

# PPRD East 2

Guidelines to develop the National  
Communication Strategy for Raising  
Awareness about Disasters



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## Introduction

The PPRD East Programme Phase 2 (PPRD East 2) has been conceived as a natural continuation of the PPRD East Programme (2010-2014). This second phase of the EU Flagship Initiative started on 1 December, 2014 with an overall budget of EUR 5.5 M. The PPRD East 2 is implemented in six countries of the Eastern Partnership (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine) and is based on the results and accomplishments of the Phase 1 focusing on further development of the national institutional and regulatory framework with an emphasis on *Acquis Communautaire* and EU Civil Protection policies, on civil protection and disaster risk management capacity building, on enhancement of the Electronic Regional Risk Atlas and on further awareness-raising activities aiming to build resilience to risks and accidents, natural and man-made.

The overall objective of the PPRD East 2 is to contribute to the peace, stability, security and prosperity of the Eastern Partner Countries and to protect the environment, the population, the cultural heritage, the resources and the infrastructure of the region by strengthening the countries' resilience, preparedness and response to manmade disasters and those caused by natural hazards. The specific purposes are to strengthen the Partner Countries' civil protection and disaster risk management capacities, to strengthen regional cooperation, and to bring the Partner Countries progressively closer to the EU Civil Protection Mechanism.

The PPRD East 2 aims to achieve the following results:

### **Result A:**

In the Partner Countries institutional and legal framework on disaster management including prevention/mitigation, preparedness and response is improved and approximated to the *EU acquis* and best practice.

### **Result B:**

Partner Countries and Participating States of the EU Civil Protection Mechanism cooperate closely through regular exchanges of information, expertise and best practices, trainings, table-top exercises and a joint regional field exercise.

### **Result C:**

The Electronic Regional Risk Atlas, developed under PPRD East Phase 1, is further developed and put in practical use by Partner Countries. Data accessibility and comparability is improved at national and regional level, in line with the requirements of the Hyogo Framework for Action Agreement and in consistency with the European common approach for developing national loss databases and sharing of information.

### **Result D:**

Awareness about disasters (natural and man-made), and comprehensive disaster management, is improved in the Partner Countries, amongst civil protection professionals, volunteers and within the population in general.

## Why to develop a National Communication Strategy?

The assessment of the implementation of the PPRD East Phase 1 outcomes and the thorough analysis of the status of raising awareness about disasters in all six Partner Countries (PCs) (conducted in June - September 2015) made it clear that national policy/strategic level documents to raise awareness about disasters are not in place in Partner Countries. Consequently, and in close cooperation and coordination with the national disaster risk management stakeholders, the decision was reached to focus the PPRD East 2 Programme activities primarily on the development of Partner Countries' National Communication Strategies. In other words, the PPRD East 2 Programme will work together with those PCs that have selected raising awareness about disasters as the priority for implementation during the Programme duration (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine) on developing and (to the extent feasible) adoption of their own National Communication Strategies, as per road maps presented, enhanced and validated at the 2nd National/Country Advisory Group meetings.

Raising awareness about disaster risks contributes directly to the country's objective of strengthening the civil protection capacities for disaster risk reduction (DRR) and disaster risk management (DRM). Enacting policies and setting legal and institutional frameworks need to be complemented with communication activities. Only with combined efforts national objectives can be achieved. In disaster risk management, communication and raising awareness plays a crucial role in policy implementation, as the success of policy implementation depends on the involvement of a wide range of stakeholders, including the general public.

An effective National Communication Strategy can:

- Facilitate provision of information to all target groups (e.g. experts, general public, etc.) and other stakeholders about natural hazards and risks of man-made disasters and disasters caused by the natural hazards.
- Facilitate provision of information to all target groups (e.g. experts, general public, etc.) and other stakeholders about what the Government and other relevant actors are doing to prevent, prepare for, respond to, and recover and rehabilitate from man-made and disasters caused by natural hazards.
- Contribute to the creation and nurture the partnerships between the national/regional/local authorities and civil society.
- Facilitate national and regional cooperation between various stakeholders and increase knowledge of the role and activities of the different Government's institutions involved in disaster risk reduction and disaster risk management.
- Ensure effective communication between the Government and stakeholders and involve them in setting priorities and allocating resources.

These Draft Guidelines aim to support the national working groups of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine to develop their National Communication Strategies for raising awareness about disasters. For the purpose of these Draft Guidelines, communication refers to the tools and methods to

communicate about disaster risk reduction and disaster risk management, not about operational communication between the different public agencies/entities engaged in disaster response.

### How to develop a National Communication Strategy?

A National Communication Strategy is a document that presents the national strategic goals and objectives, and the activities and approaches how to achieve these strategic goals and objectives within the defined time frame. Its main aim is to support the Government in designing the activities to communicate effectively its strategic objectives on the specific topic.

