategy and Content of Information and Publicity Measures

3.1 Key Messages to be conveyed in Information and Publicity Activities

The key messages to be promoted in relation to the HCI OP include the following:

- The HCI OP has the overall objective of developing the workforce in terms of both its size and skills base and will have the effect of increasing the adaptability of the workforce as discussed in the Community Strategic Guidelines while also taking account of the need to strengthen economic and social cohesion as discussed in the European Social Fund regulation.
- The objectives of the HCI OP 2007 – 2013 are:
 - To provide education, training and other supports necessary to upskill the workforce as a means of enabling it to respond to the challenges posed by international competition, to enhance worker productivity and to assist in meeting the evolving needs of industry and the economy
 - To provide for increased activation and participation with certain groups who can contribute to Ireland’s workforce but who face barriers to employment, progression and participation.
- The role of ESF in the HCI OP is to co-finance niche interventions complementary to nationally funded interventions planned under Ireland’s National Development Plan Human Capital Priority and specifically relating to Equality/Discrimination and Improving workforce access for marginalised groups
- Activities supported under the HCI OP will help meet Ireland’s commitments under the National Reform Programme and will strongly align with the objectives of the Lisbon Strategy to create a dynamic and competitive knowledge-based economy, with more and better jobs and greater social inclusion.

The following key facts will be used to support the key messages:

- The ESF is investing €375 million in Ireland over the period 2007-2013.
- Overall investment under the HCI OP amounts to over €1,360 million.
- Areas of investment under HCI OP 2007 – 2013 include:
 - The training of Employees
 - Increasing the numbers of Graduates to meet the needs of the Economy

- Investing in Vocational Education and Accredited Education
- Supporting People with a disability
- Targeting Young People and Early School Leavers
- Provision of Basic Education Skills
- Supporting Equality and Equal Opportunities
- Supporting Migrant Workers

3.2 Strategic approach for Information and Publicity Activities

The key strategies to be utilised in relation to information and publicity activities having regard to the added value of EU assistance at national, regional and local level will be as follows:

- All potential information channels to promote the ESF and the HCI OP will be availed of in order to achieve the overall aims of the strategy in a cost-effective manner.
- Awareness measures and information actions will be undertaken at the most appropriate level so as to ensure that publicity activities are focussed at the relevant target groups.
- Information and publicity activities will aim at the broadest possible media coverage using all suitable forms and methods of communication at the appropriate territorial level. They will aim to inform the media, both nationally and locally, about the role of the ESF in co-financing this OP.
- Information and publicity activities will seek to focus on the contribution of the ESF to areas of investment under this OP. This will include highlighting of particular aspects of ongoing ESF supported activities or by publicising pilot or innovative actions supported under the OP.

Such activities will also seek to highlight the support of the ESF to Irelands labour market, equality and social inclusion policies through the ESF's role in the achievement of full employment and quality and productivity at work, the promotion of social inclusion (including the access of disadvantaged people to employment) and the reduction national, regional and local employment disparities.

3.3 Promotion of ESF Policy

In order to increase awareness and understanding, it is important that clear and simple messages be communicated. The contribution of the ESF will be promoted to citizens, potential beneficiaries and beneficiaries with the aim of highlighting the role of the EU in key areas of policy and the implementation thereof.

The role of the European Union will be explained in terms of promoting the aims, contributions and achievements of the ESF. 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 also be made, subject to certain exemptions outlined under Article 9, specifically to the '*European Social Fund*' (as the structural fund concerned) and the statement "*Investing in your future*" (which highlights the value added of the EU Intervention).

3.4 Roles and Responsibilities for Information and Publicity activities

- The **Managing Authority** will be responsible for information and publicity activities undertaken 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 OP and to publicise the progress being made in implementing the OP and the achievements of specific priorities/themes.

- **Intermediate bodies and Beneficiaries** will promote the individual priorities/themes 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 (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)

- The **Managing Authority** will tailor promotional activities to their specific audiences at national, regional and local levels, specifically utilising national, regional and local press and radio, as appropriate.

