



Communication Strategy

Drug Policy Network South East Europe

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1. Purpose of the Strategy

The purpose of DPNSEE Communication Strategy is to plan communication strategically, contribute to managing and sustaining Network's relationship with key project stakeholders, be a safeguard in ensuring the Network's reputation, and contributing to the achievement of strategic and operational goals and objectives of DPNSEE.

The strategy aims to provide communication tools and strategic direction for the DPNSEE Board and Office (and Project Implementation Team when DPNSEE is implementing projects) in order to achieve communication goals as set in this document. It lays out Network's communication goals, key audiences and key messages, define communication tools to be used for each target group and structure communication planning.

Communication outputs to be produced over in the next three years, persons responsible for their implementation and possible risks/challenges faced by the Network will be discussed before the General Assembly to finalize this document.

2. Communication Objectives

The overall objective of this strategy is to support DPNSEE in achieving its objectives through good communication. More specifically:

- Keep key stakeholders informed about the activities and achievements of DPNSEE and members of the Network
- Ensure that project partners, systems stakeholders and the general public understand how DPNSEE is working, and its specific approach
- Communicate impacting systemic changes and good practices to different target groups
- Establishing a 'knowledge broker role' in the area of harm reduction and drug policies for the purpose of joint learning and sharing good practices that evolved from the interventions and activities of DPNSEE and Member organizations
- Facilitate good communication within the DPNSEE project and among Member organizations

One goal of the DPNSEE communication is to contribute to trust-building and initiate dialog to influence policymakers in the areas related to harm reduction and drug policies. Trust building is the DPNSEE core objective for positioning among various stakeholders.

DPNSEE positions itself as a facilitator of systemic changes and one of the communication goals is to communicate this role clearly to all relevant stakeholders, explaining the role and mandate of the Network.

DPNSEE also wants to be a transparent, inclusive, reliable, and credible partner. This will include good communication with the governance bodies including General Assembly, Board and Member organizations. Good internal communication is crucial for achieving its goal and outcomes. It will support good knowledge management and operations within the Network.

DPNSEE will regularly update partners on the developments, progress and achievements of the Network, report on specific results and successfully completed interventions, share information and obtained knowledge, as well as good practices from other countries and globally.

DPNSEE will establish good relations with the media and nurture them advocacy campaigns.

3. Key Audiences

DPNSEE is working and engaging with numerous audiences, across different sectors. The Network is committed to maintaining positive, fruitful and long-lasting relationships with all of them.

Audiences	Details	Communication needs	Communication channels
DPNSEE Office and Project Implementation (internal communication)			
DPNSEE Board and Office	Office and project staff	Information and knowledge sharing, reporting, joint development work, strategizing	Direct communication, weekly staff meetings, notes from relevant meetings, reports from MOs, informal communication and exchange
Donor on specific project implemented by DPNSEE and Member organizations	Priority entity for overall reporting on project implementation	Reporting and information sharing, strategic thinking and planning	Direct communication, monthly Management Report, Project reports, success stories, media reports on project
DPNSEE in Consortia	When DPNSEE has consortium partner	Reporting and information sharing, strategic thinking and planning	Direct communication, monthly Management Report, Project reports, success stories, media reports on project

Audiences	Details	Communication needs	Communication channels
Projects owners, governance and advisory bodies (internal communication)			
Donor	Priority entity in communication structure. Demanding in terms of reporting and project implementation.	Reporting, information sharing	Direct communication, monthly Management Report, Project reports, success stories, media reports on project
General Assembly	GA is steering body providing strategic decisions and elects the Board	Information sharing; updates on progress of the projects; approval of strategies	GA has the next meeting in February 2021 and it will adopt strategic documents, reports
Member organizations	Advise, provide feedback on programme activities and comment on work plans and progress reporting	Information sharing, periodical update on project implementation	Direct communication, emails, strategic documents, YPO, annual / half yearly reports
Board	Interested to receive regular updates and information about planning, activities, initiatives and opportunities. Project implementation and project status.	Information sharing, regular updates on project implementation	Direct communication, emails, monthly management reports from the Office

Audiences	Details	Communication needs	Communication channels
External to DPNSEE			
Global Networks, academic and research partners	DPNSEE main partnering global and regional networks	General update on the project development and policy developments; specific updates in the fields in which we collaborate with them	Semi-annual and yearly reports, website, updates on specific developments, direct communication, emails
Volunteers, young activists and young researchers	Volunteers young activists and young researchers who were involved in Member organization activities; potentially drivers of change	<p>Information sharing progress on projects implementation; approach of the project; showcasing experience and good practices.</p> <p>Joint discussion on problems and opportunities for triggering systemic changes, sharing of systemic change and good practices (principles).</p> <p>Advocacy Initiatives and engagement</p>	Events (workshops, conferences, roundtables, public discussions), newsletter, website, social media, intervention brief, bilateral interaction (meetings and discussions, working towards systemic changes)
Community around Harm reduction and Drug Policy in SEE	<p>Beneficiaries and primary target audience. Includes universities, institutes, academies, health institutions, social care institutions, police departments, governmental bodies for drug policies.</p> <p>Diverse, different levels of power and influence in the community. Some are interested in getting the support from DPNSEE for various activities; others want to observe developments and changes.</p> <p>Some of them are blocking the initiatives of DPNSEE</p>	<p>Advocacy initiatives on National or Regional level</p> <p>Information sharing; progress on projects implementation; approach of the projects; showcasing experience and good practices.</p> <p>Joint discussion on problems and opportunities for triggering systemic changes, sharing of systemic change and good practices (principles)</p>	Direct communication, emails, events (workshops, conferences, roundtables, public discussions), newsletter, website, social media, intervention brief, bilateral interaction (meetings and discussions, working towards systemic changes)