Developing a National Communication Strategy is not a difficult task but in order to be successful each of the steps below should be followed. These steps aim to respond the following questions: **Why? What? How? And Who, When and How Much?**

#### Step no. 1: Definition of the strategic and specific objectives of the National Communication Strategy

The first step in the development of a National Communication Strategy is to define what is the **key national strategic objective**. This is key to the successful Strategy development. It needs to be clear that the implementation of the communication strategy is actually support to the implementation of the national strategy on disaster risk reduction and disaster risk management. For the purpose of the National Communication Strategy, the strategic objective should be aligned to the **national objective(s) on disaster risk reduction and disaster risk management**. This step aims to basically respond to the question “**why** the National Communication Strategy is needed?”.

In this regard, the National Communication Strategy needs to include an **analysis of the context and rationale** with an aim to understand the framework in which the Strategy will be designed, adopted and implemented. It should help the working group and all other national DRM stakeholders to understand the need for this Strategy as well as the context. This analysis should include, but not to be limited to:

- Natural hazards and man-made disaster risks situation in the country
- Current legal and institutional framework
- Civil protection services and other Government authorities and non-government organisations involved in disaster risk reduction and disaster risk management
- Perception and attitudes of the various stakeholders in the country regarding man-made and disasters caused by natural hazards.

Once the strategic objective of the National Communication Strategy is identified, there is a need to define **specific objectives**. The specific objectives should directly contribute to the achievement of the strategic objective and should be designed to solve the issues identified in the context and rationale of the Strategy (see diagram below).



Some examples of potential objectives are presented below. As these are just examples, the working group developing the Strategy will need to take into consideration the country’s priorities and main challenges when identifying the Strategy’s objectives. It is crucial to identify as many specific objectives as needed to achieve the strategic objective. At the same time, and depending on the resources available, there might a need to prioritize specific objectives - to focus on few/several specific objectives in order to be efficient and effective.

**Example 1. Strategic and Specific Objectives**

The strategic objective and specific objectives of a National Communication Strategy could be:

<i>Strengthen the country’s capacity to prevent, mitigate, prepare, respond, recover, reconstruct and rehabilitate from man-made and disasters caused by natural hazards</i>		
↑ 1.1 Increase awareness of the general public about disaster risks	↑ 1.2 Build capacity among national media to inform about disaster risks and the government’s efforts to manage disaster risks	↑ 1.3 Strengthen cooperation and communication among civil protection agencies and other governmental organizations in DRR and DRM

**Step no. 2: Identification of the target groups on the basis of the objectives**

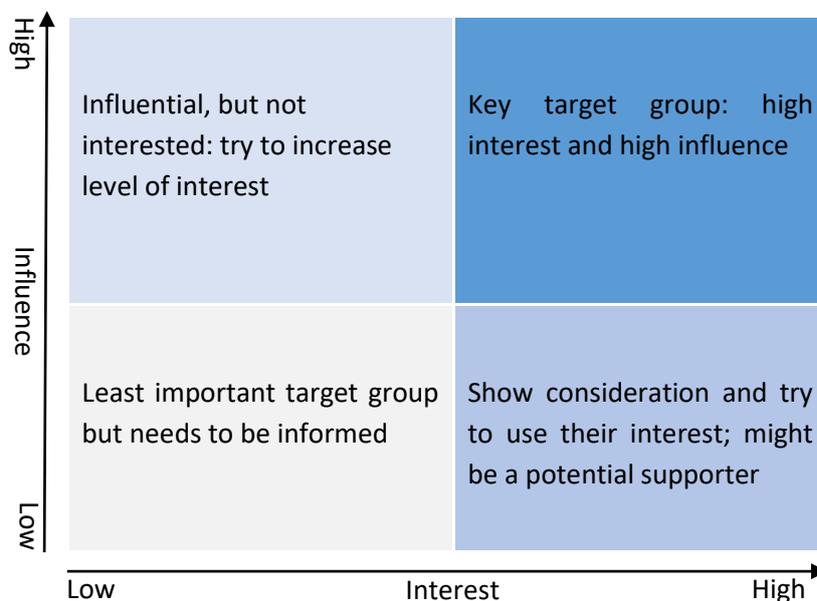
When developing a National Communication Strategy, one of the most critical steps after defining the objectives is the **identification of the target groups** to whom is necessary to communicate in order to achieve the objectives identified in the previous step. Well-defined target groups will help to craft the messages and activities appropriately to achieve the objectives, while imprecise target group selection leads to an unfocused and ineffective communication. It is essential to be as specific as possible while identifying target groups. For example, if the general public is one of the main target groups, then it is needed to more precisely define who exactly among the general public should be targeted: the population above certain age, certain gender, population in certain geographic location, family status, etc. because each target group requires different approaches. This step aims to basically respond to “**who**” the National Communication Strategy is targeting.