- The **Managing Authority** will be responsible for ensuring that the EU Structural Funds publicity and information requirements are met for the OP. In order to achieve this, the Managing Authority will include guidance on meeting the Information and Publicity requirements in Guidance Seminars will be held for all Intermediate and Beneficiary bodies. In addition, beneficiaries will be made aware of their responsibilities in informing the public of the assistance obtained from the European Union.
- The **Managing Authority** will provide advice, expertise and will assist in the implementation and delivery of this Communications Plan.
- The **Managing Authority** will enter into written agreements with Intermediary Bodies that will set out their respective roles and responsibilities and will include clauses relating to ensuring compliance with information and publicity requirements.
- 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 Regulation (EC) 1083/2006 and Article 13 of Commission Regulation 1828/2006 will include checks on compliance with Information and Publicity regulations.
- The **Managing Authority** will host a major information activity to launch the new HCI-OP following its approval by the European Commission. (This event already took place in December 2007 in conjunction with the celebration of 50 Years of ESF in Europe).
- The **Managing Authority** will host a major information activity each year with a theme relevant to the achievement of ESF objectives.
- The **Managing Authority** will fly the European Flag each year for one week commencing on the 9th May in front of the Managing Authority premises.
- The **Managing Authority** will send to the Commission an Annual Implementation Report on the implementation of the operational programme that will set out the actions undertaken in the previous year and the contribution of the EU structural funds. This report 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 amendments to the communication plan.

- The **Managing Authority** will in due course, invite representatives of the EU Commission to attend major public events, major conferences, launches, openings, announcements and will occasionally invite senior Commission personnel to address meetings. This will highlight the EU contribution to the OP.
- The **Managing Authority** will inform the HCI OP Monitoring Committee of progress in implementing the Communication Plan, the information and publicity measures carried out and the means of communication used. Progress reports to Monitoring Committee, will include a section on the implementation of the Communication Plan. **Intermediate and Beneficiary** bodies will report to the ESF Managing Authority (and through the MA to the HCI OP Monitoring Committee), as required, on planned and completed information actions relating to their priority and for promotion of the role of ESF funding where appropriate.
- The **Managing Authority** will arrange for the publication [electronically or otherwise] of the list of beneficiaries, the names of the operations and the amount of public funding allocated to the operations (participants in an operation supported by the ESF shall not be named).

3.5 Publicity Activities Matrix

Activity Description	Target Group	Timeframe	Budget
<p>Major information activity for launch of OP. This event will include a seminar celebrating 50 years of the ESF.</p> <p>Indicator: 1 event</p>	All	December 2007	€30,000
<p>Annual Major Information activity. This activity may take the form of a seminar, conference, workshops or other high profile activity. The aim of this activity will be to raise awareness of the contribution of the ESF to Ireland. The event will take place on an annual basis and aim to gain maximum publicity for the ESF</p> <p>2007 indicator: 1 event per year 2013 indicator: 1 event per year</p>	All	Annually	€25,000 per year
<p>Maintenance of an up to date and high quality website. The ESF website will be the main communications channel for OP based information and will include all published documentation, list of beneficiaries, regulations and circulars and details of events and activities to promote the ESF</p> <p>2010 indicator: 5,000 hits per year 2013 indicator: 10,000 hits per year</p>	All	Ongoing	€30,000 initial development €2,000 per year hosting and maintenance
<p>Flying the European Flag each year in for 1 week commencing 9 May in front of the Managing Authority premises. This activity will take place on an annual basis and be recorded by photograph for audit purposes</p> <p>2010 indicator: Flag to fly week commencing 9 May 2013 indicator: Flag to fly week commencing 9 May</p>	General Public	Annually	-
<p>Publication of list of beneficiaries. The list of beneficiaries will be published on the ESF website annually and also included in the Annual Report. The list will contain details of beneficiaries and ESF amounts allocated to each beneficiary (Individual participants will not be named)</p> <p>2010 indicator: List to be published on website each year 2013 indicator: List to be published on website each year</p>	General Public	Annually	-

<p>Publication and Distribution of the OP text. The text of the OP (in Irish and English) will be published and distributed to relevant stakeholders (including the members of the Monitoring Committee), Government Departments, Public Bodies and the General Public. The OP text will also be available in electronic format on CD-Rom and as a download on the ESF website</p> <p>Indicator: Publication of OP in English and Irish in print and electronic format</p>	<p>General Public, Intermediate Bodies, Government Departments, Public Bodies, Public Representatives, Irish Speakers, Social Partners and Influencers</p>	<p>2007/2008</p>	<p>€30,000</p>
<p>Presentations on the ESF delivered. Presentations on the contribution of the ESF to Ireland to be made to various groups both nationally and in international context. These may be made to visiting groups or in seminars conferences.</p> <p>2010 indicator: 2 presentations per year 2013 indicator: 2 presentations per year</p>	<p>General Public, Intermediate Bodies, Government Departments, Public Bodies, Public Representatives, Visiting Delegations, Social Partners and Influencers</p>	<p>Annually</p>	<p>This activity will be funded under appropriate budget headings and in some cases may be nominal as costs may be covered by event hosts</p>
<p>Participation in Conferences/Events. The Managing Authority will participate in ESF related conferences and events providing both published publicity information material and direct information to participants.</p> <p>2010 indicator: 2 per year 2013 indicator: 2 per year</p>	<p>General Public, Intermediate Bodies, Government Departments, Public Bodies, Public Representatives, Visiting Delegations, Social Partners and Influencers</p>	<p>Annually</p>	<p>This activity will be funded under appropriate budget headings and in some cases may be nominal as costs may be covered by event hosts</p>