Audiences	Details	Communication needs	Communication channels
External to DPNSEE			
Government Institutions	<p>Beneficiaries and primary target audience. Including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <Define target audience in each country> <p>Different levels of interests, power and understanding of evidence-based policy making. Often sceptical towards working with the communities (same applied vice versa)</p>	<p>Dialogue and information sharing; presentation of benefits of collaboration with DPNSEE and regional approach.</p> <p>Joint discussion on problems and opportunities for triggering systemic changes, sharing of systemic change and good practices (principles)</p>	<p>Direct communication, emails, events (workshops, conferences, roundtables, public discussions), newsletter, website, social media.</p> <p>Project Intervention brief, bilateral interaction (meetings and discussions, working towards systemic changes)</p>
Civil Society	Beneficiaries, primary target audience. Includes CSOs, think tanks, etc.	Dialogue and information sharing	Direct communication, emails, events, newsletter, website, social media
Private Sector	<p>Possible partners in implementing some of the activities. Includes chambers of commerce and other key actors, professional associations, private companies.</p> <p>Leave No One Behind (LNOB) principle as key Unique Selling Point.</p>	Information sharing, providing them with concrete examples how cooperation with DPNSEE community benefits their work	Direct communication; showcase cooperation between the private sector and DPNSEE community through our communication products, periodical publication of achievements based on Corporate Social Responsibility

Audiences	Details	Communication needs	Communication channels
External to DPNSEE			
International Community present in SEE	<p>Supports reform of public administration and policy making process in Serbia (RCC, UN, UN agencies, OSCE, CoE, GIZ, EU IPA/ Technical Assistance in various ministries, bilateral donors).</p> <p>There is low interest on issues related to drug policy.</p> <p>Potential Entry point for DPNSEE is on issues related to Security, Human Security and LNOB</p>	Information sharing	Direct communication, emails, newsletter, project briefs, events, periodic meetings, website
Media	Needs relevant and topical information. Includes TV and radio stations, newspapers and magazines, web portals	Key messages on LNOB	Direct communication, press release, events, website and social media
General Public	Citizens of DPNSEE who stand to benefit from improved drug policies in SEE	Information sharing about benefits of DPNSEE advocacy efforts and improved policy-making in the area of Drug policy and Harm reduction. Showcasing positive results and examples of good practices.	Website, social media, events (via the media)

4. Key Messages

The key messages outlined below will be shared in communication with relevant stakeholders:

Please enter the key message from the strategy: Mission of the DPNSEE? What you want to achieve? Message should also include call for action?

It can be structure as:

What is the problem?

What is the solution?

Why I should support you?

Principles and approach of DPNSEE

To be taken from the Strategy

SDGs 2030 and LNOB as core principle for next strategy cycle

Systemic changes we want to promote

Dialog for change – Policy dialog on Harm reduction and Drug Policy

Increased regional and international collaboration

5. Communication Tools

5.1 Office and Project Implementation Team (on specific projects)

- Staff meetings
- Collaborative spaces (ZOHO, KOBO, Office 365)
- DPNSEE Server
- Emails and calendars
- Informal communication

5.2 Project Owners, Governance and Advisory Bodies

- Reports
- Meetings
- Sharing analysis, documentation, stories, experiences

5.3 External to DPNSEE

- Bilateral interactions – meetings and discussions
- Website
- DPNSEE Newsletter
- DPNSEE Factsheet
- Project Intervention Brief
- Story of Change
- Blogs and contributions to other blogs (*needs to be discussed, probably cut blogs*)
- Case studies
- Social Media - LinkedIn, Twitter, and Facebook.
- DPNSEE YouTube channel - for posting video material, which can then be shared on DPNSEE website and social media
- Publications
- Participation in different events (e.g. speak at conferences)
- Meetings
- Events - workshops, conferences, seminars, round tables, debates, study tours, regional exchange, etc.
- Press Releases
- OP-ED, articles
- Media reports - TV, radio, print, digital

6. Communication Plans (to be discussed)

Planning of communication action plans for each year will be conducted during the preparation for the upcoming year. The action plan will include communication outputs planned for that year with set deadlines or provisional timeframe for implementing them, as well as persons responsible for their implementation. The overall responsibility for drafting communication action plan lies with the Office and Communication Officer (if any) with relevant inputs from the Board, while the responsibility for its implementation will depend on communication outputs and particular action items.