In order to identify the target groups, it is necessary to think about the objectives, the rationale behind them and to identify who need to be targeted to reach these objectives. For example, the following questions could be used:

1. What specific action needs to be undertaken to achieve the particular specific objectives?
2. What behaviour needs to be changed to solve the issue at hand?
3. Which of the target groups should be addressed in order to reach the objectives of the National Communication Strategy?

Answering these questions provides an opportunity to analyse what and how some target groups can contribute to the achievement of the objectives, and which target groups might be more interested than others in the implementation of which activities. Moreover, it will help to see that some target groups will be easier to approach and address. Based on this analyses, target groups can then be classified as primary and secondary target groups. Finally, the target groups should be divided into subgroups with similar needs and interests and the communication messages and activities should be tailored for each target group.

One tool that could be useful in the identification of the target groups is the Stakeholder mapping/analysis. The Power versus Interest grid by Eden and Ackermann is a simple tool that helps to visualize the interest and power of the different stakeholders, and on basis of where they are located in the diagram, they can be considered as primary or secondary target group.



This exercise will help to understand that it will be more effective to communicate to a certain target group (e.g. very interested and with a lot of influence). In this case, it is possible to spend more resources and time in some target group, at the same time reaching all the target groups.

### Example 2. Target group

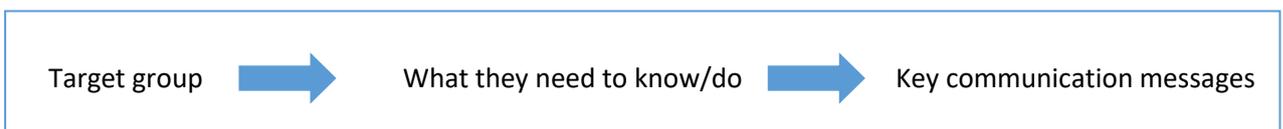
Taking into account the specific objectives of a National Communication Strategy identified above, the target groups could be:

1.1 Increase awareness of the general public about disaster risks	1.2 Build capacity among national media to inform about disaster risks and the government's efforts to manage disaster risks	1.3 Strengthen cooperation and communication among civil protection agencies and other governmental organizations in DRR and DRM
General public: 1.1.1. Men and women between the age of 35 and 55, living in major cities 1.1.2. Children below 12 years studying in public schools in major cities	1.2.1. Journalists of major national newspapers 1.2.2. Major national TV channels 1.2.3. Members of the Journalist Network (JN) in the country	1.3.1. Staff of the civil protection agency 1.3.2. Staff of the Ministry of Internal Affairs 1.3.3. Staff in public administration in local governments (e.g. municipalities)

### Step no. 3: Elaborating key messages

Once the target groups are identified, the next step is to break down the specific objectives into relevant messages for each of the target groups in line with the Strategy's objectives. The main aim of the messages is to influence the behaviours, or increase the knowledge of the target groups. This step aims to basically respond to **"what"** the Strategy will communicate about.

Messages need to be relevant and appropriate to the target group. It is possible to use the table below to identify the messages per target group.



In order to be effective, the messages should be: simple and clear, personalized and consistent.

### Example 3. Key messages

On the basis of the specific objectives of the National Communication Strategy, the key messages per the target group could be:

1.1 Increase awareness of the general public about disaster risks		1.2 Build capacity among national media to inform about disaster risks and the government's efforts to manage disaster risks			1.3 Strengthen cooperation and communication among civil protection agencies and other governmental organizations in DRR and DRM		
1.1.1 Men and women between the age of 35 and 55, living in major cities	1.1.2 Children below 12 years studying in public schools in major cities	1.2.1 Journalists of major national newspapers	1.2.2 Major national TV channels	1.2.3 Members of the Journalist Network (JN) in the country	1.3.1 Staff of national civil protection agency	1.3.2 Staff in public administration in local governments (e.g. municipalities)	1.3.3 Staff of the Ministry of Internal Affairs
✓ "Together we can protect our families of disaster risks more efficiently"	✓ Let's play and learn about disaster risks and how you can prevent them and prepare for them.	✓ Disaster risk management is an important topic for the population; it's important to inform the general public about it.		✓ Media has an important role to play in disaster risk management and by understanding its complexity you will be able to translate it into easy to understand and remember messages for the general public.	✓ Our work saves lives and the better we communicate, the more lives we can save.		✓ Our support to the civil protection agency can be crucial during emergencies

#### Step no. 4: Identifying the communication tools

For each group identified in the previous step, it is necessary to identify the most appropriate tool for communicating with them. These tools might include a wide range of communication activities and modalities, such as: newsletters, conferences, press releases, workshops, leaflets, website, social media, cell phones, and traditional media outlets such as newspapers, radio, and television. This step aims to basically respond to **“how”** you will implement the Strategy.