<p>ESF Information/Promotion Material.</p> <p>This activity involves the production of information leaflets, booklets, publication of evaluations, audio visual promotional items, reports and other documents which will be used to raise awareness and promote the HCI OP</p> <p>2010 indicator: 2 publications per year 2 articles per year</p> <p>2013 indicator: 2 activities per year 2 articles per year</p>	All	Annually	<p>Information booklet €10,000</p> <p>Annual Newsletter €60,000</p> <p>Joint Structural Funds Information Activities €50,000</p> <p>Compliance booklet €5,000</p> <p>Publicity stands and promotional items €30,000</p> <p>Local Media Projects €200,000</p>
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4. Budget (Indicative)

The Technical Assistance Priority of the HCI OP provides the main funding for information and publicity activities for the ESF. An indicative budget in the region of €0.9 million is proposed to support information and publicity measures under this Communication Plan.

The budget includes items listed below:

- Launch of Operational Programme
- Website development and maintenance
- Annual Implementation Report
- Preparing and issuing press releases
- Newsletter highlighting ESF achievements
- Participating in local radio interviews
- Photography
- Advertising in relevant publications
- Costs associated with publishing advertorials
- Production of promotional materials
- Attendance at EU events relating to Communications
- Hosting of visiting delegations
- Study Visits
- 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)
- Making presentations to relevant official Committees and Forums
- Collating information and publicity actions for monitoring and progress report purposes
- Evaluations and Research of effectiveness of Information and Publicity activities

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 ESF at priority/intervention level. Detailed estimates of the budget are contained at Annex I of this document

5. Bodies Responsible for Implementation

Article 2.2 (d) of (EC) No 1828/2006 requires that the administrative departments or bodies responsible for the implementation of information and publicity activities be identified. As elaborated in Section 3.4, written agreements will be prepared between the Managing Authority and Intermediate bodies to outline the roles and responsibilities accruing generally in relation to the management and financial control under the ESF regime. Details (including contact information) of Intermediate Bodies and Beneficiaries under the HCI OP are contained in Annex 3 of this plan.

6. Evaluation

6.1 Criteria and Indicators

The criteria to be used to evaluate the information and publicity measures in terms of visibility and awareness of the operational programme, and of the role played by the Community, are set out by the indicators set out in Annex 2 of this document. The HCI OP Monitoring Committee will formally agree these indicators for monitoring the implementation of the information and publicity measures.

These indicators will be used as a benchmark of the effectiveness of the plan's implementation and to inform communications interventions over the period of the plan. The ESF Managing Authority will be responsible for commissioning public awareness surveys and other relevant evaluations of the effectiveness of information and communication activities.

As required under Article 4 of the Council Implementation Regulation 1828/2006, an assessment of the results of the information and publicity measures in terms of visibility and awareness of the operational programme and of the role played by the EU will be included in the Annual Implementation Report for 2010 and in the Final Implementation plan.

6.2 Implementation and Monitoring

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

- Reporting on the progress of the information and publicity measures during the programming period will be through reports provided for the OP Monitoring Committee. 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 the ESF will be addressed via publicity and information activities at the time of meetings of the Monitoring Committee as laid out in Section 3.3 above.

- The ESF Managing Authority will prepare and disseminate detailed identity guidelines in order to ensure the widespread, uniform and consistent application of the correct logos, signage and other appropriate National and ESF branding (ESF, EU, and the Department/Agency) in the correct format in all cases. These guidelines will be issued to all Intermediate bodies and Beneficiaries of ESF funding and will also be available electronically on the Managing Authority's website, www.esf.ie.