In addition, planning of each project intervention will consider the communication aspect – communication approach for the particular target group and communication needs of the project intervention coordinated and/or implemented by DPNSEE. Each Project Intervention Note will include planning of communication activities specifically designed for the particular intervention and its target audience. The responsibility for identifying communication needs will rest with the Programme Manager, while the design of communication activities will be done by the Communication Officer in coordination with the Secretariat.

Types of communication outputs that DPNSEE plans to work on in the future (to be discussed and approved):

Output	Description	Frequency	Responsible	Target Group
DPNSEE Factsheet	Fact-based description of the DPNSEE, achieved results until now and facts about the Network and member organizations	One-off publication to be updated only if major changes occur		All relevant stake holders and potential new partners, it can be used also as signature in new partnerships. Open issue is language and should it be translated in local languages?
DPNSEE Annual Report	Reports on projects progress and performance towards the donor and projects stakeholders; It should contain information on membership development and brief summaries from Member organizations; for external use, can be published on the website as well	Created half-yearly and annually		Member organizations in the General Assembly and general public – to be published on the web site of the Network
Office report	The Office report is written monthly and provides a summary on key developments in the context of DPNSEE, brief of important meetings and developments in interventions and projects	Monthly	DPNSEE Office	DPNSEE Board

DPNSEE Communication Strategy

Output	Description	Frequency	Responsible	Target Group
Project Intervention Note	Provides a detailed outline of a planned and implemented project intervention, providing the base for decision making and monitoring	Based on project implementation	Project communication officer	DPNSEE Board and relevant project stakeholders
DPNSEE Newsletter	Highlights Network activities in the previous 3 months to be published DPNSEE website and disseminated both internally and externally by emails to project stakeholders and other interested parties in accordance to the Strategy	Published quarterly	Communications Officer (CO)	Relevant stakeholders
DPNSEE website content	Updates on new and finalised project interventions, news articles, any other additional content relevant to the work of Network	Updated periodically	CO with inputs from Office, Member organisations and project managers	Project stakeholders, general public
Project Intervention Brief	Tells the story of a specific intervention showcasing the approach and the work of the project. For internal and external use	Created annually and regularly updated	Project managers and Office	<i>To be discussed if this communication product is needed</i>
Communication as part of project interventions	Each project intervention guide should include a section on communication, which would consider the communication needs of the particular target group and define a communication action plan for that intervention. For internal use.	Created regularly	Project managers and CO	Project Management Team
Story of change	Story of Change (SoC) a particular person or organisation affected by a project intervention; for external use – targeting wider and non-professional audience. Can be published on the website. SoC should show systemic approach of DPNSEE including the achieved results in advocacy process	Published periodically	Project managers and CO	DPNSEE Member organizations, DPNSEE potential donors, the media, general public

Output	Description	Frequency	Responsible	Target Group
Case study	An in-depth account of a project intervention, including impact assessment and lessons learned; for internal and external use	TBD	Project managers and CO	University and Research community
Blogs				<i>Needs to be discussed</i>
Events	Project launching, workshops, conferences, seminars, study tours, etc.			Project stakeholders

7. Resources

Human resources allocated to the overall communication of the Network involve allocating part of the working time to Financial and Administrative Officer (what is the percentage? 10%?). Also, Programme Managers will allocate some time to identifying communication needs when drafting Project Intervention Notes.

Possibility of hiring a PR agency when particular events are organised should be considered (conferences, press tours, etc.), as they have better access to the traditional media and have an advantage of more people and ideas at their disposal.

DPNSEE will aim to create the position for the Communication officer - *to be discussed*.

8. Risks

DPNSEE needs to build its own credibility and trust between the community of relevant stakeholders and the policy-makers through transparency, consistent information and knowledge sharing, showcasing good practices and successful project results.

The nature of the DPNSEE filed of work can also present a challenge in clearly communicating to the stakeholders, as well as the general public. Harm reduction and drug policies can often be seen as promotion of use of drugs in the eyes of general public.

Being a loose network of diverse members DPNSEE will have to invest time and efforts in clearly communicating and explaining its different, systemic approach and slowly build trust and credibility in the community through consistent transparency and showcasing positive examples and results.

Additional Risks to be added based on experiences until now?

9. Monitoring and Evaluation on Communication Strategy and Action Plan

DPNSEE will regularly monitor the effectiveness of its communication strategy and activities. This will be achieved through the following indicators:

- Unique visits to DPNSEE website per defined period.
- Number of subscriptions to the DPNSEE quarterly newsletter.
- Number of downloaded documents from the DPNSEE website.
- Number of followers on social networks.
- Number of likes and shares of the content posted on social networks.
- Press clipping for DPNSEE mentions in the media, as well as relevant topics being discussed, based on defined key-words.
- Comparing year-on-year data for all points above.
- Interviews with stakeholders - evaluation sheets, online surveys, individual meetings, video confessions, etc. which will also be used for creating individual stories.
- Periodic reports.
- Feedback from users