When deciding on the communication tools, it is essential to assess the options based on their pros and cons, primarily on the analyses which communication tool will have the most significant impact on which target group. For example, website and social media would not be appropriate for a population living in the area without Internet access. The analyses should also take into account resources available to implement the activities. It is necessary to carry out an internal analysis of the organization to see which tools it has at its disposal. This analysis should also include the assessment of what communication tools are available within all other national stakeholders relevant for the implementation of the Strategy.

##### Example 4. Communication tools

Taking into account the messages and target groups, potential communication tools could be:

1.1 Increase awareness of the general public about disaster risks	
1.1.1 Men and women between the age of 35 and 55, living in major cities	1.1.2 Children below 12 years studying in public schools in major cities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ TV spots</li> <li>✓ Articles in the newspaper</li> <li>✓ Social media campaign</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Simulation exercise practicing emergency evacuation from school</li> <li>✓ Coloring book about disaster risks</li> <li>✓ Playing the board game “Riskland”</li> </ul>

#### Step no. 5: Developing an Action Plan, including timeline and resources

Once the National Communication Strategy is elaborated, it is necessary to develop an Action Plan, to operationalise the Strategy. The Action Plan should include a timeline to specify when the activities will take place, and should define resources needed for Strategy implementation – financial resources and human resources - the experts that will implement the communication activities. This step aims to basically respond to **“who, when and how much”** the National Communication Strategy will be implemented.

### Example 5. Action Plan

Part of the Action Plan could include the following:

1.1 Increase awareness of the general public about disaster risks			
1.1.1 Men and women between the age of 35 and 55, living in major cities	Responsible department/person	Timeline	Budget
1.1.1.1 TV spots	Communication expert  Communication agency in charge of producing the TV spot	1 TV spot per year to be broadcasted in May 2017 (include timeline to prepare the TV spot)	Production costs: EUR 12,000 (approx.)  Broadcast costs: depends on the country or whether its publicly owned TV channel

### Step no. 7: Setting-up a monitoring and evaluation framework

The final step in the entire process is the elaboration of monitoring and evaluation framework for the Action Plan. This will provide the management tools to assess whether the Action Plan was effective – if the planned activities are contributing to the achievement of objective, and if the Action Plan is efficient – if the activities are implemented as per planned timelines. It will also provide the opportunity to analyse what worked and what did not work in order to revise the plan and its activities. It is essential to ensure the allocation of resources to carry out monitoring and evaluation.

In order to monitor the implementation of the Action Plan, it is important to identify indicators that measure the achievement of the objectives. They should be SMART: specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound.

### Example 6. Indicators

Taking into account the messages and target groups, potential indicators could be:

1.1 Increase awareness of the general public about disaster risks		
Target group	Indicator	Data gathering method
1.1.1 Men and women between the age of 35 and 55, living in major cities	Percentage of population that are aware of disaster risks and how to respond in the case of disasters	Interviews
	Number of people reached via the social media campaign (i.e. Twitter)	Number of followers in Twitter

Finally, it is important to emphasize that monitoring and evaluation framework needs to be included in order to measure the success of the implementation of the National Communication Strategy and if needed, to revise it. It is crucial to include, into the monitoring and evaluation framework, the tools to evaluate the different communication activities - different indicators to measure different levels of success; indicators to measure the outreach of the Strategy (e.g. number of people reached via the Twitter account, number of students reached with publications, etc.), or to measure the impact (e.g. number of people that is aware about disasters and what to do in case of disasters), or to measure the communication activities (e.g. number of people that attended a workshop).

### Conclusions

Country's ability to effectively raise awareness and to communicate about existing natural hazards, risks of occurrence of man-made disasters and disasters caused by those natural hazards, about the way how to prevent and mitigate them, how to prepare to respond to them, and how to deal with their consequences is one of the key and crucial preconditions for the overall success of disaster risk reduction (DRR) and disaster risk management (DRM) in the country.

Therefore, these Draft Guidelines provide support to the Partner Countries to raise awareness about disasters by guiding them how to develop their National Communication Strategies for raising awareness about disasters, thus also contributing to the countries' objective of strengthening the civil protection capacities for DRR and DRM.

As explained throughout these Draft Guidelines, the National Communication Strategies, including their Action Plans must be well-thought through and based on national conditions. Therefore, it is imperative that each of the steps identified for the Strategy development is fully followed and implemented in order to make sure the Strategies will reach their objectives.