6.3 Ensuring Transparency/Information Measures for Potential Beneficiaries

The Managing Authority through written 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;
 - (d) The contacts at national, regional or local level that can provide information on the operational programme;
 - (e) Reporting, auditing and other financial management criteria under the OP.
- 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 Regulation (EC) 1828/2006.
- Ensure Intermediate bodies publicise the availability of funding, the selection process, deadlines, eligibility criteria and associated regulations concerning EU funding through all appropriate channels.

6.4 Information and Publicity Measures for the Public

Notwithstanding anything in this Communications Plan, the Managing Authority will be solely responsible for certifying compliance with the information and publicity measures set down in Council Implementation Regulation 1828/2006 in accordance with the agreed financial control procedures relating to the drawdown of ESF.

6.5 Responsible Persons and Exchange of Experience

Article 10 of Commission Regulation (EC) No 1828/2006 requires that the 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 HCI OP 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 Regulation (EC) 1828/2006) the relevant contact persons will participate in appropriate Community networks outlined in Article 10 of the Regulation.

6.6 Amendments to Communication Plan

Amendments to the Communication Plan can be submitted to the ESF Monitoring Committee by the Managing Authority for decision. The content of any major amendments to the Communication Plan shall be included in the Annual Report on implementation of the operational programme submitted to the European Commission.

ANNEX 1 – BUDGET

Required Activities and Related Indicative Costs (where possible)

Information & Publicity Activities (draft)	Indicative Cost (€) (Estimate)
Launch of Operational Programme	30,000
Printing and Translation of HCI OP	30,000
Joint information activities with other Structural Funds and the NSRF	50,000
Public information brochure on ESF	10,000
Development and maintenance of website: information and supporting compliance with information and publicity requirements	30,000 plus annual hosting & maintenance - 12,000 (€2,000 pa)
Production of Guide to Structural Funds	10,000
Compliance with technical requirements: Production of publicity guidelines booklet, development and publication of logo and strap line files. Display stands Standardised publicity materials.	Booklet: 5,000 Stands: 10,000 Publicity items: 20,000
Publication of list of beneficiaries (website)	Nominal
Participation in EU Information and Communications networks (2 per annum)	20,000
Information/study visits of other Member States	40,000
Evaluations and Research of effectiveness of Information and Publicity activities (performance indicator)	120,000
Local media project (jointly with other Structural Funds)	200,000
Monitoring Implementation of Communications plan and production of implementation report in 2010 & Final Implementation Plan.	50,000
Annual Event/Conference	150,000 (25,000 pa)
Annual ESF newsletter	60,000
Miscellaneous translation costs	80,000
TOTAL INDICATIVE BUDGET	927,000

ANNEX 2 - INFORMATION AND PUBLICITY INDICATORS

Indicator Type	Indicator	Baseline 2007	Mid-term 2010 (per annum)	Final Target 2013 (per annum)
Output (Key management indicator)	Number of People requesting/accessing Information (Website/Public Information Office)	0	5,000 hits	10,000 hits
Output	Number of high profile annual information activities	1 activity	1 activity	1 activity
Output	Number of seminars/presentations?	1 activity	2 activity	2 activity
Output	Number of ESF publications produced	1 item	2 items	2 items
Output	Number of articles on ESF	1 item	2 items	2 items
Result	Level of satisfaction with seminars and related documentation	This is a monitoring indicator. Targets have not been set.		
Impact	Level of overall public awareness of the ESF A public awareness survey will provide figures for public awareness			
Impact	Local press coverage of HCI OP	This is a monitoring indicator. Targets have not been set.		

ANNEX 3 - CONTACT NAMES AND ADDRESSES

OP LEVEL INFORMATION

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IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL INFORMATION

Intermediate Body

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NDP/SFU Unit
Training College Building
Marlborough Street
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Tel: + 353 1 8892396
www.education.ie

Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment
LMPU
Davitt House
Adelaide Road
Dublin 2
Tel: + 353 1 6313209
www.enterprise.ie

Department of Equality, Justice and Law Reform
Organisational Development Unit
Pinebrook House
71/74 Harcourt Street
Dublin 2
Tel: + 353 1 6028213
www.justice.ie

Department of Social and Family Affairs
SFSS
Riverview House
Carrick on Shannon
Co Leitrim
Tel: + 71 9672503
www.welfare.ie

Beneficiary

Higher Education
Authority
Vocational Educational
Committees

FAS
Bodies selected to
participate in
Transnational and
Interregional actions

Equality Authority
The Reception and
Integration Agency

Department of Social and
Family Affairs